

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
NOVEMBER 10, 2021**



MATTHEW WOLFF

DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome Matthew Wolff to the virtual press room here at the Hewlett Packard Enterprise Houston Open.

Matthew, to kind of set the stage, I'm going to take you back a week. You were making your first start last week at Mayakoba. Round one, you tie your career-low score, finish inside the top-5. What do you do for an encore this week?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Oh, gosh, I'd love to say win. Yeah, I feel really good with every part of my game right now. Last week I really -- I only hit two drivers all week, so definitely like this course a little more. I have a lot more room to hit driver and use that length as an advantage.

But at the end of the day, I feel like no matter what course suits my game or anyone else's game better, we're all really good out here and anyone could have a really good day and play well on any given golf course. Just looking to keep on doing what I'm doing well and that's really just minimizing the mistakes and putting myself in good positions.

Actually, I don't know if -- I just thought about this the other day, but I think from Shriners and Mayakoba, I had two bogey-free rounds in both events, so that means 50 percent of my rounds in the last two tournaments have been bogey free. For me, that's a big thing. I make a lot of birdies, but at the end of the day, when you can minimize those mistakes, it's easier to feel really good about your game.

So I don't know if that's going to happen this week, but I feel really excited to play a golf course that sets up well for me and should be fun.

DOUG MILNE: Yeah, I was going to ask you about that. You're also making your first start here. You've had a chance to get around, see the course. Just your initial thoughts on how you think it might set up well for your game.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, it definitely seems like a bomber's golf course. There's not too much trouble off the tee. I think 16 is really the only -- it's a par-5, but 16's really the only hole that you can really have a penalty shot off the tee in my opinion. You can definitely get it into the trees and into the rough and that's what makes this course hard and that's its defense.

I've just played the pro-am, so I've gotten to play both the front nine and the back nine. I think it's a really good course. The greens are really good and I think it's definitely -- I was thankful that I got to play both nines this week before the tournament because there's

definitely a couple lines off of the tees that were a little different than I thought. But at the end of the day, I think it's going to set up really well for me. I'll be able to hit driver a lot, get to cover a couple things that some people might not be able to.

At the end of the day, like I said, I'm playing really well and I feel really good with my game. So the weather's supposed to be nice, the venue's awesome, so should be a good week.

Q. How much confidence did you get from last week being able to use one of your major weapons twice?

MATTHEW WOLFF: A lot of confidence. I think that -- I was joking about it walking up the 18th fairway with my caddie, Nick, but I feel like that's kind of what I did a lot in college. My 3-wood's a really good club for me. I felt like there was a lot of tournaments -- in college, of course, they were a little wider, but there was a lot of times when things would narrow in or I kind of couldn't take driver as much. For me, my 3-wood, I feel like I hit it very, very straight and just as far as most people's drivers out here.

At the end of the day, even though I didn't take a lot of drivers, I didn't feel like I was really giving up that much of an advantage because of how straight and far I do hit my 3-wood and how much confidence I have in that club.

Like, for example, on 13, a par-5 with not a lot of trouble out there, I just didn't quite feel comfortable with driver and the last day I went 3-wood, 8-iron. I think I was -- I don't really think that I was giving up much by not taking driver, but on a course like this in Houston, I definitely can use it as an advantage, carry some bunkers and some trouble out there and have a little shorter clubs into some of these holes, because I was pretty surprised or pleasantly surprised, it's a pretty long golf course. So I'm excited to see how it plays, especially in a tournament condition.

Q. Is this your last start of the year?

MATTHEW WOLFF: It is, yeah. I'm not -- I'm done after this. I think I'm going to probably take -- I didn't win any, so I'm not going to be in the Tournament of Champions. I'll probably start up at American Express, but that's not confirmed yet.

Q. Do you have a different approach going into knowing this is your last week, and how do you feel, the fact that you've gone two T-5 and you're not going to play after this week? Are you hoping that maybe you wished you could have played a little more being as hot as you are?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I don't think so. I feel like I have a really good chance to win this week, I feel really good with my game, my confidence levels are super high, but at the end of the day, I have a lot of confidence in my ability. I think at the end of last year or the majority of this spring I really didn't play too well and it was definitely a struggle for me, but I think I've learned from that a lot and I'm not -- I wouldn't say I'm happy that I went through it, but I

think at the end of the day, I'm glad and it's made me a better player.

There's a couple things in my game and mentally and physically that I feel like I've learned about myself, and with that experience that I have in my back pocket now, I'm not so much, you know, oh, trying to -- if I'm playing good, try to play as much as I can.

I'm still focusing on making sure that I take those breaks and know that, you know, my game will still be there when I need it to. At the end of the day, we play so much golf, I think the most important thing for me is I'm not too worried about my game anymore. I've worked with my coach and, you know, like I said, battling through that rough time taught me a lot of stuff about my swing and my game so I have a better understanding about who I am as a person and my swing than I ever have in my life.

So I'm really excited to have a good end to the fall this week and then looking forward to some down time and then, you know, ready to kick off in the spring and kind of change the script a little bit from last year.

Q. And last thing, how much better is it to go to the golf course today as opposed to earlier this year?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I mean, it's just -- you know, it's completely different. I wake up in the morning and I'm excited to get out here. I'm excited to work on my game and tighten up the things I need to tighten up and see everyone, say hi and stuff.

Like last year it was just, it was a little difficult. Just wanted to stay in bed and work on my game not in front of the world.

But, like I said, going through that and experiencing that, it definitely gave me a better understanding of who I am and everything about me as a person and me as a golfer. I think that, like I said, I wasn't too happy when I went through it, but it definitely was the best thing for me and I think I'm in for some really good golf and just enjoying myself a lot more out here.

Q. Just curious, when did you guys realize your setup had gotten off? How did it get off and how was that affecting your shots?

MATTHEW WOLFF: So, first thing, my setup, my legs were pretty straight, I was more bent over with my spine, and from there it's kind of hard for me because I like to take it back and then go across the line, but when you're already so bent over, it's so hard to turn. From there, it's also you get a lot steeper, and for me, I think the biggest thing in my swing, which is the thing that I've worked on with George the most, is not only the setup but being shallow and being able to shallow out the club and then flex it down from my wrists and turn from there.

When I'm in a good setup position, when I'm athletic, my knees are bent, I'm not as bent

over with my back. It doesn't mean my butt's sticking out, it's just a better athletic posture. When I'm in that position, I feel like everything kind of clicks into place.

In my opinion, setup is the most important thing for me because if I set up correctly, the shallowness of my swing and everything kind of falls into place, but I think it was right before Sanderson, so very good timing.

But yeah, I've been working on it a little bit with George in the offseason before Sanderson. George, my coach. But at the end of the day, I was hitting it decent but still not how I wanted it to. And I looked closely one night at just my setup and I realized that I was a little more over the ball. From that point on, I've really just been focusing every single morning coming out here, making sure the things that I can control like setup, ball position, alignment, stuff like that is all really consistent. And from that, if I can control those things and do those things day in and day out correctly, I don't think I have to worry too much about my swing or my game.

Q. Were you just sitting on your phone looking at old swing videos trying to figure something out?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I honestly wasn't. I was about to fall asleep, to be honest, and I was just kind of thinking. I wasn't too tired, but I was like, I don't know if I had an early tee time or what, but I was really just sitting there thinking and I was like, well, I was looking at my swing, not so much my setup, and I was trying to do different stuff in my swing.

Then I remember kind of like making a little note of it when I looked at the video in the first place and just kind of realizing like, oh, wow, I feel like my setup's a little different, that's weird. And I looked and my setup versus how I was in college, because for me I played really good golf in college and day in and day out it was just extremely consistent.

So for me, I'm a more well-rounded better player now, but at the end of the day, I like to kind of go back to that time when I knew I was swinging it well and knew everything was in the right spot. Went back to a swing that I had in college just randomly and as soon as I looked at it, I could tell the difference. Went out the next day, I think it was Wednesday, so I had one day to practice it before the start of Sanderson, and from that point I think Sanderson was a really good tournament for me, but still just kind of getting used to the setup, but then when I got to Shriners, I felt really comfortable and from that point on I've just been rolling.

Q. And how did the flatter irons fit into all that?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I bounced back between the P750s and the 7MCs I play now. I think that I've always really had the same lie angle. I believe that I was missing it left, so the flatter irons obviously makes your club a little flatter, which is easier to miss it a little more right, which for me, that's always my preferred miss. I'd rather miss the ball right than left.

But at the end of the day, I think it was a lot more of my setup and my swing. Once I figured

those things out, it wasn't too much of the clubs, it was definitely a lot of me. And that's why I love TaylorMade and I'm so happy to be partnered with them. They worked through it with me. They had a lot of faith in me, they never -- you know, everything that I wanted, everything that I wanted to try, they were there for me.

At the end of the day, I think they knew that I was going to be able to come out of this, and now that I am, I'm playing really well and it -- you know, it's not so much the arrow, it's the Indian, but I think we're a really good team.

And the irons, yeah, I think it might have helped a little bit just setting on the ground a little better, but at the end of the day, I think it was just about my swing and my setup.

Q. So how were you hitting it Tuesday and Wednesday of Sanderson before this kind of epiphany and how did you hit it Thursday after realizing that stuff with the video?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I was still hitting it good Tuesday and Wednesday. I wasn't -- I think there's a lot of times, for example, George, my coach, or Nick comes out, I'll be on the range and I'll look like I'll be hitting it good and every shot will be going where I want it to, but in my mind, I'm the one who's hitting the shot, so I have to know that I'm feeling confident in my swing and my game. And I think when they came out and they were just trying to instill that confidence in me, it didn't work as much because at the end of the day, I knew that -- I knew that I didn't -- it wasn't how I was feeling, or I wasn't hitting it how I wanted to and it didn't feel how I wanted to. So I wasn't hitting it bad, but it definitely wasn't as tight and as, you know, clean as the tournament.

But Thursday and Friday to me at the Sanderson were, like I said, I made a long putt to make the cut, so it wasn't great, but it definitely, you know, I knew it was going in the right direction, I just had to get more comfortable with it. Now I'm extremely comfortable with it. I'm looking to play really well this week.

DOUG MILNE: Matthew, you heard me call it here first, this is going to be a great week for you. That's all we've got. Appreciate your time as always. Have a great week.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Thank you, guys.