

# BMW Championship

Monday, June 23, 2025

Owings Mills, Maryland, USA

Caves Valley Golf Club

## Denny McCarthy

### Press Conference

JIMMY ROBERTS: Speaking of College Park, let me next introduce a man who spent a piece of his youth in Cole Field House, I guess it was called the Comcast Center now the XFINITY Center, as a ball boy for the Terrapins. He's of course gone on to bigger and better things. He's a three-time Maryland Open champion, a three time All-American at the University of Virginia -- boo -- and he's hoping for something of a home game at the BMW Championship. Please welcome Rockville's own and the PGA TOUR member Denny McCarthy. Denny, come on up.

I bet you got some heat from your high school buddies about going to UVA.

DENNY McCARTHY: Yes.

**Q. The very first thing, if you Google this guy, aside from everything he's done on the golf course, one of the things you're going to find is his love of basketball. What's it called? It's called Denny's Got Game on YouTube.**

DENNY McCARTHY: I didn't even know this existed.

**Q. Come on, PGA TOUR Productions did a thing with you where they followed you. Where were you? You were shooting with somebody from the Wizards?**

DENNY McCARTHY: We did a couple things. I did something with a Wizards player, I think during the tournament at TPC Potomac, the Wells that week, and then we did something at Ohio State during Jack's tournament, the Memorial. We did a 3-point contest with some other players, and I shot with Anthony Gill, former Virginia Cavalier.

**Q. Boo.**

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, you can say boo. I get it. I'm in Terp country here. I grew up a big Terp.

It's been fun to do those little things. Basketball was



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probably my first love honestly, but being 5'8" --

**Q. Nothing wrong with being 5'8".**

DENNY McCARTHY: I know, I know. I just knew where I stood. I knew basketball wasn't going to really be in my cards in the future.

Yeah, I enjoyed playing basketball, I played baseball. I enjoyed playing different sports growing up, and I had a lot of fun doing it.

**Q. I don't know what it is about golf and basketball, but I bet you a lot of you didn't know this -- you may not have known this -- Jack Nicklaus, actually, his scholarship to Ohio State was for basketball.**

DENNY McCARTHY: I did not know that.

**Q. On a pretty good team. He didn't play there, but on a pretty good team that won the National Championship, Jerry Lucas, John Havlicek, so he was a pretty good multi-sport athlete himself. Let's move on to golf now. Well inside the top 50 right now. Tied for 12th in Hartford, good finish for you yesterday, 69. What would it mean to you to play so close to home in the BMW Championship? Would it be easier or would it be harder because of all the family that you have and friends?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I don't know if it would be easier or harder. I'm looking forward to it. I still have a little work to do to get here. It was something that was kind of circled on my calendar back in '21, and I was a little upset that I didn't make it here. I believe I just missed out.

So this is one that's been circled on my calendar this year to be a motivating factor to play well, work hard, and make it here. Obviously I want to play the week after the BMW too.

It would mean a lot to be here and play in front of family and friends. All my family is still in this area pretty much. All my friends are still in this area, all the ones that I grew up with. Yeah, it would mean a lot for me to come and play here.

This is such a special place, Caves Valley. It's been a little



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while since I've been here, but they put on a great show in '21, and I'm sure it will be the same this year too.

**Q. You're really having an extraordinary year, 16 events, if I've got my numbers right, you haven't missed a cut, and that includes three major championships. When we look back two weeks ago, what did you finish at the U.S. Open?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I don't know. Let's not talk about that. I just ate my lunch.

I did make the cut there, but if you're a little off, you can look pretty silly out there, and I was a little off.

**Q. You were less off than some other people were.**

DENNY McCARTHY: True.

**Q. I can't get past this. I once played that course, and it wasn't in the U.S. Open obviously. I said it was the hardest golf course I've ever played. What about you?**

DENNY McCARTHY: That's accurate. I would say that's probably the hardest golf course I've ever played just because it puts such a premium on driving, it's straight, and if you don't, you just run into problems immediately. You can make a bogey or worse pretty easily even just by hitting a drive a yard in the rough.

All the fairway bunkers are essentially a shot penalty. Everything kind of runs up into the face, and you can't really advance it. When you've missed the fairway out there, you know you're in for basically a battle on that hole to try and -- a par would be great. If you make 5 or a bogey, that can be potentially good depending on where exactly you drive it.

Then the greens are some of the most undulating, probably some of the quickest, undulating greens that I've ever seen. Your problems don't stop after the tee, they continue around the green.

It's just challenging in every aspect. I like playing places like that honestly. I didn't have -- I wish I had some better stuff that week because that's kind of the golf that I like, where pars are really good scores. I've played well in a couple U.S. Opens. That's kind of my -- I would say it suits my game to kind of grind out pars. You need to be able to scramble. You need to be able to think your way around a place and limit mistakes and clean up those par putts. Yeah, that place is all of that and more.

**Q. That's because you've got an unfair advantage, you're such a good putter. But there are two schools**

**of thought on this, and that was actually the next thing I wanted to ask you about. Some people like to watch the Masters -- actually, a lot of people like to watch the Masters because on the back nine, or the second nine as they like to say there, it's not unusual to see guys shooting 30, 31 coming in, a lot of birdies. Then you get to a U.S. Open where it's as hard as it can possibly be. You actually prefer the latter?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I think so, yeah. It seems like more people out in the world these days are into that too. People like to watch us suffer sometimes. That seems to be the trend.

**Q. They're just jealous.**

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, people like watching the Masters because it's the same -- obviously everyone knows the whole course, but everyone's obviously very familiar with the back nine, so people enjoy. They feel like they know the course, they feel like they know how the putts break, so they enjoy that.

Yeah, it seems like in a U.S. Open they want to watch us suffer and make bogeys and doubles and triples and wreak havoc. Also, it provides for an exciting finish too. It feels like, if you're within five or six shots of the lead on the back nine, you probably still feel like you have a chance somehow. It provides entertainment for us. It provides entertainment for the fans.

We're out there doing a job, but we also want to put on a good show for everyone watching.

**Q. I've heard it said by more than one person that it makes sense that there's a connection between those who are good basketball players and those who are good putters. You're an exceptional putter, the hand-eye component of what's going on. What's the one thing -- I can't even imagine how many Pro-Ams you play in. What's the one mistake that you see amateurs make when it comes to putting the most? Is there something that's relatively easy to address?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I think -- that's a good question. The hand-eye stuff, I was just always -- I've never played video games. I'm terrible at video games because I was always outside playing different kinds of sports. The hand-eye stuff, I kind of developed it doing a bunch of different things.

I was always looking for ways to get better at things through trial and error really. Does this work? No, it doesn't work. What works well for me in this? Always trying to find -- whether it was shooting a basketball,



throwing a baseball, all these little things. I was playing ping pong. If I flick it a little more, I can get a little more topspin. All these little things I feel like I developed through a process of trial and error to try to find out what works best for me.

It was no different with my putting. I struggled at an early age in junior golf tournaments. I would hit 16 greens and shoot 74, and I'd have 36 or 38 putts for the day. I was trying to be too perfect. I was trying to really kind of do something with my putting that wasn't really me. So I had to kind of spend some time and figure out how do I best use my athleticism? How do I tap into my instincts, my creativity, and make it my own thing?

I've never really had a putting coach, so I kind of just -- I got in my own little world, and I found out what worked best for me.

So I feel like I see a lot of amateurs, when we play in Pro-Ams, they're unsure what they're doing. They're unsure of how much it's breaking, how fast it is. So I always try and tell people to -- you look at the green, the lay of the land, and try and pick spots to track your ball around. Aim at something close and kind of see it tracking off, whether it's a ball mark or discoloration, try and make it really fun and creative.

I feel like people are gripping their putter like it's a rattlesnake, like they're scared of the thing. To me that's when the party starts is when I get to the green. I enjoy, it's almost like a puzzle piece, piecing it together. If I putt it to this ball mark, it should curve this way off of this ball mark. I'm just trying to paint pictures on the green and really have the same process and make it as creative as possible and have fun with it and enjoy it.

#### **Q. Use your imagination then?**

DENNY McCARTHY: Correct. Tap into my instincts, and if I aim -- it's tough because I've played golf for 30 years of my life, I'm 32, so I've seen so many greens, I've hit so many putts on certain greens.

#### **Q. Wait a second. Back it up. You're 32, and you've played for 30 years?**

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, I've pretty much played since I could walk. I don't know how I read greens when I was 2 or 3 years old, but I've played a lot of tournament golf where I know what it looks like to be right edge from eight feet. I know how my eyes see that. So my eyes pick up -- I tap -- like I said, tap into those instincts, try to be creative. I may see one thing from the other side of the hole and one thing from -- my eyes have tendencies, and I

understand those tendencies, and I try and trust them as much as I can.

Yeah, I'm kind of side tracking here, but I tap into my instincts. I've seen a lot of putts over the years and how they break, and just trying to trust my instincts and pick the spots and let it fly, be really free when I putt.

#### **Q. Let's talk about this place. As we mentioned, par 70 this time around, not 72. There's the PrecisionAire, which is going to make things potentially firmer and faster. They'll have more control over the agronomy, different grasses. What do you know about playing here at Caves? When was the last time you played here?**

DENNY McCARTHY: It's been a while since I've played here. It's been maybe 10 or so years -- maybe 5 to 10 years since I've been here. It seems like they don't want 25-under to win this year. It seems like they turned a couple par-5s into some long par-4s.

#### **Q. Speaking of the U.S. Open.**

DENNY McCARTHY: Exactly. I know it's an unbelievable piece of property. From the second you drive in, it's stunning, and it seems like we're at the high point here, so everything kind of seems like it slopes this way on the property.

I know there's going to be some elevation change. I've got some -- I'm sure they're going to have some deep rough. The PrecisionAire, like you said, it seems like they redid some greens and have taken the steps to make it a challenging golf course.

I'm excited to hopefully have the opportunity to come and play it. Like I said, it would be great to play in front of family and friends. It's going to be a good test of golf, I think. It doesn't seem like you're going to be able to play from the rough. I'm sure they're going to grow the rough up some, and you're going to have to play quality golf.

You've got the top 50 or so players in the world coming here, and weather permitting, hopefully we can get some nice weather around that time. It's pretty hot right now. It's known in Maryland for being pretty hot around that time also. I'm no stranger to this humidity. So maybe that PrecisionAire will help the greens firm out a little bit and give us a really good test.

#### **Q. We just heard Kevin's story, had an opportunity to spend some time with him. I know on a week-to-week basis that you're wrapped up in doing what you do for a living, but I just wonder, as we wind down here, if**

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**you could reflect on what it means as a PGA TOUR player to be part of something that can change lives the way this program changes lives?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I think this is phenomenal. I think the Western Golf Association and BMW have done a great job with the Evans Scholarship. I got a chance to talk to Kevin before, about an hour ago, and he was really excited about this and coming up here.

As you all alluded to, it seems like it's expanding quite a bit. Just to be able to give these kids an opportunity through the game of golf, an opportunity that they might not have had otherwise, I think, is unbelievable. That's one of the good things about the PGA TOUR and a lot of the areas where we go. The Western Golf Association doing this is incredible, and I feel fortunate to be a part of this.

Like Pat was saying, every Wednesday, Tuesday or Wednesday they caddie in the Pro-Am or during a practice round, and they're always so excited to carry our bag, and getting to know some of these kids, it's amazing what the game of golf can do. Like I said, I feel fortunate and blessed to be a part of something like this.

**Q. Last thing from me. Is maybe just a small, little piece of your heart still rooting for the Terps?**

DENNY McCARTHY: It is, for sure. Obviously I went to UVA --

**Q. Boo.**

DENNY McCARTHY: I know. You can say boo.

I'd say part of my heart definitely still lies with Maryland. I was pulling for them to make a run this year. I felt like they had some good pieces to make a run.

I like Buzz Williams as a coach. I think that's a really good hire.

**Q. Now we're talking.**

DENNY McCARTHY: I like Buzz. He brings that Gary Williams type of energy. I think that was -- I think that was a really good hire. I think Buzz is going to do really good things for the program. My parents and my brother, they still -- they probably go to 5 to 10 home games a year. I get the updates when they're going to the games.

Yeah, it's fun. When Maryland basketball is good, it's really, really fun. It wasn't so fun there for a handful of years when they weren't that good because, like I said, a piece of my heart does still lie with Maryland basketball.

JIMMY ROBERTS: From your lips to God's ears when it comes to Buzz Williams having a great year. That's all from me. We have some questions maybe.

**Q. Denny, you came close last year, birdied seven holes and then losing a playoff. We just witnessed yesterday Tommy Fleetwood go through what he went through. I know it's not easy to win a tournament. What goes through the body when you're coming down the stretch and you see the leaderboard and your name's right there?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I've gotten more and more comfortable with seeing my name there. I haven't had too many opportunities this year, but you try and just kind of stay in your own little world and stick to your process and try and go about business as usual, but things try and creep up and get a little faster.

For me, I tend to start walking a little faster, talking a little faster. So just trying to take a step back and focus on my breathing a little bit, try and just relax and stay in the moment the best I can.

You alluded to seven birdies. I don't even know -- I think it was almost kind of relaxing because I felt like I had a free wheel to go ahead and make a push. I think I was five shots back at the time.

I don't know, when I went on a stretch like that, it didn't even feel -- it just kind of felt like I was stringing along holes. It didn't even feel like I was doing anything crazy. You look back, and I made seven birdies in a row to finish.

I was, you could say, in the zone. I was locked in, and that's a nice place to be. I don't even really know, it was so like subconscious. I don't even really -- I was in my own little world talking about shots as business as usual. For me, when I get in that situation, I try and even zone in more. I try and pick really small targets and make really free, committed swings to those small targets. My misses seem to be a little smaller when I do that.

It's hard to do that all the time, play so much golf consecutively. It's hard to -- that's why Scottie is so good. He seems to do that better than anyone really. His physical is really impressive, but what he does mentally is really impressive, how he's able to lock in all the time, even on Thursdays early off.

Yeah, you can always learn from those things. I'm sure Tommy is absolutely gutted today. He played great all week, and two shots going on the last hole, and he's probably thinking what the heck just happened.



I think the thing is to always take the positives from it. Obviously it probably really hurts in many different ways for him, but he did so many good things. That's what I had to remind myself a couple times. Did so many good things; let's use the positives and build off this instead of going the other way.

JIMMY ROBERTS: You speak of slowing down. I remember Arnold Palmer once told me that, when he found himself going too fast, he would bend down, he would stop going from one green to the next tee, he would tie his shoe even if he didn't need to, just to kind of step on the brakes and slow down.

**Q. Denny, you mentioned you did not make it here the last time Caves Valley hosted the BMW Championship. Can you talk about the playoff format and the pressure that's on you pros? It's only top 50, it really narrows it down to the crème de la crème. Can you talk about the whole playoff format and how it works and trying to make it all the way to Atlanta?**

DENNY McCARTHY: It's hard to make it to the top 50. It's really hard to make it to the top 30, but it's just as hard to make it to the top 50 really. This is where you finish in the top 50, there's a lot to play for. You get into all the Signature Events, which is obviously the events you want to be playing in. I've been fortunate enough to make it to the top 50 the last few years.

Yeah, there's a lot to play for, and a lot can change late in the year. The playoff events are four times the points. So Memphis, even the week before this event, is a really big event because, even if you're sitting at No. 40 on the FedExCup, if you don't have a great week and some guys have a really good week, they can jump you just with the amount of points that are at stake come playoff time.

Yeah, there's a lot to play for. That Memphis event can be really crucial too because there's a lot of volatility in terms of how the points can change. I remember last year Memphis, I had to have a good week. I was, I think, 43 or 44, and I remember a lot of guys right around me were playing really well. So I felt like Memphis was a really -- if I didn't have a good week, I might not have made it to the top 50. I went out and played a really good week. I felt some pressure for sure because you want to be in the top 50. You want to make it to this event for sure.

Yeah, there's a lot going on. I think, at the end of the day, you've just got to focus on your game and what you need to do to play well and not try and get caught up in all that.

I always say, if you play good golf, the rest will take care of

itself, you'll get rewarded. So just try and do what I can to control how I can play my best golf and then worry about it after.

**Q. I wanted to ask you about you're coming from mainly the Northeast's only consistent PGA TOUR stop at this point, and this area used to have more of a consistent PGA TOUR presence. There's some fleeting majors here and there, and the Ryder Cup is coming up, Congressional is hosting majors coming up. What do you think this area needs to do to have a more consistent presence on the PGA TOUR, and what do you think is the reason? Do you want to see more of a consistent presence closer to home?**

DENNY McCARTHY: I would love to see more of a consistent presence here. I don't know what this area or the TOUR needs to do. That's above my pay grade. I can voice my opinion that I would like an event in this area. I don't know how much that's going to do.

Yeah, I would love to have an event obviously. The TOUR had a pretty regular TOUR stop being in this area. I would like to see that come back. I don't know how much longer I'm going to be playing golf, hopefully a little while longer, so hopefully that happens throughout the rest of my playing career so I can play in front of my family and friends and home crowd more often.

**Q. Jimmy mentioned your three Maryland Open wins. You also won a Maryland Amateur at Mr. Jones' Baltimore Country Club. As someone who proudly lost to you three times in those Maryland Opens, can you talk about the impact your developmental golf had coming from Argyle and coming from this area a little bit?**

DENNY McCARTHY: It was huge. I didn't really play any of the national stuff until I was a junior -- after my junior year of high school, really going into my senior year of high school. I pretty much played all local stuff.

I felt like it was important to, even before going to that national stuff, you need to be competing or competing to win in your local areas before you take that on a national level.

Yeah, I remember playing in all the events around here. I was so competitive. I still am very competitive. Whether it was basketball, baseball, like I really got up to play every single event. I felt those nerves. Towards the later, when I got into high school, people probably saw me as a favorite in some events, and I kind of knew that, and I felt some added pressure to perform or some extra nerves, but it felt good to come out and win some of those events.

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I just remember always being excited to play in these events. It was huge to -- it gave me a lot of confidence, winning somewhat regularly in some of these events, to then take that to the next stage. I've won some tournaments, I know how to win, I know how to do this, and then bring that to the stages after that.

**Q. Just in regards to the playoff format, this BMW Championship has had a lot of success just kind of rotating through different venues. Do you think they should consider doing that for the other playoff events too, moving them around more?**

DENNY McCARTHY: Yeah, that would be -- I know there's been some talks about we play in Memphis the first week of August, and Memphis is a lot more hot and humid than we're all feeling right now. I know FedEx, their headquarters is there, and obviously it's a big sponsor of the TOUR, FedExCup obviously. It's actually a really good golf course; it's just we play it at kind of a difficult time of the year there.

It's great what the BMW does and the Western Golf Association moving venues, locations. We get to experience all these cool courses. Last year at Castle Pines was awesome. I didn't even know that place, I didn't even know it existed, and you go there and you're like, wow, this is a really special place.

Coming to these cool, different venues is awesome. Yeah, I would like to see that more. I think it would be really cool, but I don't have control over that (laughter).

JIMMY ROBERTS: I hope you had one of those milkshakes at Castle Pines last year.

DENNY McCARTHY: Phenomenal. Everything about that place is great, and that's kind of what this place is here too. Everything they do here is second to none. I'm looking forward to coming here.

JIMMY ROBERTS: That sounds like the perfect way to end. Denny, thanks so much for being with us. Good luck to you.

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