

# RBC Heritage

Sunday, April 16, 2023

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

## Matt Fitzpatrick

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Matt Fitzpatrick into the interview room, our 2023 RBC Heritage champion. You've won the U.S. Open, now you have your first non-major on the PGA TOUR. Talk about what it means to do it right here at Hilton Head.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think I can retire now. Yeah, this one is the one that I've always wanted to win. Any golf tournament, you know, other than the majors, of course, there isn't a higher one on my list than to win this one, and that's the truth. My family can tell you that, and my friends can tell you the same thing. This place is just a special place for me, and it means the world to have won it.

THE MODERATOR: You move up to 22 in the FedExCup standings and a career high No. 8 in the World Rankings. Talk a little bit about what that means as you set your goals for the rest of the season.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, obviously I felt like I got off to a slow start, didn't play much in the fall, and this gives me a huge boost. This really cements my place up there in the top 30 for TOUR Championship, and that's the goal is to always make it there, of course, as well as getting as high up in the World Rankings as possible.

For me the majors are the goals, and winning tournaments like this is obviously also the goal. For me after last year it's kind of a thing for me just to play as well as I can each week and just keep working hard on my game to try and improve.

**Q. Could you just take us through the emotions of the playoff? The first one it looks like Jordan's putt has gone in there. Did you sort of have that moment where you felt that, and then to come back and take us through the shot that you hit to win.**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I felt like Jordan played really well today. Didn't really hit many bad shots, if any. I think in the playoff, I felt every putt he hit was going to go in. But I'll be honest, I just feel like that all the time. I don't play with him much, but he's the person that does that.



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Everyone calls it, they play "Spee-eat." Jordan Spieth does different things. I always had that in the back of my mind.

The putt he hit in the first playoff obviously had a very, very good look, and then same with the second hole, and then obviously the third one it was a perfect number for us, and I just hit a great shot.

To finish where it did obviously made it a little bit easier.

**Q. Is there a sense of validation, sort of validating that U.S. Open victory?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yes and no, I guess. I don't feel like -- I feel like winning the U.S. Open is probably enough, but I think -- I'm sure people are going to be like, oh, this golf course suits him perfectly, as well. But if you look at my results here, that's not necessarily the case. I've missed the cut a few times. I've finished middle of the pack a couple times, and I've added some good finishes.

I just feel like I played really well this week, and I felt solid coming in off the weekend of last week, and just took it through into the rest of the week.

**Q. You're the second Englishman to win here after Nick Faldo. What does that mean to you? And when you were coming here as a kid watching the tournament, was that something you dreamt of following in his footsteps and winning here?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: As a kid, not really. I always remember coming here and saying to my dad, is Tiger going to be in it here, and my dad is like, no, Tiger is not playing this week. I seem to remember that happening a lot.

It was only ever when I came here, I was always looking for Tiger. I remember a few guys when I came here as a kid that I ended up seeing out there, but to me, just winning this tournament because of the history that me and my family have here is what means the world to me. That's why this is so special.

**Q. A question about two different emotions. On 17**

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**before the playoff, missing that short putt and then on 18 when you realized how close you were to the pin walking up to the green during the second 18 playoff.**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Sorry, what was the question?

**Q. Two different emotions, on 17 before the playoff when you missed that putt to take the lead, and then on 18 during the second time you played 18 on the playoff, the emotion when you walked up and you saw that the ball was right next to the pin.**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, obviously 17 in regulation I obviously had a chance there to go 1-up with one to play. It was just a really strange putt. I thought I saw it downhill right to left, and Billy thought he saw it pretty straight, and then kind of looking at it, I felt the grain was into out of the left, so we kind of went straight, and it moved left to right, so it kind of -- Billy was a lot closer than I was.

Then in terms of 18, I felt like the shot that I hit was right down it from the moment it left the club face. We knew it was the perfect number for the club. Then I knew it was good because my mom and my girlfriend were jumping up and down with their arms in the air. I knew it must have been decent.

**Q. You mentioned how great this is for you with your family's history here and all the emotions that you've had as a kid. Although it seems like the local favorite was definitely Spieth down the stretch, seemed like a lot of the crowd was pulling for him, especially on 18 where there were a couple of U-S-A chants that Spieth told to quiet down. Out on the course did you take that personally? Did that make the win any better or is that just part of the game at this point?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: You know, it's obviously -- when you're the underdog or the person that everyone else -- everyone is not rooting for, it's obviously a little bit sweeter when you do win, yeah, there's no doubt about that. But I felt like I had a lot of support out there myself.

Obviously the U-S-A and the Spieth chants were louder, but I definitely had support out here, and I felt that because of my connection here.

But yeah, it was very, very nice to win, yeah.

**Q. As I'm sure you know, you made the cut here as an amateur back in 2014, and that was your first non-major PGA TOUR cut. This is now your first non-major PGA TOUR win. Do you find any significance in that, that it happens here?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Just that it's special, just for what this place means to me and to achieve both of those things. I had a little bit better weekend this year. I seem to remember that year I ended up playing the weekend with two birdies and no bogeys for 36 holes, and yeah, this weekend I had a few more birdies, fortunately.

It means a lot that this is the place that I managed to pick up a win.

**Q. You came into this round with a lead. It wasn't a big lead, but the first few holes all of a sudden Jordan is right there with you. As you go through a stretch where maybe you have chances but you're just not converting them, how did you stay mentally ready to kind of attack when you had the chance to attack late in the round?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I didn't do any attacking. I just stuck to my game plan all along. I didn't change. We were hitting the same targets, same shots as we did all week.

The big thing for me that I feel like I've learnt when I play well is just having patience, just letting it happen, and just giving myself time. At the end of the day, the final round is over 18 holes. If you caught up in five holes, things can change in the next three holes.

I just felt as long as I could hang on -- not hang on, but as long as I was within two shots going into the back nine, I was easily in with a shout. I know I can play the back nine well. It's a hard golf course, there's no doubt about that. You've got to hit good golf shots at the right times, and fortunately for me, made a great putt on 15, great shot on 16, again, good shot on 17 and good shot on 18 and just managed to get in the playoff and go from there.

**Q. Just curious, how will you celebrate tonight given your history with the area? Is it going to be a big one?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I honestly don't know. I was supposed to fly with Keegan Bradley and Patrick Rodgers at 7:00, so I told them to carry on. We'll probably just stay here tonight and hopefully go for dinner, probably have a dessert, and that's as exciting as it gets, I guess. It's just nice. I'm lucky I've got my family, friends here, my girlfriend here, and that makes it very special.

**Q. Seeing what a great event this was this week, is there any hope that it is designated next year? I know you'll be back anyway, but to see what it's like this week, do you hope to repeat that?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Totally, yeah. I feel like this event -- I'm going to be biased, but I'd like to think the missed cuts

allow me to be non-biased, I guess. But I feel like it's a great event. You've seen the crowds out there this week. I feel like they've been really good. I feel like ticket sales probably are also really good. It's a great town to have a golf tournament. The golf course is fantastic. Is really is a true test, and it's different to what we play week in and week out. It really is.

I think it deserves a good field. I think the fact that Jon Rahm came after winning the Masters I think is probably a testament to the tournament as well as a testament to himself for doing that. Yeah, really hope it is an elevated event next year, and I think it's a great place to have one.

**Q. I want to ask you about the cross-handed chipping. They were talking a lot about it on the broadcast, going back and forth, debating what the rhyme or reason might have been, when you used it, when you didn't use it. Can you explain your theories behind the cross-handed chipping?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I didn't think I was very good at it today, to be honest. Normally if I've got to land it inside 30 yards, I'll chip cross-handed. Outside of that, I tend to go normal grip just because I can't really get the speed. I also can't get the spin from anything outside of that or if I have to play a high shot I can't get the spin, either, going cross-handed. That's when I might have to go normal grip.

**Q. To follow Evan's question, do you like that it's the week after the Masters? I know you said Augusta is your favorite golf course other than here.**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I think it's a great time in the year to have it here weather-wise, golf course condition-wise. I have to admit previously, I feel like it's been a heavier toll on me than it has this week. I'm not really sure why that is. I always probably before winning the U.S. Open -- before last year really, probably got maybe overworked over majors, that desperate to try and win one, just changing things, trying a bit harder, probably made myself tired from that, and then you come to this week and it's -- you just feel tired from the week before.

I think sometimes it can be tough, particularly if you really had a grind, if you had a good result. I think it can be difficult to get yourself up for it.

But for me, it is a little bit different. It's a week that I enjoy.

I came into this week feeling that my game was making positive strides, but my goal was to enjoy this week. I just wanted to enjoy it. My family is here, my girlfriend is here, and I really did want to make sure that that was the big

thing.

**Q. Unrelated, on No. 3 when you missed your tee ball right and had to hit the low shot from the sand area, where were you trying to miss that shot? Did it end up where you were trying to miss it?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: It went a lot further than we thought it was probably going to go, but yeah, I was trying to miss it out there to the right. Anything right of that flag was fine.

**Q. How crucial was that putt after you left the chip short?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, made the playoff, so I guess you could put it down to that.

**Q. You mentioned wanting to enjoy this week. Obviously any week after a win is special, but you get to go to New Orleans and play with your brother. Just want to get some thoughts on the week ahead.**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I'm even more excited to go now. I was really excited. That kind of was one of my thoughts going into today, just enjoy today, it's a great challenge, great opportunity to go out and try and win, and fortunately managed to do that, and then just look forward to -- my plan was to enjoy today and look forward to next week, and now I can really enjoy next week.

Yeah, I think we're going to have a good week.

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