

# Workday Charity Open

Tuesday, July 7, 2020

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

## Matthew Fitzpatrick

### Press Conference



didn't have any issue with it personally, and yeah, I'm obviously delighted that I'm here.

#### **Q. Are you getting used to having no fans out here? Is it almost becoming normal?**

THE MODERATOR: Matthew Fitzpatrick, Workday ambassador, thanks for joining us for a few minutes here at the Workday Charity Open. If we could just get a couple comments from you, initial thoughts on being here at Muirfield this week.

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I would say it is. For me personally, I've not really felt an effect because I've not quite played well enough to get into the final groups and sort of, like I say -- the only place where I've played where there has been a few fans would be Harbour Town, and it didn't really feel any different. It's been pretty nice, but you know, obviously I think we'd all prefer to have fans, there's no doubt about that, but it's really not too bad without them so far.

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it's great. First of all, we're all so grateful for Aneel stepping in and Workday helping the TOUR out to put on the Workday Charity Open. It's fantastic, and obviously big thanks to Jack for letting us use Muirfield Village, as well. Yeah, I'm looking forward to the week, and it's actually -- I know it's not been done for a while, but it is great to actually stay in the same place for two weeks and play a tournament, to be honest.

#### **Q. Is there a sense of low pressure, less pressure?**

THE MODERATOR: I know one of the questions you'll probably get asked more about is your caddie this week, Jim Mackay. If we can just get a few comments on having him with you this week.

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I wouldn't say anything pressure-wise. If anything it's more reaction-wise, I guess, watching the first week on TV the close of play when I think Xander or Daniel holed a long putt coming down the stretch and it was just silence. I think it's like a couple well-dones from the caddies and the other players, but yeah, I think that is probably strange, given that if it was a normal event with fans, the crowd would be going wild. I think that's something that we're all getting used to.

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it, obviously. Everyone knows what he's achieved in the game with the players he's caddied for, obviously particularly Phil, but yeah, I mean, he got in touch with me and asked if I was looking for a caddie, and we had a good conversation. Yeah, I'm really excited to sort of have him on the bag for the next two weeks and see how we get on.

But yeah, it is a little bit different.

THE MODERATOR: We know you were one that came over and quarantined yourself for a couple of weeks. If you could just kind of talk us through a couple of highlights of that process and your decision to have done that.

#### **Q. I want to ask you about the Bones thing. How did that exactly happen? He reached out to you? And if that's the way it happened, how surprised were you that somebody of his stature had reached out to you?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I mean, it was important for me to come over. I was desperate to get back playing again. It was important for me to get back playing, and obviously with the World Rankings starting, FedExCup, everything else that was involved. I was just excited to come back and start playing, really. It was an easy decision. I was happy with quarantine.

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, he did, yeah. I was shocked, yeah, honestly. I was absolutely shocked. You know, like I said earlier, everyone knows what he's achieved. Everyone knows sort of his place in the game and how well he's done. You know, even just walking around here is sort of -- people are excited to see him back out and on TOUR. For me, I was very taken aback. I know Aneel from Workday, he sort of put in a bit of a word for me, as well, because at the time my normal caddie, Billy Foster, he's back in the UK, and he sort of knew that I was looking for someone for a couple weeks.

For me, going out and being careful, you wear a mask, you wear gloves, hand sanitize, be careful, and it's okay. I

I think Aneel sort of helped out with that, as well, and then



obviously Bones got in touch. He sort of texted me, and yeah, we took it from there really.

**Q. When his caller ID popped up, were you like, is this a joke?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: No, I mean, he texted me. He texted me saying -- and I was surprised. He mentioned that he'd spoke to Aneel and I was looking for a caddie. When he mentioned that, I thought no one could be making it up. So yeah, we sort of exchanged a few texts and figured some things out, and then yeah, and here we are.

**Q. Have you been out with him on the course today, and what's it been like?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: No, not yet. Not yet. We're going to go out in a bit after this. But yeah, it's been great so far. Learnt a few stories, which is always interesting, but yeah, just been pretty easy so far. Slotting in nicely.

**Q. Any Phil stories?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Not yet. Not yet. We've got two weeks to get all those out of him.

**Q. Regarding the course, this is a Jack Nicklaus-designed course. He's designed well over 400 courses, but probably Muirfield is the one that is the most associated with him. What is it that you like best about a Jack Nicklaus-designed course and this course in particular?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I can't comment too much about this course, unfortunately. First time I played was last year. I can't really remember it too well. There's a few holes that stand out to me.

But the big thing for me that I'm also a member at his place in Florida at the Bear's Club, and I know I've played a couple of courses that he's designed all over the world, and the thing that stands out for me is a lot of run-offs off the green. I think that's sort of a bit of a -- I don't know if it's a bit of a signature or not, but I know the couple that I have played, that is the case.

The golf holes that I've played are always fantastic. Each hole is different. It's not just monotonous and sort of a bit dull-like. A lot of courses can be.

You know, he's a good enough player to know what a good golf course is, so yeah, I enjoy coming to play here in particular, and then obviously the place I play in Florida, as well, it's great to play down there.

**Q. What was Billy's reaction to hearing that Bones was going to be on the bag, and can you give us a sense of when he'll be joining you?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, Billy was fine with it. We talked about Billy coming out for the WGC FedEx, so my big thing was that for him and me, I wanted him to feel like he was safe, obviously, coming over here. Didn't know the procedures at first. Wanted to get -- it helped him having me get used to what goes on here, what happens, and I can feed that back to him. So that was really why Billy stayed over in the UK. Like I said, he knew that I had someone for the first three weeks, Cayce Kerr, and then these two weeks got Bones, and he was fine with that because we both knew that -- we both knew that the FedEx was sort of the time he was going to come out.

**Q. Kind of looking ahead to that event, are you a person that likes to play the week before a major championship, and if so, how did you develop your system of liking to play before or not?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, for me it varies. It really does. I don't really -- I've never played the week before Augusta. I just like to either go there just the week before, go and see the course, what's going on, or just sort of mainly just rest because mentally and physically Augusta seems to take it out of you a bit more than most, or more than the other majors in my opinion.

But you know, the other majors, it tends to just fall in periods where the golf courses beforehand, they either happen to have suited my game or just want to get in a flow of golf really in the time period. I know at the start of the year for Augusta, I played a lot of golf before then, so it is kind of good to sort of have a week rest beforehand and sort of get ready, whereas the others it sort of -- they just kind of just flow into a better rhythm in my opinion for myself, so that's why I tend to play before.

**Q. Does it change at all seeing a WGC before a major? Does that impact you at all?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: No, not particularly. I played pretty well there last year, so I'm actually looking forward to playing there before to hopefully sort of get some confidence going into the U.S. PGA and sort of build some momentum. I was pretty happy to see a golf course I played well round be the week before a major. That was nice. Yeah, we'll just have to see really. Obviously it's all a little bit different this year.

**Q. What's your flavor of milkshake and how many do you think you're going to consume in the next two weeks?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Well, I don't think my trainer will be listening to this, so I'll be having plenty, particularly now with Bryson. I think everybody has got to be bulking.

**Q. Having Bones on your bag, does that alter your attitude at all, having somebody who's a world-class caddie just like Billy?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I have to admit -- how do I say this without disrespecting my previous caddies, basically. When Billy first came on the bag, I had the same feeling as having -- I mean, I still have the same feeling with Billy on the bag now. Just having someone who's achieved so much, has so much experience, it kind of makes you feel better about your own game that someone of that stature has belief in your game. So for me, it absolutely gives me confidence going into the week. Having Billy, having Bones, I had Cayce Kerr the last three weeks, who's worked for some great players, as well, it really sort of makes me -- yeah, it makes me look forward to the week even more to be honest just because I feel like I can -- I have a little bit of extra confidence, I guess. And it might be false confidence, but either way it's certainly a big help in my opinion.

**Q. Going back to the fans not being on-site, are you going to play the rest of this year with the anticipation of playing without fans?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, for sure. I'm hoping by maybe Augusta that the fans might be allowed in, particularly because I know my parents really want to come watch that one. But I'm hoping by then we'll have some fans and then that might lead us to a few fans later in the year back in Europe. That will be nice, and hopefully things with corona have sort of moved on and things are getting a little bit better.

**Q. Will you be having a whole lot of conversation before every shot like Bones and Phil used to have?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I don't know yet. I'm yet to get on the course. So we'll have to see. But I tend to talk a lot with Billy, as well, so I would have thought it would be pretty similar.

**Q. What are the advantages of living in the same place when you're on the road for two consecutive weeks?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: That's a good question. I don't mind hotels. I really quite like hotels, so I just feel very comfortable. And to be there for two weeks straight is pretty nice. You don't have to move. Nothing is too different. You know, also you get a week of competition on

this golf course and then you get another go at it the following week to sort of right your wrongs of the first week. Yeah, that should be good, as well. I'm looking forward to that.

**Q. Back to your point on playing consecutive weeks there, do you think it would be awkward at all to have a different setup going week to week? What kind of an adjustment do you think that's going to require?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think -- I have to admit I think that could be quite tough. I don't know, I'm not saying this is how I would do it, but I feel like the first week you would probably make it a little bit more scorable, you would move tees around, move tees forward, and then obviously traditional Memorial setup would be back for the second week. I have a feeling that's probably what's going to happen. But you know, I don't really know.

But I think it's definitely tough because a lot of balls are going to be ending up in the same area. I'm hoping that we play Jack's local rule like we do in Florida and if you end up in a divot you get relief. But yeah, I think it's going to be interesting for sure. I'm sure it's been thought through.

**Q. You've talked enough about fans already; I'm still trying to get my hands around how different that'll be at a major. In your experience. In the last say five years, and I'd almost leave Augusta out, by the way, but how much does noise and size contribute to energy and pressure and all the things that go into a major, and how different do you think that'll be at Harding?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, definitely. I definitely think it will be different for a major. There's no doubt about that. You know, just from people watching you on the range, you've got a lot more people watching on the range than you do at a normal TOUR event. I always find that that's a big difference. So that will be strange.

And then like you say, once you get on the course, I've not quite played well enough to sort of get myself fully in contention and really feel the difference that the fans make yet in the other majors. For me, again, I can't really comment on how big a difference it's going to be, but you know, I know I remember playing the Open last year and sort of I was probably on about 12 when Shane was coming down the first few holes, and the noise there, that was a different level, obviously. It's a bit different because it was in his home country and it was sort of strong support for him. But things like that will be missed for sure.

**Q. Matt, following up again on the fans, were you disappointed or relieved or what was your feelings**

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

**when you found out that the Memorial would not have fans, that it was going to be the first tournament with fans, and just your thoughts on that?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, no, I was a little disappointed for sure, but my main concern is being safe. I have to admit, I think it's the right decision for sure to not have fans for the time being. I think things really need to calm down. Obviously been watching the news and things sort of have ramped up again a little bit over here. You know, it's all about -- my opinion is all about being safe and stuff like that. My girlfriend was planning on coming up, but even before the announcement of no fans, we were sort of discussing flying commercial, the potential of catching something on that and then giving it to me, I give it to a few people, and it's just not smart for the time being. You know, we were extra cautious in that aspect, and then obviously the announcement was made about no fans. I definitely think it's the right way to go.

**Q. You talked about course setup. How odd is that going to be? It hasn't happened yet, I get it, but is it a certain advantage to some guys to have slower greens, faster greens? Have you thought that through? And also going from an easier setup to a harder setup, how that plays out?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it's going to be really, really interesting. I don't really know what to make of it. For me personally, whatever tournament it is, the harder the better in my opinion, set up the harder the better. I know the last few weeks, I think mainly because of the weather, it's been so soft at the places we've been playing, the scoring has been very, very good. Now I read something from Jack the other day that they want to sort of make the course setup here a little bit tougher, and they want to make it obviously fair but they want to make it tougher. I assume it's going to be pretty tough for the following week, but I think obviously they've only got a selected number of areas that they can use for the first week, so it's definitely going to be strange. But like I said, I'm sure it's been thought through. Tees are going to be moved around all over the place, I'm sure, and we'll just have to see how it is.

**Q. Back in March there was a lot of talk about Tommy Fleetwood having won on the European Tour but not yet on the PGA TOUR, and you're kind of in that same boat. What is your level of frustration at this point about not winning on the PGA TOUR? And what do you think has held you back?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, obviously I'm disappointed not to have won, but the way I look at it is I'm not playing full-time over here. Okay, I'm playing a fair

amount of events, so I've got chances, but I played full-time in -- I have played full-time in Europe, as well. So I'm sort of doing half and half. I've given myself a few chances now, and I don't think I'm far off. It's just sort of everything coming together.

Back at Harbour Town, drove it well and then putted well and just didn't quite hit my irons close enough over the weekend. And then the following week at Hartford, did everything great and just played the par-5, 13, in 3-over par. That's a hole that you should be playing 2-under par for the first two days and five shots better. I was T20 after two days and you're looking to push on.

I feel like it's close, but my level of frustration, I'm not frustrated. It's the way the game is. I've just got to keep working hard and sort of improving and trying to do the things that me and my team have looked at, and yeah, sort of just take it from there really and hopefully it will come.

**Q. What part of your game are you working the most on at this point?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: All around, to be honest. All around, really. Sort of just looking at my stats and everything for the time being, particularly while I'm on my own and I've got no coaches over here, it's sort of difficult to really delve into a certain area and really go for it just because technically it might need work, but there's only so much I can do myself. Yeah, I would say sort of balancing everything equally and just sort of just trying to make everything a little bit sharper.

THE MODERATOR: Matthew Fitzpatrick, thank you very much for the time, and best of luck to you this week.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®