

# The Memorial Tournament Presented By Nationwide

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Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

## Matt Fitzpatrick

### Press Conference

HALEY PETERSON: We would like to welcome Matt Fitzpatrick here to the media center at the Memorial Presented By Workday.

Mat, you're making your fourth start here. Just want to get some general thoughts about being familiar with this course and of course two seasons ago, having a third-place finish.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I like it a lot here. You come back every year and the golf course is in perfect shape. It's arguably one of the best that we play all year.

Obviously last year Jack made some changes, as well, which I think probably enhanced the course in a different way, and I'm just looking forward to going out there and seeing the course today and seeing how it's playing.

HALEY PETERSON: And going back to 2020, you had a strong final round. Any specific memories from the final round?

MATT FITZPATRICK: It was incredibly hard, yeah. It was windy, dry, firm, fast. Yeah, it was really, really tricky, and to play as well as I did that last round, yeah, it was pretty nice.

HALEY PETERSON: And already six Top 10s this season, and entering this week, you already have back-to-back Top 5s. So how is your game feeling?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it feels good. It's been a good season so far, and like I say, last sort of two tournaments I've played, I've played well, as well.

This week is a little bit different for me. The one time that I played well it was at a different time of year, and the golf course was very, very different, firm and fast. The other three times I played or two times I've played, it's been -- well, actually three times, I'm counting the Workday Charity Open in that, as well, as being really, really soft and sort of maybe didn't necessarily play as much to my strengths.



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So yeah, I'm going to be interested to see how it is this week and see how it plays, really.

**Q. Your record on the PGA TOUR suggests that you hope for really, really hard conditions, but when you won the U.S. Amateur in Boston and when you've won on The European Tour. Has it always been that way?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: When I've won, has it always been hard conditions?

**Q. Has it always been really, really tough?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: No, not really. I wouldn't say so. My most recent win, yes, at Valderrama, it's Valderrama. Everyone kind of knows what that is.

But I think of tournaments, the ones that I've won in Dubai, DP World, it wasn't -- I think it was 15- or 16-under that won maybe. No, it's not always like that I guess.

I guess sort of over here, I think that maybe when it is -- I feel like it is rarer over here that the conditions get really, really, really difficult. I just think whenever that seems to happen, I seem to play well and I feel like maybe players aren't necessarily used to that, sort of the firmness and fastness.

You know, when I first came over to America, every golf course you play, it's perfectly green and perfect condition. In the U.K., a lot of clubs can't afford sprinkler systems and can't keep that green lushness about the golf course. I think having that experience of playing on firmer, faster golf courses in the U.K. has definitely come in handy.

**Q. Do you think it's just as likely that your first PGA TOUR victory might come at a major just because you prefer it so tough?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I mean, I don't know. I guess that would be nice. That would be nice. I look at where I have played well in the majors, not many of them.

But U.S. Open seems to be my best event of all four of them, and I think that sort of says everything, really, what



everyone knows U.S. Opens to be, and I think that's sort of definitely something that I've enjoyed more than maybe playing some of the U.S. PGAs where they have been longer and softer and sort of not necessarily lower scoring, but just a little bit more, a different kind of toughness, I guess.

**Q. You've played here four times now. What is your approach to the 16th hole, which has been renovated quite a bit, and it's been pretty fierce a few years. What's your approach when you come to 16?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: The year I finished third was to hit into the bunker and try and get up-and-down. It was just playing that firm that day. But I can't really -- I can't really remember sort of what happened last year. I think maybe I hit one in the bunker and one on the green.

But you know, I know particularly back when I played well, I just remember the whole week, it was joust really, really firm and it was downwind as well, and it was incredibly hard to stop the ball. I think there was only one man that hit it within 20 feet, and that was Tiger Woods. I think says it all.

**Q. Have you been back to The Country Club since you've won the Amateur?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I've been back a couple times. I went back during Thanksgiving 2013, like literally a few months later. And then me and my caddie actually played the golf course 2020 in the summer. We didn't play the exact routing of like what it's going to be for U.S. Open, but it was good to see it, and it was in great shape. You know, it's going to be a great week.

**Q. Will you go back before the U.S. Open?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: No. No.

**Q. Do you think you have any advantage having won the Amateur --**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah.

**Q. -- I would imagine six rounds, even though it's nine years later, the field is going to be tougher, the course is going to be set up differently, but what advantage do you think you have going into this U.S. Open?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I think just having played the golf course so much, obviously it is going to be different. It's nine years later. Lots of things changed. My game's changed.

I just think having previous positive history on it, I feel like it gives me confidence to feel like, you know, no one beat me that week. And you go into this week, thinking, you've played so well here before. It's one of those things you feel like suits you and it just gives you confidence going into the week knowing that you can do well.

I sort of spoke a lot this year about playing golf courses that you're comfortable with, and that's sort of exactly what I've felt like with a lot of places and I feel like this falls under that category, too.

**Q. Young European, you probably grew up knowing Tiger, following Tiger. What was your thought of Jack Nicklaus? Was he just a legend in your mind, or what are your thoughts about Jack and coming up and knowing who he was?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, growing up, my dad always made sure that I knew that Jack was the best of all time, 18 majors. My dad was a big Jack fan.

I'll be honest, it's kind of been very surreal the last five or six years since I've turned pro just because -- I wouldn't say I've spent a lot of time with Jack but I'm a member of the Bear's Club in Florida and he's there regularly. I've had regular lunches with him where he's just come and sat down with me. You know, Jack Nicklaus is asking you, "Do you mind if I join you?"

"Of course not." It is pretty surreal.

We once did a golf day in Ireland, and he was kind enough to offer not just me a lift on his plane but my parents, as well. And you know, I feel like that kind of says everything you need to know about him, really.

But for me, I feel like he's such a great man and everything he's achieved in the game, and you know, his record speaks for itself. Obviously I've got very -- a lot of respect for him.

**Q. When you're having lunch with Jack Nicklaus, do you become more self-conscious, you know what I mean?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I'm just always interested in what he has to say, and sort of I was asking him the other week about what's he getting up to and does he still play. He does, and he said he's sort of spending a lot of time on his course design and he's telling me how many he's got in the pipeline and stuff.

I think that's absolutely amazing that he's still so busy with that stuff. I think he's still amazed that he's so busy with it

as well. I think he'd probably like it to calm down, I guess. The times I've had with him, it's pretty special.

**Q. A lot of the names we have heard associated with LIV Golf are older players. You're a young European, again; do you have any thoughts on whether that could be something you would entertain some day? Is it out of sight, out of mind? Where are you right now with LIV Golf?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Tiger made a great point at the PGA the other day in his press conference. He's there to create legacies and to win tournaments and to win majors, and that's kind of -- that's definitely I am where.

And it was interesting, it was kind of, you know, I'll be honest, some tournaments where I'm maybe not necessarily in it, and I can't win, then I do think, oh, you know, well, at least on the bright side I've made this much this week after the tournament's over.

I came away from the US PGA and literally couldn't care less about how much I made that week. I was just gutted that I didn't win. I had a chance and I didn't take it, and that kind of said a lot to myself about myself that that's all I'm bothered about out here.

You want to have records, I want to win tournaments, and for me, that's why for now, the sort of LIV Golf doesn't interest me. In five years, if all of a sudden that becomes the main tour, then obviously you sort of rethink your options. But for now yeah I'm out here wanting to make sure I've giving myself the best chance of winning tournaments, winning majors and going about my career like that, really.

**Q. This is the first time in I don't know how many years that Tiger nor Phil have been here. I'm sure you've gotten this question in a variety of ways in other tournaments but as a guy growing up watching those guys, does it feel like -- I'm sure the Patrons feel it but do you guys kind of feel it when they are not in the field?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I don't, if I'm honest. I don't. I'm just trying to concentrate on myself and stuff. It's more the opposite that you know when Tiger is playing. It has all of a sudden, he's on the range, the range has a different feel. That's the difference for me when they are playing, particularly Tiger.

But when they are not, it's kind of just like, I don't really think about it to be honest, no.

HALEY PETERSON: Unless there are any others, I'll wrap

it up with one. Have you been able to speak with your brother, Alex, since he's been able to wrap up his collegiate career with Wake Forest?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I spoke to him. He's happy with the way his college career was. Yeah, unfortunately he finished sixth on the rankings despite some discrepancies. So we'll see about that. But you know, he's enjoyed his time and I think he's looking forward to his next step, really.

HALEY PETERSON: Thank you, Matt, for joining us and we wish you the best of luck this week.

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