

The Northern Trust

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Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

Matthew Wolff

Eric Andersen

Press Conference



holes when usually they're later in the round, and like the risk reward, it's just you take on that risk and you can get rewarded, but it can also go the other way. I wouldn't be sitting here if it went the other way. So I'm glad I got the reward along with the risk.

ERIC ANDERSEN: For sure.

THE MODERATOR: Matthew, your approach allowed you to birdie over 54 percent of the Aon Risk Reward Challenge holes. Your par-5 at over 45 percent. Go for the green success rate, 16 percent higher compared to the field. So many amazing stats throughout your season. Are there any Aon Risk Reward Challenge holes and specific decisions that stood out to you throughout the season?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I think one of my favorite Aon Risk Reward holes is 15 at Travelers. I just think it's such a good hole. It's coming down the stretch. What I love about it is I love those drivable par-4s that are those Aon Risk Reward holes because it's just -- it's set up so perfectly to where, if you take on that risk, that you will get rewarded because par-4s are not supposed to be driven, but if you have the ability to and you're willing to take on that risk and try to step up and hit that shot, you can get rewarded.

But I also feel like, if you don't pull off that shot, it could definitely -- you know, like it's a break your round or maybe even tournament if you're trying to go for the lead, and I think that's what is so amazing about this hole -- or this challenge is because it makes you really step up and hit the shot and commit and take on that risk.

It just shows that there's much more to going about golf than just hitting the shot. It's about preparing and looking at the statistics and seeing everything, where people make birdies from, where people make bogeys from, pulling all that together, and on top of that, just your feel of what you feel like you should be doing and putting all those factors together and making the best decision, it's not always easy, but at the end of the year, it seems like I made the right ones.

THE MODERATOR: Absolutely you did. Players on the PGA TOUR obviously have very different approaches. Can you talk about how you build your strategy specifically to these challenge holes?

THE MODERATOR: We're going to go ahead and kick things off. We're going to do the first five to ten minutes recognizing your award as the Aon Risk Reward Challenge winner, and then we'll get into the tournament press conference questions.

So we're excited to make a big announcement for you today. You are the 2021 champion of the Aon Risk Reward Challenge with a \$1 million prize for the PGA TOUR. To turn it over and welcome you and thank you and congratulate you, I'd like to introduce Eric Andersen, president of Aon, who's joining us today.

ERIC ANDERSEN: Thanks, Laura. It's great to be with you all today.

First off, Matthew, congratulations. We're so happy to have you as our Aon Risk Reward Challenge champion. It's been inspiring for all of our colleagues around the world to watch you compete on the challenge holes, especially as the competition got tight and started to really become very competitive as we went down the stretch.

Watching you play, seeing your strategy, using your team, how you put yourself in a position to make the decisions that really -- it really speaks to what we're also trying to do with our clients, and it's incredible to see that your approach has paid off in the way that it has. So really congratulations. Really excited about it.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, first off, it's nice meeting you, Eric. I appreciate you for what you do and for Aon and putting everything on and allowing me to do what I do and making the best decisions and getting rewarded for that. So I appreciate that, first and foremost.

Secondly, yeah, it's an honor to be the 2020/2021 Aon Risk Reward Challenge champion. It's a season long race and felt like a really long season this year. It was great. I just think, like you were saying, making the best decisions, and especially coming down on those holes. Those are the



MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, I think I'm a very aggressive player. I feel like there's a lot of times when I try to take on that risk. You'll see that in a lot of players, such as Brooks Koepka, who I know was last year's Aon Risk Reward Challenge winner. I think just being that aggressive mindset, knowing that you can pull off that shot, or feeling that confidence that you can pull off that shot, it really helps me when I get to these holes because, even though the shot may require a little more skill or a little more kind of thought going into it, I feel like at the end of the day I have that confidence and I have that ability to pull off those big shots when they're not easy.

To me, it was just really knowing that I could -- you know, having the confidence in myself and knowing that I could step up on those hard holes and take a risk and know that it was going to be -- or I had a good chance of getting rewarded, which was don't always feel that way, but it was a nice feeling.

THE MODERATOR: I have a last question, and that goes toward both of you. This is the third year of the Aon Risk Reward Challenge across the PGA TOUR and the LPGA TOUR. Eric, you launched this in 2018 and made the decision to support the challenge across both tours and anchored it with the \$1 million for each winner.

Can you first tell us, Eric, about the significance of the program and gender equality in sports, and then, Matt, we'll talk about what it means to you to have this challenge across both those tours as well.

ERIC ANDERSEN: Sure, Laura. Listen, the Aon Risk Reward Challenge for us, we really wanted to do something that really showed our commitment to what we were trying to do around inclusion and diversity both within our firm but also within our communities.

The winners of this Risk Reward Challenge, how they approach the shots, as Matt was saying before, really has nothing to do with gender. It's around skill. It's around preparation. It's around working with your teams. It's about using that right risk reward balance that's so important to winning like you have.

For us, it was an easy decision that we wanted to back up our challenge with a financial commitment that was equal across both the women's tour and the men's tour. We're really excited about it. We've gotten great feedback from it, not just from our own colleagues who were excited, but also our broader community. So we're really excited about Matt for sure and also who's going to join him in November with the LPGA TOUR winner.

THE MODERATOR: Matt, what does it mean to you to

have this program launched across both the LPGA and the PGA TOUR?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, I think just kind of echoing what Eric just said, it's more than just the gender or the skill that you have. It's about the decision-making and the thought process going into it and also the hard work. No matter what gender you are, no matter what skill level you play at, at the end of the day, taking those extra steps and looking at the statistics and going out there and getting a feel for the hole is -- that's what an athlete does.

And being able to -- you know, for Aon and everyone, just forget about gender and make everyone equal because, at the end of the day, I put in all the work that I do in order to make the best decisions and play the hole -- not only the Aon Risk Reward holes, but every hole as well as I can, and they do the same thing. They put in just as much work. They put in just as much time. They go through the statistics and try to make that best decision, and they should be rewarded just the same as we are.

I think that it's really important for other athletes, especially female, to see that and know that, you know, to keep working hard because people will realize that, and Aon is one of the first to do it.

I'm sure there are plenty of others that have the same rewards and stuff like that, but not many that I've heard of. So it's really cool what Aon's doing, and I'm excited as well to see who's going to join me in November with that trophy.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you, Matthew. Thank you, Eric. We're going to turn it over to our media here at the Northern Trust, but congratulations again on your award this year and all your hard work.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Thank you. Thanks again, Eric. I really appreciate it.

ERIC ANDERSEN: You got it. Well done.

Q. You've now played, I think, six times since you came back at the U.S. Open. Just wondering how are you doing mentally and personally? How are you handling life on TOUR differently than you were before?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, it's still a grind. I'm doing a lot better. I am. I feel like I'm starting to feel like the results based -- or the performance doesn't so much affect the person that I am, and I can still be friendly to fans and talk to people and smile and have fun out there and enjoy all the hard work that I've put in to be where I am today.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Sometimes I definitely take that for granted, and it's hard when you're out there working really hard and feel like you're ready for a tournament and then going out and not performing, it takes a toll on you, especially when you're not playing well in that moment, and it might happen over and over again.

But I just feel like I've really got to stick to what I've been working on. I trust the people that are on my team, and it's definitely getting better. You know, I can't say by huge amounts really quickly, but I know incrementally the scores might not be better, but I'm feeling better. I'm happier. And I'll look to keep on being happy.

Q. And with what happened with Naomi Osaka and Simone Biles, it does feel like there's a momentum to addressing these mental health issues in sports. Do you feel like there's momentum in that way, and did you notice support from other guys on TOUR for stepping away the way you did for a little while?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Absolutely. I feel like stuff is starting to go that way. What you said about Naomi Osaka and Simone Biles and stuff, I want to move that to what Rory said. He was at the Olympics, and they asked him about Naomi and Simone, and I think his quote on that was so powerful and so true. It was mental illness or not being happy, that's an injury, and people don't look at it as that. People look at it as, oh, you're not happy, or you're a little screwed up in the head or you're just playing bad. It's like get over it, keep on working.

But it's more than that. It's more than just how you play. It's about enjoying yourself. There's so many guys out here that have such good attitudes, and even when they're not playing good, they're going out there, having fun, talking, laughing. They're enjoying themselves out there.

If you don't feel right, if you don't feel like you want to be out there and you feel like -- some of the feelings that I had were like getting up in the morning knowing I had to get out of bed and just like not being able to, being like I don't want to get out of bed. I just want to stay in my bed and not be in front of everyone and not screw up in front of everyone, and I think that what he said was really powerful because, if you don't feel a hundred percent right, no matter if it's physical or mental, it is an injury, and you should be able to rehab and take your time in order to get to a place where you need to be.

I feel like I had that time, and I'm looking forward to this off-season to working on it a little bit more.

Q. Hey, Matt, this is where you had your first playoff appearance two years ago. When you look back at two

years ago, is there something you're possibly trying to recapture or kind of those feelings you talk about? Did you have those in 2019? I guess how would you -- what are the things that 2019 Matthew Wolff, you want to get back in 2021 Matthew Wolff?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, I think just how free I was. Obviously, I made the cut here, but I didn't have that good of a tournament. I think just the aggressiveness and the go for it attitude and the everything -- not everything's going to be all right, but I'm taking on that risk, and if it doesn't always happen the way I want it to, not getting frustrated because I know there's going to be times when I do take on those risks or I play how I used to in 2019.

Just I would say more fearless if anything. It was going up and getting after every round and being like I'm going to go out and shoot 62 today and not being like I hope I shoot under par, and I just think that little mindset is something that I've been working on.

Yeah, playing here always helps even if it's only one time. You see guys out here, they've been playing for 15, 20 years, and they show up on Wednesday morning or Tuesday night, and they just play the Pro-Am and they're ready to go because they've seen it before.

It is nice knowing that I've seen this course before, and maybe subtle things on the greens or lines on tee shots that I can feel a little more confident with this time as opposed to the first time I played here. But I think at the end of the day, I'm just going to stick to my game plan and try to have a good time out there.

Q. With the fall, do you feel like you'll use that as a time to step away again and work on the things you talked about? Or is that a time, because you had a break, you could maybe play a little more than you would have attended if you played the fall season? I guess how do you view what you possibly want to try to accomplish in the fall?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, I think that my fix or what I'm working on isn't a quick thing to fix. It's not something that is a choice. It's not, oh, just be happy because if I'm working really hard and my results aren't good, it's hard to stay positive. The most important thing for me is to keep on working on it and make sure that negative results or bad days don't take away from the overall product of what I'm trying to do.

I think that I'm definitely going to take as much time as I can off in the fall to work on that and work on my game as well as my mental side and just being happy, but I do think that I'm ready to go in the fall. I think I'll have a couple

months off, and that will be a good time to reset and work on what I need to work on. Or my bad, a couple weeks off, and then play the fall, and then I'll have a couple months off.

It's a long season. The PGA TOUR, they play a lot of tournaments, and just like any other professional athlete, you play a lot of games in any sport that you play, and any down time that you can get is really important, and I think that's one thing that I've learned since I've been out here.

In junior golf and when you're younger, you feel like your motor always goes. As soon as you get out here and travel week to week and play a bunch of weeks in a row, you feel like your motor kind of wears out quicker than it usually does. Rest is just as important as practice, in my opinion.

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