

# Sanderson Farms Championship

Wednesday, October 2, 2024

Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Country Club of Jackson

## Matt McCarty

### Press Conference



SANDERSON FARMS  
CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Matt McCarty into the media center. Matt, how does it feel to be making your first TOUR start this week at the Sanderson Farms Championship.

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, I mean, it feels really good. I'm really excited for the week. Obviously after the third win on the Korn Ferry, just really excited to get out here and get going. But yeah, looking forward to it.

**Q. How has your time on the Korn Ferry TOUR prepared you to be a TOUR pro and specifically this last season, winning three times? How do you feel coming into this week after this past season?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, I mean, I feel good. It's weird because first start, I guess, but it's my 26th event this year. I've been playing a lot of golf, a lot of good golf recently.

I feel good coming into it, and I'm ready. Obviously earned my way out here, and very excited just to kind of see how it feels and see how I stack up against a lot of these guys.

But yeah, just looking forward to getting out here and competing all week.

**Q. Not only did you secure your TOUR card with that third win, but a few weeks ago you secured the No. 1 spot in the Korn Ferry TOUR points list. How does it feel knowing that you have gotten exemptions into the 2025 THE PLAYERS Championship and U.S. Open and earned some more playing opportunities with that No. 1 spot?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, I mean, it'll make next year, I guess, as easy as possible. Out of the gate will be nice kind of knowing I'm in the fields; exempt from reshuffle is awesome.

Obviously THE PLAYERS and the U.S. Open, this summer I was just happy to be exempt from local qualifying for the

U.S. Open, so now to be into the field next year will be really cool, and obviously at Oakmont with all the history and everything out there, it'll be a good challenge and exciting.

Same with Sawgrass, growing up and watching that event. It'll be a lot of fun. But looking forward to the opportunities ahead, and growing up in Phoenix, kind of having the Waste Management circled and being able to go out there with friends, family and that whole atmosphere will be a lot of fun, as well.

**Q. Starting with this week, obviously like you mentioned, making your first start on TOUR, what have been your first impressions of the course, and how do you feel going into tomorrow?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, it's good. The buildup here is a lot more than a Korn Ferry event for sure. But yeah, the course is good. I've kind of heard a lot from a lot of guys, just kind of the difference between Korn Ferry and out here, and I think this course kind of epitomizes that, four long tough par-5s.

This course doesn't really give you that many birdies. With the rough, Bermuda, pretty thick, fairways are at a premium.

I think it just tests every part of your game pretty well, and I think that'll kind of be this course and also next year, as well, just you've got to drive it a little bit better, you've got to hit your iron shots a little bit better, you've got to chip a little bit better and you've got to make some putts still.

Looking forward to it. I grew up on the West Coast, Arizona, so I have some experience with Bermuda, but I think being a little uncomfortable with that, especially for my first start will be good, and kind of teaching me and understanding what I kind of need to work on this offseason and going into next year, especially with some of these different types of grasses, I think it'll be a good first step in that direction.

**Q. Are there any players you've talked to this week or leaned on this week heading into tomorrow to help get**

**ASAP** . . . when all is said, we're done.®  
sports

## **you prepared and acclimated to TOUR life?**

MATT McCARTY: I mean, I feel like I've played against -- from all the Korn Ferry grads and guys the last three years out there, I've played against a good amount of this field, so I've got a good amount of buddies out here. Just kind of asking them questions about what's different, just bouncing ideas off of.

We played 18 holes with Mac Meissner yesterday. He's a good buddy. Last year, he made it out here a year earlier than I did, so it was nice to kind of be back with him.

But yeah, I mean, just kind of all these guys, and I think tomorrow playing with Kuchar and English, I don't know how many TOUR starts they have combined, but it's a very large number, I'm sure. It'll be cool just to kind of see how they go about their business and talk to them, get some advice, but also just kind of watch and observe and understand that that high level of golf they've been playing for a long time is not a mistake, so kind of learn from them and just watch, honestly, will be kind of cool, as well.

**Q. The last couple months have been, for lack of a better term, a whirlwind with three wins and earning your promotion to the TOUR. Have you had a chance to reflect on your last season and what you achieved and what making this start shows for what you were able to do on the Korn Ferry TOUR this year?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, I mean, I think last year I was really close to getting my card. I think I finished like 34th, 35th, but missed it by like 40 points. So this year just like spending last offseason working on a few things, but also this year getting in contention a little bit more and honestly learning how to win.

But after my first one in Springfield, to keep that level of golf going and keep the pedal down and refocus from getting my card to finishing No. 1 to getting in the U.S. Open and the PLAYERS and honestly the three-win promotion and get out here as early as possible, it's just been kind of more changing goals around a little bit, but also just been nice to -- a lot of hard work paying off, but also to kind of keep it going.

I think that shows kind of where my game is at and how these last couple, three years have prepared me. I feel ready to be out here, so I'm looking forward to the week.

**Q. Growing up did you go out to many events as a kid, attending any PGA TOUR events?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, I went out to the Waste every year, so it was fun. It was always a lot of fun. I think a lot

more fun once you turn 21 than when you were a kid in high school.

But yeah, it was great, and we would do -- me and my buddies, we would do standard bearing out there, so kind of being able to be inside 16 was pretty cool, especially at that stage. Then get out to a few events here and there.

Me and my dad were lucky enough to get tickets to the Masters in '09, went out to the U.S. Open at Torrey in '08 when Tiger won, obviously. I think growing up having that -- seeing those guys, it's pretty surreal to be out here now. But at the same point, it's very exciting. I'm ready for it.

**Q. Do you have any specific memories from when you were a standard bearer in Phoenix, any specific groups you were following?**

MATT McCARTY: Actually Ken Duke was really -- he would talk to us walking down fairways and stuff. Nothing else that really stands out, other than just being inside 16. It's a lot louder when you're in the middle of it, I guess, than on the side, in the stands.

But yeah, just seeing how big of an atmosphere it is itself, just having that many people out to watch golf and everything is pretty crazy, it was fun.

**Q. For those less familiar with your game, where would you explain your strong suits are, off the tee or with your putter? Where in your game?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, I mean, I've gained a little bit of distance this year, so I think that was kind of a disadvantage to me the last couple years kind of coming out of college. So I think -- I'm not crazy long by any means, but long enough to use it to an advantage sometimes.

But hit a lot of fairways, just kind of consistency with ball-striking.

But yeah, I've been working a lot on my wedges and my putting, and I think that's gotten a lot better this year, and when you do give yourself a chance to be in scoring position to actually be able to convert, it's huge, and just make a lot more birdies but also just kind of managing the misses a little bit better lately, too, of, like, making pars easier on myself and not having to grind for par as much and limiting the bogeys I think is huge, especially on the Korn Ferry but definitely out here, as well.

Sometimes it's not the birdies that you do make but the bogeys that you don't, I guess, I think, to have a successful week.



But yeah, it's been a long couple, three years, a lot of learning experiences. I think a lot of little things add up, and you kind of don't realize it in the moment, but I think over these last few months, like he was talking about, reflecting and I've had some time to do that. I think the amount of growth that I've kind of seen within myself is very promising, and I think I've continued to get better every year the last -- basically since my freshman year of college. Just kind of looking forward to doing the same thing.

**Q. Sticking along those lines, are you someone who personally likes to set goals? You've had a very successful Korn Ferry TOUR season, but what goals do you have on the TOUR and what does success look like for this week?**

MATT McCARTY: Honestly, with the way that I'm playing, I think it's not crazy to put myself in contention and have a chance to win this weekend. But I think goals sometimes are relative, too. I just want to continue to play well, have fun, and then also just use the experience, kind of see if I notice anything within myself, especially this fall, having a few -- however many events I get into, but three, four, five extra bonus starts this fall kind of before the season gets going next year, and I've kind of got some free golf, like if I'm able to come win one of these, I can extend my status from one year to two and get in some more events and stuff.

But just looking forward to the experience and just the difference in golf courses and kind of the guys out here, and just have fun with the week, honestly. I think that's my main goal. I've been waiting to be out here for a while, and just to really enjoy this week and kind of take it in, as well, I think is important for me.

**Q. Who's on the bag for you this week and what's the relationship there?**

MATT McCARTY: Same guy that's been on the bag for me the last three years, Dev Doss. We went to college together. Lived together for a couple years. Good buddy.

He's been through it with me on the Korn Ferry, so it's his first TOUR event, as well. But we've done it our way and kind of grown, I guess, together, as well, which is cool. So it'll be fun for both of us to be out here.

But yeah, it's good having a buddy on the bag. We kind of give it to each other. Nobody's feelings get hurt when we're out there. It'll be fun.

**Q. Before this earlier today you were at the Children's**

**of Mississippi. What was that experience like visiting the hospital there?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, it's cool. It's crazy to see how happy those kids are and their attitude. It's very inspiring. We get to play golf for a living, and sometimes you take that too seriously. It really puts things in perspective when you kind of see kids and families like that that are going through some serious stuff. We're just out here hitting a ball around; it's really not that big of a deal. It is cool to see their attitude and what they're interested in and how tough and strong those kids are, honestly, too.

**Q. Any friends and family you're expecting to follow along this week?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, my dad, he's flying in tonight, and then my girlfriend has got to work this week, but she'll be in Friday night. But yeah, it'll be exciting, and it'll be fun to kind of have everybody together. Yeah, looking forward to it.

**Q. Being so young, are you proud of what you've achieved, and what keeps you motivated and going?**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, I mean, I guess I'm about to be 27, so I guess seeing some of these guys now -- I'm not that young. But yeah, it is cool. It was nice to kind of get my Korn Ferry card right out of college and hit the ground running and have these experiences, I guess. Obviously spent three years on the Korn Ferry, but feel like I've made it out and made it here in a good amount of time.

I think it just kind of proves the work I've put in, my process, and kind of how I practice and stuff. But yeah, it's cool to think about, I guess.

**Q. I'm kind of new to golf. I'm still trying to figure out the ropes and learning the different aspects of the sport, so what advice do you have for someone who's learning and getting into golf?**

MATT McCARTY: I mean, I think just kind of gather as much information as you can and then see what works for you. But at the same point, it's like anything; it's a sport. It's supposed to be fun. Just have fun, enjoy it. That's half the battle. Don't beat yourself up too much if you have a bad day or anything. You can learn something from every day. You probably learn more from bad days than good ones, honestly. But just kind of taking that approach I think is helpful.

**Q. What's your favorite part about playing golf?**

MATT McCARTY: Making birdies. I mean, I don't know. I

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

think the competition is my favorite part, and the challenge that it kind of brings internally. Even when you're practicing or playing, you're kind of always competing against yourself, but then now being out here and being able to challenge myself and kind of what I have against the best players in the world will be very exciting. But that competition aspect, and it just helps -- it's the reason why you kind of get up in the morning and you want to work hard and everything, and that aspect of it is the best. It's a lot better than sitting at a desk, too. It's a lot of fun to be out here and traveling and going to cool places. There's a lot of life experiences that come along with it and the people that you meet and the camaraderie as part of the game itself is a really nice aspect. You meet a lot of cool people, go a lot of cool places and spend a lot of time outside.

**Q. With this being your first PGA TOUR event, I don't know if you do have any nerves, but if there are any, would that settle off after the first hole? If there are any nerves, have you --**

MATT McCARTY: Yeah, we'll kind of see when I step on the first tee. I think there's always nerves, especially like golf you're kind of only as good as the last round or last tournament you play. But yeah, just proving to myself that this year that I've had and to be out here, I want to prove to myself that I can play with these guys and play well out here.

I think all that pressure, nerves, it's all internal, and I think channeling it from being nervous and excitement is the same feeling. Just telling myself I'm excited to be out here and embracing that and leaning into it will be part of the fun this week for sure.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.

