

THE PLAYERS Championship

Saturday, March 11, 2023
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA
TPC Sawgrass

Tommy Fleetwood

Quick Quotes

Q. Good playing. What is it about this crazy place that agrees with you?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I mean I've had my fair share of good rounds and bad rounds around here. I enjoy the golf course. I think you don't find anybody that doesn't think it's a great test of golf, that it's a great golf course. I think it's just so important to drive it well, and I've done that over the -- anytime that I've played well, I've put the ball in play with the driver and felt comfortable off the tee. Give yourself the chance to hit a lot of greens.

Today was relatively soft, so it was quite forgiving compared to the first two days where the course has been very firm. So it was a good day to score on. But, yeah, I've been lucky that I've had a few good rounds, and one more will do me no harm.

Q. Do you feel like you kind of had like the last five years, specifically sort of over the COVID break and everything, that you had a slight dip in form? I know you won at the end of last year, but how would you characterize sort of the last four or five years?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I haven't played to the standards -- definitely consistently I haven't played to the standard that I had in 2017, 2018 and 2019 and the start of 2020. I had a year stretch, I would say, sort of post COVID in 2021, I felt like I was poor, really, and struggled.

The thing is the standard's so high these days that anytime you're struggling, it's very, very difficult to build any momentum. It's difficult to keep confidence. The margins are so small, the standards are so high, so when you are struggling, it highlights it even more these days, I think than ever.

But last year I felt like I played very consistently without having -- I got the win at the end, had some top-5's in majors, so I had some good performances and sort of like quietly in a way felt like I started to play much, much better.

So far, this year's been the same. I haven't particularly



played great, but I haven't played poorly. But what I've lacked is rounds like today really where you just get on the right side of the game and you get on the right side of the course and you actually build a round, and that's sort of what I haven't done so far this year, but it's never a bad time to start.

Q. You said the standard "these days." Have you noticed the standard improve since you turned pro?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, for sure. I've notice the standard has improved over the last two, three, four years. I think players are getting better, and courses aren't particularly getting any easier, but the standard's getting higher, and you have to be really, really good these days.

I think it's noticeable, I think, throughout the tournaments and whoever's in the field I think anybody can turn up and win, which I think has always been the case, but I just think more so. Mistakes, I think, are highlighted, bad rounds are highlighted and you just have to have it together all the time.

Of course, you're going to play poor at times, and the best players are the ones that are the best at playing poorly, in a way, as well as being great at playing well. But for sure I think the standard is getting higher and higher.

Q. If you would have guessed how much how many shots easier you think today played versus yesterday afternoon?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Do you know the answer?

Q. No, I don't.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I mean, it was a lot easier. Even though the wind -- there was a bit of wind, it was just how soft the greens were. I don't know, two, three shots. I mean, I was making an absolute hash of it early yesterday in the round, felt -- I mean, I was -- I've putted so poorly early doors, and once I got it going, I was all right.

But it was a scorable day today, so if you were going to have a chance to contend, you had to do that today.

Q. The fact that you've never won on the PGA TOUR,

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

does that add a wee bit of incentive tomorrow?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No, not really. That's been a goal, a dream, an incentive as long as I've been playing out here. Yeah, sure, I would have loved to have done it by now. I would have loved to have done it multiple times. But I haven't, so tomorrow's another chance.

I think it will be great to go out there teeing off on Sunday with a chance to win THE PLAYERS Championship. I think that's an amazing feeling, and I look forward to that tomorrow. But I think what's important for me is to sort of play like the player that I want to be and be at that standard with the best players in the world and keep giving yourself more and more chances.

I haven't put myself in contention enough at the start of this year, so this is as good a time as any to start, and I'll see how we go tomorrow. But the more I can play like I want to play, the more I give myself chances hopefully and my time will come.

Q. You've had a chance to win here before. Is this course particularly uncomfortable on a Sunday just because of how it sets up?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I guess so. I think, you know, I think I can look back at 2019. They kind of show that one quite a lot on TV because Rory won it. So I've watched how that one unfolds plenty of times. I enjoyed it last time. I played all right, and then you just look at the back nine and a couple of mistakes that I -- or a couple of poor shots that I made.

It's tough winning any tournament, never mind a PLAYERS Championship. But you have to put yourself in that situation and test yourself and you learn from it.

Tomorrow I just want to go out and keep playing golf. You can't win it if you are miles back, so tomorrow I'm going to go out with a chance and we'll see how it goes. But sure, you look at the list of players that have won it, it's a who's who in golf. I would love to be on that. But there's a reason why all the greats have won this tournament.

Q. When Jordan was here he finished at 6-under, and he said I'm just going to go out and I have nothing to lose tomorrow. Clearly you're in a little different situation; it's a \$25 million purse. How do you approach it in the morning, and as you said, I'll just see how it goes. Well, if it's not going exactly the way you want it to, do you force it, trying to think maybe somehow some way I can win, or do I think at all about a good top 5 would be great this week?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: A good top 5 won't change my life. I'll go out and set out like I do every week and try and win the tournament. Look, we play for incredible amounts of money, and a top 5 would be -- it would absolutely be lovely. It would be a great result for starters, and it would give me a lot of confidence about my game, be another fantastic result, be a lot of money. Don't particularly spend that much money.

That would be great, but I think going out with a chance to win THE PLAYERS Championship is something that's very special and that's probably what I'll look forward to the most.

Q. As a DP Tour guy too, have you had a chance to play much with Min Woo Lee, and what do you admire about his game?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, he's a proper player. He's been around for, I don't know, two, three, four years now. He's played some really, really good stuff like the back end of last year, start of this year, he's been playing really well. He's young with a lot of talent. Hits it great. He's got a lot about him. I don't think people that play over on the DP World Tour are surprised to see him in contention in any event. But, yeah, he's obviously clearly got a bright future ahead of him.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports