

# AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am

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Pebble Beach, California, USA

Pebble Beach Golf Links

## Matt Fitzpatrick

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Matt Fitzpatrick to the interview room here at the AT&T Pebble Beach National Pro-Am. Matt is making his 4th start here. Coming off a T-6 last year. Just an opening comment on returning to this event.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I really enjoy this event. Last year I had a good friend on the bag and obviously had a good result, which was really nice.

Yeah, I just enjoy this. For me it's like a great event. This is kind of, even though I played in Hawaii this year, to kind of start my season and really get it underway, see how my game is at, see how I'm feeling on the golf course and go from there really.

THE MODERATOR: Maybe a more fun question, what was it like to get to play with Gareth Bale. What was that like?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it was really cool. First time I've officially met him. So that was obviously good to see him. Really, really enjoyed it. Asking him questions about football and he's asking questions about golf and stuff.

So we had a really enjoyable front nine and there's not many better places to do it than around here.

THE MODERATOR: Was his game as good as Jon Rahm made it sound last week?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I don't know. I don't know what Jon said. But, yeah, he's obviously a good player. He's obviously got a lot of talent. Yeah, he was impressive.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions out here.

**Q. Since your breakthrough at Brookline were you expecting any aspect of your life or game to be different that's maybe kind of stayed the same?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I don't know. I guess I just felt like I was going to be like pulled in a million directions, Do this,

do that, do this. I probably, I've been asked to do more things, but at the same time it's kind of just learning to say no, really. Kind of do what I feel is valuable. Do what's going to kind of help me and my profile, as well as helping my sponsors and their commitments that I've made with them.

So I wouldn't say there was anything kind of out of the ordinary. If anything one thing that it's made me realize is just that my time is really important. Just time management has been a really big thing for me that I've learned.

**Q. Can you give us an example of what you said no to?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: No, just all sorts of things. I don't know. I couldn't give you an example.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: No, might just be, can I do a 30-minute interview here or an hour, you know, some photos for a magazine here or something like that. Just little things.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I would say, yeah, yeah. Mainly appearances. Can you come and do this or whatever. No, I'm busy.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: No. No. There's not. There's a couple things that I want to do that I've not been asked yet.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Well, I'm going to question him this week if he'll have me on his podcast anyway. Jason Bateman's got a really good podcast. So, yeah, he's playing behind me. I didn't realize he was playing and I saw his name and I was, yeah, I was pretty excited to see that.



**Q. He knows who you are, right?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Oh, I doubt it. I severely doubt it. Yeah. (Laughing.)

**Q. I know you like football, but he probably likes golf, ore than you like football?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: It would be close, yeah.

**Q. I don't know if there's a good answer to this, but do you think he's more impressed with you for your golf?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: More impressed with him as his golf game or in his football game?

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: That's a good question. I think there's a couple of shots I hit today I think he was kind of like, Wow, you know, these guys are good, as they like to say.

We each have a running joke. So the first time I kind of got to know him a little bit he was looking to sign my brother. So I ended up having a conversation with him and his manager and he jokingly said to me, If you sign for my management company I'll not score three goals against your team. My team being Sheffield United.

Obviously I didn't sign. I'm happy with where I'm at. He decided to score three goals against my team. (Laughing.) Just by pure, obviously, pure chance. And I just remember being, watching the game and he scored all three and I was laughing. Obviously disappointed as well.

I got sent a picture. Normally, in football, after the game is done, if a player scores a hat trick, all the players in the team sign the ball. And I just got this picture of a signed ball from him. So, yeah, he's a pretty impressive individual, to be fair. He's achieved a lot in his game.

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, no, it was a bit of both. Just kind of see where my game's at. Given last year I had the whole of January off. I used that as a real good preseason, which worked really, really well for me. Made obviously a lot of changes.

This year was the same deal, but obviously Hawaii was an event I didn't want to turn down. I wanted to go play. Which I did.

So it was kind of a bit of a continuation of the season before, I felt like. I had not really planned on making any changes or anything before that. Even in my off-season I've not really made any changes, to be fair. Just kind of doing the same as what we were doing last year.

I think it was more of a one-off tournament that I kind of went to enjoy and stuff. Whereas, I feel like now it's back to work and stuff. The week after I was back practicing and getting ready for this next stretch now.

**Q. Are you going to do three in a row?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I will do, yeah.

**Q. Honda, is that one you never really played anyway?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I played it before and to be honest I would love to play it again. It's just too many in a row, unfortunately.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah. Yeah.

**Q. There's some, there was some discussion with Jordan earlier about the possibility of making this an enhanced event. Maybe the possibility of the pro-am maybe going away for a year. What's your thoughts on that?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think the pro-am would be -- I think for me once a year having a tournament like this that I play in -- although I play twice now because I play with my mom in the Dunhill -- I think it's fun. For one a year I think it's enjoyable.

I think it brings new fans. Whether it be celebrities, sports stars, business people. I think it brings new fans to come and see the golf and come and see what's going on. There's not really a better location than this to do it, I don't think. I think it's just a really, it's an enjoyable week.

In particular, like I say, for me this time of year it's a great start to my year to kind of just get my, see where I'm at and see what's going on.

I wouldn't necessarily want to see the pro-am format to go, because obviously we have a U.S. Open at Pebble as well. So that comes around every five years I want to say. So for me I'm happy with kind of the format that there is now.

**Q. Are you concerned at all that maybe these enhanced events it's going to get so crazy that you're going to be forced to do certain things you don't want**

**to do, tournaments are going to be forced to do things they don't want to do, like raise their purse 20 million dollars when really they're just as happy being a nine-million-dollar event?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Sure, yeah, I think that is definitely a concern, for sure. In terms of myself playing certain events I'm not really worried about that. If I have to go and play events that I've not really played before, that's not really an issue.

I think the big thing that has been talked about a lot with the players is we kind of want to play less. I do think there's too much golf, regardless of what level you're at. Having 53 tournaments in a 52-a-year cycle is ridiculous. It's too much golf.

I just think people probably need a break from it. They could watch golf every week from January to December. I think that's why I think having less, but having, getting the best players together more is obviously the way to go.

**Q. One other thing. At the U.S. Open when they were trying to figure out what name to put on the trophy it was between Matthew and Matt, obviously. When did you go from Matthew to Matt, if that's what you've done?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: At the U.S. Amateur I said, I asked them what's on the U.S. Amateur and it was Matt. But I've been Matt since I was a kid. Even my mom calls me Matt now. So, yeah.

**Q. That was an issue? I had no idea.**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Neither did I. It was a question that I did have to think about it.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I didn't want to take up any more of the lady's time. She already seemed pretty annoyed to be there, to be honest. (Laughing.)

**Q. (No microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: A hundred percent. A hundred percent. That was definitely the vibe.

**Q. You always put an emphasis on your game and kind of keeping out the noise. Obviously this week though with celebrities and a lot of A-listers and industry titans there's a lot of ancillary things going on. You also have a really good track record at this event. So how do you keep that noise at bay when it's**

**right there in your face this week?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: This week's perfect. I hurt my neck last Saturday. So it's, like it's still not a hundred percent. I don't feel like 100 percent. That's why another reason I'm kind of playing this as a warm-up week for me. It's just kind of see where I'm at. Hopefully, it's going to die down a little bit more. Like I can still play, but I'm not, I've not got like full speed or anything like that.

But, no, normally I'm just concentrating on things that I can control and I can do and just go through my same routine as I have done the last few years really in terms of how I practice and how I go about things.

I've kind of come off social media as well, which is, has been way better. It makes life a lot easier. I've got no idea what's going on in the world. But, yeah, it's definitely better.

**Q. With the Netflix series coming out, you obviously have a big part in that. Have you thought of how -- I mean, already your stature grew from Boston last year, but now that you're going to be on this show have you thought of the possible ramifications of that in terms of popularity and asks and things that can come with it?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I guess I thought about it a little bit, but not a lot. For me watching the Formula 1, the Drive to Survive series, that I really, really got into Formula 1 from that. So if that's going to have the same effect in golf, which I assume it probably will, to be fair, I think that's really exciting for our game.

It's obviously really exciting for me as well and sort of my profile. So it's something I'm just going to kind of have to see and sort of take in my stride, I guess and see what happens really. But it's exciting, I think.

**Q. What did you do to your neck?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I've had it like on and off throughout the years. But not exactly sure how I've done it. But it's kind of just -- it's just like stiff going through my right side. So just going through the ball is just a little bit more difficult than normal.

**Q. What kind of are you taking and how long have you been doing it?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I've just been having like soft tissue work and just doing like a good warm-up routine. I saw Tom here on the truck the last couple days. My trainer was with me last week as well. So that was fortunate.

But like I'm fine to play. I'm just, I don't feel like -- well I know I just don't have my normal speed, which is obviously disappointing.

**Q. Have you seen your episode for the show?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I have seen my episode, yeah.

**Q. And what's your thoughts?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I thought it was really, really good. Yeah.

**Q. Have you seen the other ones at all?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I've not seen any others, no. No, just my own.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah. Because I want to see what everyone else does. (Laughing.)

**Q. I'm missing something, sorry. I did want to ask you, you had something -- trying to think -- something quirky about getting your card over here for the first time. What was it?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I got it off -- I finished second at Bay Hill. That gave me unlimited invites. Then I just kind of got the rest of the points as the season went on.

**Q. I thought there was something like a new system that hadn't been in place.**

THE MODERATOR: Are you maybe thinking of the, moving forward, the top 10 not otherwise exempt on the DP World Tour?

MATT FITZPATRICK: No, no.

**Q. If it had been in place back then you would have been --**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I would have probably been here sooner.

THE MODERATOR: I think it was four years. I could tell you later.

**Q. Was the TOUR always, this TOUR, the U.S. TOUR, was it always where you wanted to be?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, yeah, I would say it is, yeah. There's no hiding that. I think, being completely honest,

not only wanting to play against the best and stuff, but growing up as a kid, I would come here or come over to the States and vacation with my family and play in America.

I love being here. I love living down in Florida. My life's over here now. I kind of, from a young age I wanted that to be the case. So to now play here full-time is obviously a dream come true, really. So, yeah, definitely wanted to be here.

**Q. Can't think of a nicer way to ask this question. There was a lot of thought about this new system, the leading 10 access to a card, etcetera, that Europe has become nothing more than a feeder tour. There's part of me that has wondered, has it not been that way for 20-odd years? In other words, I can't think of any players who want to kind of, as you say, play against the best as many times as they can and they want to be here. Is it just semantics?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think it's been difficult. I think the long and short of it is there's two things: Guys want to play for more money and guys want to play against the best players.

There's more money over here and there's more, they're the best players over here. That's just kind of the long and short of it.

Unfortunately, due to the pandemic and kind of everything that came with that, Europe struggled and a lot of things changed. They were in a good shape. Having eight Rolex Series events at eight, nine million and all of a sudden the pandemic comes along, wipes that completely out. I think we got two or three now. Maybe four. It's definitely had a change.

Obviously there's another player in the game that's kind of hindered that even more, which is obviously a big factor in it as well. But I'll be honest, I do think the strategic alliance is good. But at the same time I feel like there probably needs to be a little bit more done from the PGA TOUR to Europe. I think, I do think it's probably a little bit one sided for now.

But I think the thoughts of going into it and trying to figure out how it can work and kind of Europe can coexist and grow as well.

But for me, I'm just a player. There's more to it. I'm sure there's so much more to it with sponsors and all the other things that go with it that I have no idea about.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**



MATT FITZPATRICK: What could they do?

**Q. What could the TOUR do to help that out?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: That's above my pay grade. I've got no idea. I've got no idea.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: No, I generally don't know. I personally think there probably should be more PGA TOUR events in Europe and stuff like that. I definitely don't see an issue in that.

No offense to some of the places that we go out here, but going to Rome is a pretty nice place to be to play a golf tournament. Or Switzerland or France. You know, not just the location, but as we like to say, like "growing the game," you know. It's just a thing that I think is important and I think it would be really good to kind of take events over there rather than kind of just being like, Oh, well, the European Tour does that so we don't need to bother.

**Q. Obviously over the last year the structure of professional golf has changed. At least on the TOUR side players seem to have a bigger voice in how things are run. You've been one of those guys they have leaned on. Do you enjoy having that type of say?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, a little bit. A little bit. I wouldn't say I enjoy it massively. I'll be honest, I just want to turn up and play and just kind of carry on with what I'm doing. I don't feel like I've put enough thought into it to know what's best or what to do.

I know that Rory and Tiger are doing a ton of that to try and make it better for the players. It's actually ridiculous that Rory's playing so well and doing that. It really is. It is mind blowing, really. But I think other people probably have a little bit more going on in the head thinking about it than myself. It's not really something that I kind of want to get too involved in, I guess.

**Q. A lot of tournaments in Europe now, the purses are 1.5, 1.6, 1.7. If you weren't as lucky to be out here and you were there, would there be some of you that says, unless I play like really, really well, maybe this isn't how I can make a living?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: No. I think you can definitely make a living out there. Yeah, you can definitely make a living out in Europe. I don't think it's like that.

I think probably playing Challenge Tour, if you're playing Challenge Tour for a few years and kind of finishing middle

of the pack every time, then you're not making a living down there.

But I certainly think in Europe you can have a certainly a really nice life. You can play 25, 26 events a year and you play okay, you keep your card every year and tick along and that would certainly make a nice living, I would say.

**Q. What do you do for your schedule in Europe?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: My first one's going to be Scotland. So I'll play Scottish and then The Open Championship and then I'll play Wentworth. Right now that will be it for -- well, yeah, I'll probably play Dunhill with my mom again. So, yeah, that's it.

**Q. What do you need for Ryder Cup? Four?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. I honestly, I have no idea. I just play.

**Q. (No Microphone.)**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I tell you what, I will say this, if I make the team and I don't play a foursome, a four-ball, then I will happily not play a Ryder Cup ever again (laughing.) I'll give in if that is the case.

**Q. Have you expressed that to Luke?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Oh, I've told that to Luke, don't worry about that. Fortunately he knows, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Matt, thanks very much for your time.

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