

BMW PGA Championship

Wednesday, 18 September, 2024

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

Tommy Fleetwood

Press Conference

MATTHEW JOULE: We are joined by Tommy Fleetwood here at the BMW PGA Championship. You just played the Pro-Am. How is the course playing?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's beautiful. I played Monday morning. I always think the course is in great condition. It's so English, which is great. The course is in perfect condition, really.

It's one of the nice things, when you play somewhere, you have such a feel for the golf course, like you know how shots play and you know what's happened in the past on these holes. And that's one of the nice things about when you come to the same course time and time again.

Yeah, there's always new things that you learn, but you have experiences around there, and just getting a feel for how it plays is always nice.

Q. You've had success at every level of the game. You grew up playing links and you've proven that your game can travel no matter what the tours throw at you, you seem to succeed. But why is it that you think you've been able to take your links speciality and apply it to different venues where some others seem to struggle?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: That's a good question. I think there's a difference to how the courses play, obviously, between when, for us in the U.K. and Europe and playing amateur golf, we play a lot of links courses and then as soon as you turn professional that's not something that you have that much. I think certain people are gifted with a particular ball flight or a game that's going to travel, anyway.

But I think for me, I think I've always had a good sense of what I feel like I need to do to adapt and what I need to learn, and I think I've always enjoyed learning new aspects of the game, I guess, wherever I've travelled. I enjoy travelling and I enjoy seeing new places and new courses.

But I'm not sure. I've always worked hard, and yeah,



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there's definitely always elements that you can improve. But I've always enjoyed the journey of new venues. I think the game adapts from being at the entry level, what the game requires, for us, The Challenge Tour; and when you get on to The European Tour, and I think I've always kind of like -- you look at the first year I had on The European Tour and nearly lost my card and struggled to adapt to what it required out here. Had to learn that.

Once I got the hang of that, felt like settled on this so well. And then you get to the PGA TOUR which is a different style of golf again, and you just always have to learn on the go and work hard, which I think I've always done.

Q. You just played in a Pro-Am and played with Spiderman and his brother. The crowds were huge out there. Do you think golf can do more to tap into people like that, the Holland brothers, celebrities, Andy Murray, etc., just to grow the game even more?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I don't know. I don't have a great knowledge of what the game does in terms of, I guess, celebrities outside of the game that play. I think for us all out on the Tour you get engulfed in what you're trying to do week-in, week-out.

For sure, I think we do quite a good job, and at the same time, you know, you can always do more, and I think attracting golf, if you can attract it to a new audience at any given time, that's obviously a great thing. I think we are lucky that we have a sport where everybody can play. I think it's a lot of people's favourite pastimes, and people find it very relaxing, I guess.

Anything that we can do to all grow the game, and I think people that love the game, the celebrities, they can do a lot to attract the game to new people. It was massively busy and neat to see so many people watching.

Q. What was the score --

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think 31. I'm not sure how well I did at marking the scorecard. I always find it very hard in the Pro-Ams but that was the score I was seeing up there. We did well. We got a low one going. I did birdie the last two holes to get us over the 30 mark. It's always me.

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Q. Is one of the brothers better than the other?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I can see they are very, very competitive and hold a similar standard. So I can see it getting nasty on a match between them.

Q. I've asked this question to two of your colleagues who came in. Could you conceive of a Europe Ryder Cup Team without Jon Rahm in America next year?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Well, I think, you know, there can be a Ryder Cup Team without any particular player in it. I think everyone is well aware, the Ryder Cup is much bigger than any individual player, and of course, there's certain people that are a big months in terms of stat your and what their game can bring to the team.

But you know, I think if you look at the last Ryder Cup Team, there was a big deal made about who we were missing in the last Ryder Cup in terms of not even -- playing is one side and presence in a team room is another and we didn't have a lot of big characters in the last one. You don't want to lose anybody that you know that you can have there but at the same time, the Ryder Cup is much bigger than all of us.

Q. Another Ryder Cup one. Rory was in and was saying he think it is would be difficult now for the likes of Westwood and Poulter to be Ryder Cup captains just because they have been away for quite a while, probably haven't got the rapport with the players coming through. Do you see that as something else that's moved on?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I don't know if I've got the experienced sort of to say what would work and what wouldn't work. I think every -- of all of the Ryder Cups that I've been a part of, there's been a know to whoever has been the captain and the vice captains, whether they have been part of the Ryder Cups beforehand and then transitioned into vice captaining and then captaining. So I think there's always been a flow. Whether that always has to be the case, who knows.

But for sure, I think time moves fast and different people come through. I think it is important for the captain to have a great connection with the players for sure. Who knows, you know, in the future and what a team of players looks like and who that captain can be or will be. It's a difficult one, isn't it. Because I think there's clearly a few guys, like obvious names that have been such a huge part of Team Europe, and you can't take away what they have done for Team Europe over that period of time and the success that they have had.

But yeah, who knows what will happen in the future. Sure, I feel like with the last Ryder Cup, Luke was definitely the right call, and you saw how much anybody that was part of that team knew that -- not even just emotionally, but the right thing, it felt like, for Luke to carry on.

Players' opinions don't necessarily matter that much. Like the captain will have earned that right to be the captain but I think you have to have a strong current relationship with whoever is playing because it will struggle to work otherwise.

Q. Two things. One, do you think that the regulations maybe need to look at in regards to whether you have to be a European Tour Member to be on the Ryder Cup Team?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No. I think if you're going to play tore Team Europe -- in my opinion, you should be a member and a part of the Tour in some respect. I'm not saying it has to be necessarily super strict but following the regulations at the moment are the right thing to do.

Q. And Rory was in here and other players have said this in the past, the need to get golf to come back together, try to get some kind of agreement done. Do you feel that same way?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think it's important -- or I think pretty much everybody that has a passion to get the most out of their career wants to test themselves against the best players in the world. We did it this year in the majors, and so that's one side. And then I guess the fans' perspective; I guess you have to listen to the people that are so important to the game in terms of how the game grows and how people react to the game, what they want.

You know, getting the superstars of the game to may together more is probably in the best interest of the game. What that looks like, how many times do you that, whether is four enough or should it be, you know, eight or 20, who knows. But I think from a players' perspective, I think testing yourself against the best players is always a great thing, and you get a lot of satisfaction out of that if you manage to play well and see if you are from a fans' perspective and knowing what they want would be a good thing.

Q. You got a taste of being captain in the Hero Cup last year, how important is that now that Justin will have that opportunity?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I got dropped as captain. Again, I think it's important.

I think going back to Whistling Straits, on the plane home from there, one of the main sort of points that came up looking towards the next Ryder Cup, obviously wanting to do a better job, was we thought that we wanted another team event back, and that was important.

I think, again, you could learn, you see how players react in a team environment. You might get some partnerships out of that, as well. But also, again, you go back to Seve Trophy captains when it was that, EurAsia Cup captains, this is all part of a process that culminates in having the Ryder Cup Captain. I think that's a great addition, and I think just the whole flow and transition of what happens to being a Ryder Cup Captain I think is an important part of it for sure.

Q. Can I just ask about Fino, back on the bag now a couple of months. Great to see him back out there. For you, it's a dual kind of a thing as you have more than an employer/employee relationship, but also a friend going through something traumatic. Can you talk about what that was like and how good it is to have him back healthy?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: We went through a worrying time. We go back to the start of the year when he was really poorly for a good two or three months, which wasn't great. He was really struggling. I think anybody that was close to him, you know, had that bit of like worry at the time.

It all kind of -- you know, from when he got diagnosed to having his operation, probably felt like a lifetime to him but it was a quick-ish process, and then you are just focusing on the recover for him. He was up and about quick. He's a doer. He was up and about. He was talking a lot. He was in contact a lot. I think it was just keeping up-to-date with how he was doing.

Obviously didn't see him for a while, which was unusual. But I think once I got past that initial hope that the worst doesn't happen and hoping that everything goes right and you knew he was fine and on his way to recovery, he actually came back way quicker than any of us thought he would. Fair play to him there.

When he originally came back, it was on me. I really wanted to play well. I thought it would be a cool story if we did amazing when he came back, and I put too much pressure on myself. But it's been amazing having him back.

I think the Olympics was great for us, and we've done well since. I feel like we're back into a rhythm and a stride together, and it's been good. But I think everybody has just been happy to see him back healthy. I actually think he

looks better than ever. Looks healthier than ever, and that's the main thing.

MATTHEW JOULE: Thanks very much for your time and best of luck this week.

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