

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Friday, June 18, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Matthew Wolff

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Matt Wolff, 3-under 68. Two really consistent days of golf; sum it up heading into the weekend.

MATTHEW WOLFF: I don't know if I'd say the first day was consistent. It was very up and down, but, yeah, I ended up posting a decent score, and today was much better. I felt like I got a little bit more feel back. I felt a little more comfortable with my swing.

Like I said, there was a lot of good yesterday, but quite a bit of bad as well. Today I definitely minimized the mistakes and feel pretty good going into the weekend.

Q. You've been in this position before in a U.S. Open. Talk about the mental focus it will take going into the weekend.

MATTHEW WOLFF: The way I describe the U.S. Open to everyone is there's not one shot that you can finally like breathe and relax and feel like, oh, it's all right if I miss this a little bit because every single shot, every single putt, it takes all your attention.

After stepping off the course the last two days, I've been pretty drained, but I've been really trying hard to focus and keep my composure. More importantly, just be happy.

Q. I think you spent some time up there with Todd talking about some of the issues you dealt with before you got here. Bubba was in here earlier talking about the fact that he had actually approached you to talk about some of these issues. Could you, A, talk about what -- I'm not sure if you went to any kind of medical professionals and were diagnosed with any issue or not. Secondly, how comfortable were you when Bubba came up to you and talked to you about issues he's had and tried to help you.

MATTHEW WOLFF: No, I didn't see any medical professional, and even if I did, I don't know if I'd say it. Yeah, it's different. I feel like most people, when I first got on TOUR and had that early success, people were coming up to me just to kind of joke around and say what's up.

Now plenty of guys out here have been, if you ever need to talk, I'm here for you because, even though you may not know it, almost every single guy out here -- Bubba -- I don't know if he wants me to say this. The first thing he said is, I've retired five times in my career. When he said that, I was just like -- I was hopeless for five months, and I was really struggling, and just to hear that and know that someone of his caliber being at the top and winning two Masters, as much success as he had, everyone goes through it.

It's really awesome to see all the guys out here kind of just not trying to take me under their wing, but just to be there for me. If I ever needed to reach out or talk to any one of them, they were more than happy to talk to me. It means the world.

Q. In golf, a lot of guys don't talk about it. They won't talk about any injuries. They won't talk about anything that would think they'd give somebody else a leg up on them in some way, shape, or form when you're on the golf course. Is this -- because we don't know. You're a young guy. We don't know. Is it more something you've kind of put pressure on yourself, or is it you feel there's this pressure from the outside coming in?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I would say more the outside coming in, but I mean, obviously, I put immense pressure on myself. No matter how many bad shots I hit, if I hit one good, all the fans are going to be like, oh, that was so good, but to me I only see the bad. I think it's just -- to answer your question, I think it's everything combined. I think it's both the pressure of all the fans. Not that they're trying to put the pressure, but you want to perform for them. You want to go out there and play well and put on a show for them. You also have expectations for yourself and to play well. It's just hard to manage. It really is.

I'm learning every day, and I promise you I'm going to play bad and have a bad stretch probably somewhere, or multiple times before the end of my career. This is definitely going to, I think, probably make me a more well-rounded and just more complete and happy person because I've already went through it. Probably next time I'll be able to handle it a little better. Right now I'm just

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trying to come out here, enjoy myself, and be happy.

Q. After we talked on Wednesday, I was really wondering when you went to bed that night, what were you going to be thinking? What numbers were possibly in play? What could go really well? What could go really bad? I just wonder, when you put your head down Wednesday night, what were you really thinking about these two days?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, it's the fear. It's all managing the fear. What's probably the worst thing that could happen? I could miss the cut? That's really the worst thing that could happen, but your brain makes you think that you hit a bad shot and like the world's over or you're going to physically get hurt or something. That was not my worry, but it's just hard.

I'll admit, I mean, Thursday and even today, even after playing well yesterday, I was still like I wanted to stay in bed. I wanted to be like where I was comfortable, not in the spotlight. It's awesome that I came out here and played well, but I think more importantly, I'm just getting closer to being more comfortable and being happy and enjoying it. I feel like I've done a very good job of enjoying it, but I've still got a long way to go to keep a level head.

Like I said, I'll probably be working on the same thing that I'm working on now for the rest of my career.

Q. And I think back to Winged Foot and there was probably this perception of you as more kind of free wheeling, everything's great, everyone's having fun, and you were talking about football scores on the day of --

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, final round, yeah.

Q. How much of that was perception? How much of it was reality at that time? The last U.S. Open.

MATTHEW WOLFF: I think back then it was reality. Back at the U.S. Open, I had that fear of playing bad and kind of choking off the lead per se, but I think I was actually enjoying it. I was having a great time out there. I was playing well, so obviously it was easier to enjoy it.

Everyone -- I have highs and lows, and I think I was just at a low. Even though I haven't played good in every single tournament I've ever played in out on the PGA TOUR, I was in a good spot then and playing well. To be quite honest, I really -- I never played as bad as I've been playing the last five months from the time I picked up a golf club until literally five months ago.

I just didn't quite know how to deal with it. As good as my life is, 22 years old and on the PGA TOUR, there's also a lot of stress and pressure that comes along with it, and it got to me. Looking back on it, it's always easy to be like, gosh, you're just overreacting. But in the moment, it's much, much harder to be from an outside perspective, and that's kind of what I'm trying to focus on and just enjoying myself, which is good.

Q. Matt, obviously you're working on things the last couple months, but what kind of work did you and George do to make this type of performance possible?

MATTHEW WOLFF: More mental than anything. I think that we worked hard on our swing. I went to California for probably a week or something like that. We worked on my swing and getting back to where I kind of -- the positions I was in in college and stuff, a little longer and more across. But at the end of the day, I'd say every single night -- every single morning, every single night, because I stayed with him when I went there. We just had two-, three-, four-hour conversations just about my thoughts and my feelings, like on the golf course, not like my relationship or everything like that.

We just literally went over every topic, and George was a sports psychology major in college as well. He knows a lot more than most people, and there's a lot of things that he's told me that have really helped me. It's hard to kind of put them in perspective or put them in play when you're in the heat of the moment, but I'd say it was more just talking and getting through this. I look at him more as a father figure than a coach, to be honest. I've been with him for eight, nine years now. He would do anything for me, and I'd do anything for him.

Just to show how much he cared, over and over again, he was like, dude, I don't even care if you pick up a club ever again; I just want you to be happy. Everyone on my team has been saying that, and it makes me feel really good.

Q. Given the time that you have taken off and that this is the most mentally challenging tournament, how surprised are you where you are right now?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Very. Yeah, very surprised. I know that I've played good golf in the past, but the low time that I had was pretty tough. My confidence was shot. I'd say I came here with very, very -- I'd say no expectations. I'd say my expectations coming here were to enjoy it and be happy, and I didn't even know if I was going to be able to do that. Thankfully, I am, as well as playing well.

It's a great position I'm in. I'm contending at the U.S. Open, and I'm very happy right now and enjoying it, but I

know there's going to be times that I'm not enjoying it as much or not playing as well. For those times, that's what I'm trying to work for and work towards and kind of prepare before it happens.

Q. Was there or is there anything wrong with your hand?

MATTHEW WOLFF: No.

Q. What's interesting is, if you win this week, how does that change you, do you think?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I don't think it changes me at all. I can't express it enough that my scores up there, even though I'm happy right now, 4-under par, one off the lead or whatever, I really could care less about that right now. I know you might think I'm bulls---ting you, but I'm not. I'm really just out here trying to have a good time and enjoy myself.

Like I said, even this morning, I felt like I was struggling to get out of bed because I was just wanting to stay in a safe spot, and it's just hard.

Right now the absolute only thing that I'm focusing on is enjoying myself and being happy out there. It's probably not a coincidence that I'm playing well when I'm doing that, but that's the main focus this entire week and probably for a while.

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