

# The 151st Open

Press Conference

Thursday, 20 July 2023

## Tommy Fleetwood



STUART MOFFATT: Delighted to be joined by Tommy Fleetwood, 5-under par 66. Good start to the Championship today. How would you sum up your first round performance.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I started off a little bit, I didn't really get it off the tee that well on the first few holes, but once I got going, played the par-5 fifth really well.

One bogey made, actually a great golf shot, half club too much, and for the rest of the round just played really well.

Nice to get on a run on the back nine really.

But yeah, to be in the clubhouse now, to have played so well, it's a lovely feeling. I can rest up, start getting ready for tomorrow.

But yeah, first day, so this was a pretty good one.

**Q. I know you're a big Evertonian. At times did the crowd feel like Goodison Park? Those were some roars out there for you.**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, it was very cool, and I think you can't ask for more from the fans and the support. They were so great to me today.

I would love to play Goodison. I would love to give that a go. But yeah, they were great, from the first tee onwards, throughout the round, the way they were down the last hole there, the reception I got.

Such a special opportunity to play so close to home, but have that support and play an Open, glad I gave them some good golf to watch.

But for me, yeah, so, so cool for me to step out on the golf course and getting that kind of support.

**Q. The home Opens you've had before, Birkdale and here, you've got off to a slow start. This is exactly what you wanted, wasn't it, just to give the fans what they wanted?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah. I guess for any tournament, you just want to get off to a fast start. It's not really been my

strength recently. Started tournaments pretty slow, so to get something going today felt really good.

Honestly, from 5th or 6th hole onwards felt like I started hitting good golf shots and I had some chances, but my putts were close rolling at the hole. Just a case of finally getting on a run really through there.

Like I say, as first rounds go, that's absolutely the one you wanted, and to get off to a good start feels good.

**Q. Where would you put that in first rounds? Is that near your most enjoyable in a major?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: One of, for sure. Just a combination of everything really. One of the things that we've said this week is what an amazing time it is for us to be out on the golf course with that support, playing in an Open.

It's very, very special.

Whatever, it's always going to be a great time, having the support like that. But on top of it playing a great round it does feel really good. Yeah, it's up there.

**Q. Tommy, you played sort of consistently brilliant golf this year, and obviously forcing that playoff in Canada. Has that sort of sparked even more determination to play even better and to play so well in an event like this?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think whenever you have a good result, I think there's validation in the work that you're doing, and I think that of course that's what you want.

It's much better having good results than getting kicked in the teeth all the time when you feel like you're working so hard and you're doing the right things.

I think good results always spur you on and they give you the confidence to keep pushing on and doing those things.

I enjoy the game, and I enjoy trying to get better. At the moment we're obviously in this period where I have to be patient and trusting in what we're doing and show good results, and yeah, there's times where it could go either way, and it hasn't gone my way yet.



All I want to do is keep working hard, keep playing, and keep putting myself in position, and obviously it'll be my turn soon.

**Q. I know you touched on the fan response, but I was following your group around and I lost count how many times I heard in the local accent, shot, Tommy lad or come on, Tommy lad. Did you feel like you were at home with people?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Oh, yeah, yeah, it feels -- yeah, absolutely. I am one of them, one of the guys that's out there. I'm a fan of the game. I'm from this area. Yes I feel at home, and to feel that support, it means a lot.

Of course throughout the day, you can easily put too much pressure on yourself. You can easily try too hard. But just having that support and people egging you on, whether you're hit a good shot or a bad shot, good hole, bad hole. Yeah, just pushes you on, and very, very lucky as I said at the start of the week to be able to play an Open so close to home when we get to do it two, three, four times.

It's an amazing opportunity and an amazing thing to have the chance to do.

Yeah, they've been great, and absolutely the northwest is where I'm from. I'll always be a northwest boy, and to have so many people out there from the area supporting is really, really great.

**Q. Given what you were speaking about yesterday and how much this week means to you and your family, how were you out there on an emotional level today?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, it was great. I enjoyed the round. Like I say, once things started to flow and started to play well felt very in control of my game. Stayed very patient. Felt like hit the right shots at the right time, and yeah, take it day by day, shot by shot, and enjoy sort of each moment as we're going through the week.

Special week, regardless.

But yeah, felt really, really good out there.

Any tournament really, but majors, just to get off to a good start and be in a good place like that, it's really important really for the rest of the week.

**Q. We talked about Southport, Hillside and everything this week. I wondered if you had thoughts on Christo winning at Hillside and how those two might translate given you two are at the top of the leaderboard?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, funny our game. I actually

watched him on TV. My boys wanted to watch the British Amateur. Watched him play, and then yeah, very cool for him. What a great round. Sort of seeing an amateur's name up on the leaderboard is always something that's so special about major championships or anything like that. You're watching somebody's career start to blossom.

Whoever that is, I think all of us that love the game are very, very happy for them.

**Q. Do you see similarities between Hillside and here?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I know Hillside, that area's links golf courses, so that's the biggest similarity.

Yeah, I mean, that might be it. Both courses pretty demanding off the tee. Hillside is a bit shorter than this one. This one plays very, very long.

I think in general if you have the ability to play well on links golf, you can sort of adapt to any golf course, and I think for anybody sort of recent golf on links golf. You see so many people now playing the Scottish Open before The Open, and I think just that feeling of it and the way the courses play, I think if you get familiar with it and if you seem to play well in those, it's obviously going to follow at some point.

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