

NW Arkansas Championship

Thursday, September 28, 2023

Rogers, Arkansas, USA

Pinnacle Country Club

Brooke Matthews

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, hello and welcome everyone to the 2023 Walmart NW Arkansas Championship.

I am joined here by one of this week's sponsor's invites, Brooke Matthews, and also former University of Arkansas player. Welcome to the tournament. How does it feel to be here?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Thank you. It always feels so good to be here, back at home on the home turf sleeping in my own bed, all my friends and family here. You can't beat it.

Q. You mentioned friends and family. Is there a lot of support coming out to watch you the next few days?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: I think so. I never know who is going to show up, but it's always good to look out in the crowd and see a bunch of familiar faces. It's something you don't get the rest of the year, so I soak it in when I can when I'm here.

Q. Fourth time playing in the event, four years in a row. What does it mean to receive the invitations?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Yeah, it's an honor. I'm so happy they keep picking me. This is my fourth year playing, second year as a pro. Last year I felt like I was getting my feet wet in the pro world and this year I'm a little bit more ready.

Yeah, just so excited. What a better place for me to be able to do this. I'm just really grateful they gave me the sponsor's invite this year.

Q. You mentioned playing two years as a professional out here. What has that transition been like from college to professional golf, and what have you learned from that?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Yeah, it was actually a way bigger change than I had originally thought. I was pretty confident coming out of college, and then last year I got a little bit



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humbled.

But it's been really good. These past two years I feel like I've grown so much, grown up, learning how to play the professional game. Definitely some growing pains, but that's normal for anybody to experience.

I'm just looking forward to keep going.

Q. Former University of Arkansas player. How did being on that team make an impact in your career so far?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Yeah, I owe them everything. I loved my time at the University of Arkansas. Shauna and Mike, my coaches and all my teammates, getting to go play with Maria and every single person on a team is a great player and person.

I couldn't have picked a better college. I miss it honestly. I'm like, you guys want to take me back? It's awesome. Again, I can't be more grateful for my time there.

Q. I wanted to know more about the excitement of getting to share the course with some of your former teammates. Some of you are all back here playing as professionals. How does it feel to share the course with them again?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Yeah, it's awesome. It feels like a homecoming. We call the Hogs on hole 17 so you can hear that throughout the whole course, which is cool. They have signs up everywhere. Everybody is a Razorback fan. I know all the former Razorbacks. We all get along so well.

It really is a cool thing we get to share.

Q. You talked a little bit about it, but how specifically do you think you've grown as a professional in the last year?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Yeah, just kind of the transition of college to professional, like it does turn into a little bit more of a job. Also not having your teammates, coaches around you to kind of hold your hand, you have to experience the world by yourself, which is good, but it is challenging at the same time.

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So, yeah, just kind of a lot of stuff off the golf course is the things where you really grow the most, which I feel like a lot of people don't really think about.

Q. You are one the longer hitters actually; and what's the secret to your power?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: I don't know if there is a secret to my power. I feel like people ask me that. I don't know. I was lucky. I don't know if I was born with it or developed it just by playing all the sports as a kid.

Yeah, I wish I really had an answer to that and I could give you guys some workout to where like you would gain 20 yards off the tee. Luckily it came natural to me. I have lost a few yards being in college. We lift really heavy in college and when you turn professional it's really hard to keep that up. You play a lot more weeks.

So I have lost a couple yards, but I'm going to get them back this off-season so don't worry.

Q. Can you talk about the evolution of your game, what parts are stronger and what maybe you struggle with in the last year?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Yeah, absolutely. First of all, going from college golf, we had ten tournaments on our schedule and going professional golf you have over 20 tournaments on your schedule.

You play double the golf, so you really have kind of less time in between events to practice. I think that was a really challenge for me. Last year I struggled with my swing a lot just being on the road so much and away from my coach.

I actually this past off-season made a lot of swing changes. Started working with a different coach. So it has definitely been a year of growing and trying to figure those out.

I can tell it's going where I want it to go, and a lot of that is just about being patient. You can't force it out here, so you just have to kind of let to come and keep working and working until you have your breakthrough.

Q. When you come back here does it always kick back? You always played pretty well here.

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Yeah, it's awesome being back here. I always get a little nervous because it's like the eyes are somewhat on me this week. It's just so comfortable and familiar. I learned to play golf here Su know the course really well.

Don't have to play a ton of practice rounds fortunately. I always just get really good feelings coming back and I'm excited to tee it up tomorrow.

Q. Can you give us any details of the course after playing it for so many years?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: Yeah, they always have the course set up amazing this week because they roll out the red carpet for us, but there is a lot of different shots you have to hit off the tee. It's kind of a strategic course. You don't hit a lot of drivers. At least I don't.

Then you got to find way to make some birdies out there because the course is challenging, but people go low on it so you really have to pick your holes where you want to be aggressive.

Then there is a lot of holes and especially pin locations where you kind of have to, you know, err on the sides of caution.

Q. As the tee location on 5 I guess it is -- 4 after the par-3 -- is that new to you? And if so, does it change how you play this tee shot?

BROOKE MATTHEWS: No. 4, yeah. It's really long. I think we're playing it at 430 yards this year, so the course at least the other day when I was playing it was a lot softer, so in years past you are able to get a lot of roll. I was able to hit like an 8 or 9-iron in and I had a 5-iron in on Tuesday when we went out and played.

Yeah, that's a tough hole, especially if it doesn't firm up. Again, one of those cautionary holes. Hit the fairway, hit the green, you know, get out of there.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you and best of luck this week, Brooke.

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