

# Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Wednesday, 31 July 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

## Great Britain

## Tommy Fleetwood

## Matt Fitzpatrick

### Press Conference

BRIONY CARLYON: I'm delighted to welcome Matt Fitzpatrick and Tommy Fleetwood from Team GB to the 2024 Paris Olympics.

Matt, going to start with you. Just making your debut here at the Games, can you give us a sense of what your early impressions have been like being part of the Team GB team and the atmosphere and being at Le Golf National.

MATT FITZPATRICK: It's been really cool. Really enjoyed it so far. The experience being in one of the Team GB houses which has been pretty cool, I had dinner there Sunday night, saw a few other athletes bouncing around which was pretty nice.

But yeah, been a great experience so far. I just wish the golf course was a little bit closer to all the events and stuff so we could go to a few more.

BRIONY CARLYON: Speaking of the golf course, you're obviously a past champion here at Le Golf National. What's it like to be back and what are you enjoying for your second Olympics?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah for us that grew up on The European Tour, it's obviously been a staple part of our golfing life, if you like, we've come back here every year pretty much, haven't been here for a while but it's always been historical on the Tour.

The course doesn't change; so it's nice to get back out there. You have memories of each and every hole that you've played, and it is, it's always nice coming back to somewhere that you know relatively well and just getting used to it again. But it's been great.

#### Q. Why the different uniforms?



PARIS 2024



TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's Wednesday. We can wear what we like today.

#### Q. Is this the first time you've been back here since 2018?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah.

#### Q. Did all the memories come flooding back?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, like I say, it's a bit quieter than the last time we were here but it's just nice coming back to somewhere with some lovely memories. That week in particular, the Ryder Cup, you remember almost every shot you hit throughout the three days.

Like I say, it's been a big part of our lives on the Tour but Ryder Cup as a special week and I think this is a very special week as well. But as I say, the golf course is the same. You see things that you didn't see when the Ryder Cup was on because there's thousands and thousands of people out there but it's great coming back.

#### Q. What's your principle memory from that week?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Winning moment. I think that stands out pretty much the most. It was my first Ryder Cup and that winning moment on the 16th hole when Fran had finally clinched it, that was the one for me.

#### Q. Obvious question for you both but what would a Gold Medal mean in the grand scheme of what you guys do as golfers?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think I said this the other week at The Open. The Gold Medal isn't at the top of every golfer's list; the four majors are. There's no doubt about that.

But I'd certainly say it's underneath that. I think probably before I arrived here and kind of got the feel for the Olympics itself, you probably underestimate how big it is and once you are here, and you realise the gravity of the whole event and how much it means to other people, not just as an athlete and golfer, you realise that a Gold Medal



would feel very special.

So yeah, you definitely want to try and win one. So I would definitely say it's higher on the list than I thought it would be, probably, growing up, yeah.

**TOMMY FLEETWOOD:** Yeah, I think it's something very, very special, and I think for us as golfers, it's always when we get asked this question, where does it rank, me and Fitzy would be in the same boat as pretty much everybody here in that when we were kids, we didn't grow up with the opportunity of winning an Olympic Gold. It wasn't a thing in our sport.

But I think now, I have kids, and over the first couple of days, I'm watching Frankie watch things like synchronised diving and all this stuff and he's supporting teams GB and he thinks winning the Gold Medal is like the most amazing thing.

He doesn't quite look at me as an Olympic athlete, really, but to have the opportunity of being that and maybe he can look back and I was part of it or I might have would be a Gold Medal as being something very, very special.

Like Fitzy says, we've grown up dreaming of winning majors and that's just ingrained in you, if you like. But where would Olympic Gold sit in a generation's time, we'll have to wait and see, but it's something very high on the list.

**Q. Do you come here with an extra spring in your step given your individual and the team's success?**

**TOMMY FLEETWOOD:** I've had both end of the spectrum, really. I've missed plenty of cuts here and won a tournament and we had a great time at the Ryder Cup.

But I do think any time you come to a golf course and you've played well around there and you've got visions of good golf shots, you feel better than somewhere where you've always struggled.

When I was look agent making the Olympics, coming to Le Golf National, first of all, there's knowing the course. If you've played it quite a lot, that's always a helping hand and yeah, some good memories around here.

Golf is very unpredictable and doesn't always follow but I would rather be somewhere where I've played well than not.

**Q. Has this week felt different to a usual event? Have you done anything different to what you would normally do?**

**MATT FITZPATRICK:** It definitely feels different from the setup. Being in the city, I'm saying in Versailles, I wouldn't say it has a massive Olympic feel to it but there's definitely an Olympic feel.

I took a walk on Monday and you can see the equestrian stuff down in the Palace gardens which looked cool. It doesn't feel like a normal week, I'll be honest. It really doesn't. It's not a good thing or a bad thing. It just definitely feels different. If anything, I would say it's a cool feeling that you're going for something that's different, and you feel part of something a little bit bigger. Yeah, it's pretty cool.

**Q. Not only your success but as you said, a staple of The European Tour, is it the kind of course that having that kind of experience is an edge, or is it pretty much any player who can get around and keep it in the fairway is going to be better off regardless of how they are playing?**

**TOMMY FLEETWOOD:** I think it's a very good golf course in the fact that it's dead in front of you. You're going to get rewarded for good shots and you'll get punished for some bad ones. I think that's why everybody has always respected the golf course. I think it's been a great tournament golf course.

Every course, when you've played there a bunch, it's always better than having never seen it before but yeah, the strategy is pretty simple. It's not like it's tricked up or anything like that. There's definitely options off tees but once you've found it's hittable in play, you see the fairway in every shot, you see the green pretty much every hole, so it just rewards good golf, really.

**Q. There's been talk of a lot of events like gymnastics or track and field having lots and lots of medals and golf having just two medals, and there is also a propose toll have a mixed-team event. Do you have any comments on men and women playing together for a possible Gold Medal? Do you have any comments on that?**

**TOMMY FLEETWOOD:** More opportunities for a medal the better, really, more opportunities for chances than one.

First impressions are I would love the chance. If I was here, I would love more than one chance to win a medal just selfishly, if the opportunity is there. You don't know until you've tried it. It could be a great idea. I guess I would love to try it. I would love to make the next one and see if we do anything different there.

**Q. I realise COVID was a big part of Japan last time, but did you find your anticipation or excitement level about this week different from when you played for the first time?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think very similar. Having done one, you have a little bit of experience what it was like. It's very different for us. We spent week-in and week-out every year with the same people and people do the same job as you, and being surrounded by the best athletes in the world is something that's different for us. I enjoyed that at the last one and I think it's great, and I think it's kind of an honour to be around them, if you like, that give their lives to their sports.

I remember going out on Sunday and I was never that close to the lead, but I definitely had a chance of winning a medal and it was very, very exciting. I would love that feeling again for sure. I guess I'll have some motivation from that, knowing what that felt like on the Sunday. It didn't quite happen.

But a little bit more used to it I guess, but still, it happens once every four years and it's such a unique feeling for us. You spend every week with the same people, if you like, so that's the biggest difference, I guess.

**Q. Do you get inspired at all by some of the other Team GB athletes and other sports, knowing what they have gone through for their one moment, as opposed to your 40 a year?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's pretty extreme. Being at the last one in Tokyo, one of the biggest things I took away, and it's obvious, but these guys, they train for four years; a false start on a hundred meters, and your opportunity, you have to wait another four years. So it puts a bad tee shot on the first in a perspective a little bit.

One of my close friends, James Guy who was in our relay team in the swimming that won Gold last night and being so proud and happy for him, and knowing the work they put into it to achieve that; you can't help but be inspired and motivated by that.

I think the Olympics is amazing, I really, really do. I feel very lucky to be here and be amongst it. It does, it inspires me for sure.

**Q. I'm going to assume you were in the U.K. back in '16 when Justin won the Gold. Wherever you were, do you have any recollection of what the reaction --**

MATT FITZPATRICK: No. I can't remember it, honestly. You're talking eight years ago. I can't remember. I know it

was a big deal. But yeah, I couldn't answer that question.

**Q. The general thing we've heard from a couple players this week is in the golfing population in the country, even the U.K. understands Claret Jugs and the green jackets, but the whole of a country, sporting fans, understands a medal. Do you get that sense at all?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, big time. Big time. I always remember growing up watching the Olympics and understanding how big a deal it was.

Like Tommy said, you train four years, false start, you're out of the race. I feel terrible for those people that maybe pick up an injury two months out or that train all this time, training has gone well, feel like they have a chance and then bang, something unlucky happens.

I feel like Britain has always had great support, great fans, great understanding of the Olympics. So yeah, I certainly think a Gold Medal in any sport, that for people outside of the world of golf, Silver Medal, Bronze Medal; a huge deal.

**Q. People have said the golf course is playing very similar to what it was in 2018 at the Ryder Cup, especially regarding the height and density of the rough. What are your thoughts on that?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think it's quite a bit more forgiving. I remember it being pretty thick and brutal.

But yeah, it's a bit more forgiving. I think you're going to get punished at times for missing the fairway. I think one ever the great things.

The wider you hit it, the more trouble you're going to get into. I think that's one of the best things about the golf course. Some holes, like to the right of 1 and to the right of 10, you can get unlucky with a bad lie but in general, you're going to be able to bounce that to the green where that was never a thing at the Ryder Cup. It was like if you hit it in there, good luck.

So there are certain areas where I think it's quite a bit nicer but there's other areas that are just the same.

**Q. I wonder how much you each allow yourselves to sort of immerse in the Olympic experience, whether it's going out and taking in other events, seeing the city and things like that, or do you just remain focus like the other golf tournaments that you play in?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I would definitely like to do that. Obviously time constraints don't always allow that. You've

obviously got to come up here, prep, practise. You know, getting tickets for the events, as well, isn't a piece of cake.

So I think as athletes, we get one individual ticket. I'm here with my fiancée, so obviously don't want to just go alone and ditch her.

Yeah, I would love to go and watch as many other events as I could as long as, you know, time permitting. That's the only thing, I would say.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think, yeah, this week for sure, it's been very much golf and it's been very much doing our regular thing. That's how it's worked out.

I felt like in Tokyo, it was a shame, it was COVID, so we didn't really get to go to events but at times I felt like golf was getting in the way of me just hanging out in the Village.

Yeah, the more you can sort of be immersed in it and experience it, the better. You don't know if you're ever going to do this again. I think it's an amazing experience to be here but at the same time, our main goal is to win a medal. So it like, do everything you can in preparation to make that happen.

**Q. For both of you, if you have an answer, when you SPEND time in the Village or around the Olympic athletes; there something you find yourself trying to pick their brain about in terms of trying to be a better athletes yourself?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Just look at most of them and feel bad about myself.

Yeah, your question pick up something from everyone. I think the main thing is the passion that everybody has for their chosen field and their sport. And there's always something that you're going to pick up. There's so many similarities to it in terms of the psychology of what we all do, but I think there's always something that you can pick up, and just getting the chance to talk to them is amazing.

**Q. Is there something that you picked up that you would care to repeat?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Well, like I say, I think for them, I think the importance of their training and their repetition and what they do, every single day for them goes into this four-year cycle, if you like, and I think it puts things into perspective and it kind of heightens your awareness to how important every day is, if you like. For us, we miss cuts or we play bad and we move on to the next week. When we talk about majors, four opportunities doesn't really seem like a lot but we get four a year.

I think the intensity of how they have to go about things, and especially when they are here, they might do all the same things we do in terms of of the psychology and everything and the preparation, but it's unbelievably important for them. They get one opportunity, really, and I think just watching how they go about it is great.

**Q. Have you spoken to James Guy since that, and will you, and what did he say?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: He sent me a picture saying, "Lovely, Brother" with his Gold Medal. Watching as home I was unbelievably happy for him, how well he swam and how well the team did. I haven't spoke to him today. The last text I got, I was asleep, it was pretty slate, and I think he was doing a drugs test.

But yeah, just unbelievably happy for him and I can't wait to see him, really. Amazing performance.

**Q. It sounds like neither of you have had a chance to get to any events life but anything you've been following on TV, any quirky sports that you're now huge fans of?**

MATT FITZPATRICK: I've just been watching anything that they have got on, really. Yeah, anything that BBC One has been putting on. My hotel has it, so we've been putting that on.

The skateboarding was pretty cool. I obviously didn't really understand the rules but one big one was basically if you fall off, that's the end and you go. I thought you would be able to get up and carry on but a couple guys fell off and obviously feel for them. That's probably the wildest event I've seen.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: There was the synchronised diving, and archery has been a big one. That's been on a lot. So I'm there trying to work the wind out for them and watching where they are aiming. Similarities in that.

Look, BBC showing everything they can on TV, you just jump right in to whatever happens to be on the TV.

BRIONY CARLYON: Thank you for your time and all the best this week.

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