

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Friday, 2 August 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

Matteo Manassero

Press Conference



Q. I know these settings are often mostly about asking about how you just played but I was curious if you could talk about your journey a little bit, particularly with the Olympics, because not a lot of people remember but at 16, you were campaigning to get golf into the Olympics. I was curious how much you remember from 15 years ago doing that campaign?

MATTEO MANASSERO: It was really nice. I remember feeling like it was a big deal for me. I was 16, and in a way, yeah, very young to do something like that and speaking in front of very important people. I remember being nervous. I remember understanding this was something huge, and for me as a golfer, it was obviously something to really dream about and love to.

In that particular moment, it looked still far for me. It was 2009. So I was still an amateur. I was doing well but it was all so far ahead for me, and then things happen quickly. It was like being there for building a dream.

Q. You've got Pádraig, you've got Ty Votaw, you've got -- Tiger did a video, Suzann Pedersen. What role does a 16-year-old amateur play in that group in the campaign?

MATTEO MANASSERO: The amateur one, yes, I don't know.

Q. Do you remember what you said?

MATTEO MANASSERO: No. I remember training for it. I remember the day before doing diction. I was treated like an actor trying to say things properly.

Q. Rehearse?

MATTEO MANASSERO: Many times. I remember all that but I don't remember what I said. I guess it was just I was doing really well and I was really young. So that was really good for golf.

Q. Does it feel full circle to be here at the Olympics now? Like that's the first chapter of your Olympics book, and not to say that this is the final chapter but this is another chapter, I guess. Does it feel like part of one full journey?

MATTEO MANASSERO: My journey, yes, for sure. This is the Olympics in which I probably I understand the most about my game and I'm enjoying golf probably the most I've ever enjoyed it.

I think for the Olympics, this edition has been unbelievable with the players attending and everything and the golf course. I think this is what golf can show at its best, and I'm happy that we are showing it at the Olympics. I think that's what it should be every four years.

Q. I was walking with your group out there. There's a good bit of family and maybe friends.

MATTEO MANASSERO: Not a lot but there is a few important ones that are here.

Q. Your journey, it's one of those things we pay attention to when you come back, but you're on the journey the entire time, so you know what the last 11, 12, 13 years have been like. When someone asks you, how do you describe it? Is it hard to describe because it's so many years?

MATTEO MANASSERO: It's not that hard. It's very similar to things that happen in life. It's ups and downs and difficult moment, and you grow, you mature and you understand things. I would say it really as simple as that. It's not easy to go through it. I didn't do it on my own. I had people that were really, really supportive and helped me to go through every step outside the golf course and inside of the golf course.

Overall, it's a lot of years now that I'm professional. It's weird to say that but it's 14 years. In 14 years, a lot of things happen. For some players, the best ones in the world, a lot of things happen but they keep making birdies. For others, they need to find ways and get back to playing



really well.

To be honest I'm really happy that -- standing here right now, I wasn't happy all the time but the journey has been really good for me right now, the Matteo playing golf.

Q. What's different right now about the Matteo playing golf when it comes to out there on the golf course?

MATTEO MANASSERO: I know so much more of myself, how I work and the proper way. Like how to make myself a bit diligent and do the right things I need to perform. I understand a lot more that golf is very, very random at times, so I take that in a much better perspective.

I would say, yeah, a lot more things but those are the main ones. I'm sort of easy on myself in a way but on the other side, I know what I have to do and I have to do it.

Q. You have to forgive me but sometimes when players go through a little bit of a valley, people in my shoes, we forget about them, we lose track of them.

MATTEO MANASSERO: Other things to do.

Q. Yes, of course. I was curious on your way back up the rankings and prominence, was there a moment when it really felt like you were kind of back, when it felt like people started to really notice?

MATTEO MANASSERO: You need to win to have the ultimate trust that you're on the right path. And then there is always another step. Like I don't know right now if I'm going to be able to do the next step because I haven't done it yet.

I'm not sure. I haven't done it. But I know for sure that I'm on the right track and doing the right things and out there I perform well. I would say last year when I won on Challenge Tour twice and I started winning at a higher level again, I was doing things -- it's in the small things, also. You're under pressure and you can produce a good round and you can produce and you feel good and you're not overstressed and you can still enjoy the golf and perform. I would say those are the little things, and then you end up winning and it's kind of one step, and then it's the next step.

Q. Things come with winning -- this is the last thing I'll ask you about. I couldn't help but notice at The Scottish Open you were paired with Rory on Saturday, and to me that felt like this thing where both of you guys were very young in 2009, 2010, 2011 and Rory has been so relevant, and then you guys get to play together. Probably haven't seen each other in quite a

while. I imagine that was kind of one of those moments, too, that tells you I'm back on the correct stage.

MATTEO MANASSERO: That's exactly what it is. Probably years ago, I wouldn't have been able to go through that day enjoying golf and doing myself but with the work I've done, we're just talking about, you know, it's great to play with Rory because he's a great player, and I was doing my thing and I was able to, you know. But of course, playing with a player like that, it's difficult because of all the environment around. It's not easy, and you need to get used to it for sure.

Q. He mentioned that he didn't know that you were -- are you married now?

MATTEO MANASSERO: I am.

Q. He didn't realise that you were married. He was curious.

MATTEO MANASSERO: I think it was nine years, Scotland nine years since we last played together.

Q. Was there part of him you were curious about asking about during that round, catching up?

MATTEO MANASSERO: I mean, at the end we are playing golf and we are doing well. So it not -- but it's always nice to be around Rory. I like him because he's at the top of golf and he's been at the top of golf for so many years, but he's a normal guy and we can talk about different things. I like that. I like people that kind of -- it's very difficult to stay the same because life brings you a lot of different stuff and it's not easy, but you know, that's why it's good to be around Rory and just normal chat. Nothing special.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®