

# BMW Championship

Tuesday, August 24, 2021

Owings Mills, Maryland, USA

Caves Valley Golf Club

## Keith Mitchell

### Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome Keith Mitchell to the virtual pressroom here at the 2021 BMW Championship. We are really glad you're here. You certainly put on quite the performance last week to make sure you were here. Birdies on the last three holes to get here, just great. I know you've talked about it, but if you could recap the last three holes, your mindset, did you know what you needed to do going into it, that kind of thing.

KEITH MITCHELL: My caddie and I pretty much knew that 12-under was going to have a chance, and we probably needed some help from some other people. Fortunately we knew 13 was it, and it was the number. So when I had the putt on 18, I figured that if I made that putt, there was no doubt I was in.

That was really the deciding factor.

Prior to that, I really had a tough stretch of 13, 14 and 15. Had to stay in it and really not try to get myself out. After I birdied the last three holes, here we are.

DOUG MILNE: You're making your third start in the BMW Championship. I know the course has changed, but how exciting is it to get to that second stage in the FedExCup Playoffs?

KEITH MITCHELL: Well, it's huge for next season, let alone just to have a run for the FedExCup and you have another chance to get to Atlanta. But it gets you in a lot of invitationals for next season.

A lot of focus is on this week and the BMW and having a chance to get in the TOUR Championship, but at the same time it opens up a lot of doors for me next year in terms of the Arnold Palmer and the Memorial Tournament and some of the invitationals in the Fall Series.

That's just another added bonus to a great week.

**Q. Years from now when you're nursing your Michelob Ultra, what will you remember the most, the six birdies that you started the run with in Minnesota or the three**



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**birdies you ended your round with on Monday?**

KEITH MITCHELL: It was seven birdies, come on. You cut me one short.

**Q. That was my bad.**

KEITH MITCHELL: I would say they were equally memorable. However, this one was more impactful, the three birdies coming down.

Just the way I was playing yesterday was not my best golf, and to be able to finish with three birdies not having my best stuff was something that's really hard to describe because I was relying on my short game a lot yesterday, probably my weakness compared to my driver. The fact that I did great around the greens and on the greens really helped propel me to where I was to make three birdies.

I mean, that's just overcoming adversity I would say in my own game, in my own mind, and that's a lot different than when you make seven birdies in a row, everything is clicking. Yesterday things weren't, and to finish with three birdies was huge.

**Q. When did you know that you had gotten in?**

KEITH MITCHELL: When I walked off the green. I knew that 13 was probably a lock. We weren't certain, but what we saw on the leaderboards, it sure looked that way. Yeah, you never know what's going to happen behind you, so once I made birdie on 18 to get to 13, kind of got some thumbs up from some rules officials and media officials, and then it was confirmed when we got in the scoring tent.

**Q. How did you celebrate, and how do you make sure that you don't go on a lull this week? How do you approach this week?**

KEITH MITCHELL: Well, we just got in the car and drove straight here. That's the only option we had. We ended up just kind of showered, changed, cleaned out my locker and drove three hours and got in about 10:00 last night, tried to sleep in a little bit, and then really have to turn and burn and go play 18 holes today.

I've never played this golf course before. I've never seen it. I'm not in the pro-am, so it's my only opportunity to



prepare for this week is pretty much right after this interview.

**Q. How do you approach going forward this week?**

KEITH MITCHELL: Just try to keep that same momentum going forward. Definitely hit a few balls tomorrow, try and get some kinks worked out of the driver, and then get used to the green speeds. I'm not sure how they're rolling. Yesterday's were pretty slow compared to the seven inches of rain, so probably check these out, see what the differences are, hit a few chips, and then make sure you know what your clubs are off the tee. Once you do that, it's pretty much just all execution.

**Q. Why and how great was it for you to ring that bell?**

KEITH MITCHELL: I'll tell you what, the whole experience was a 10 out of 10. Ringing the bell was really cool. But just being on the trading floor, seeing the history of the New York Stock Exchange, seeing all the artifacts, all the rooms, all the history was equally incredible.

Also Patrick Reed had the good luck; he rang it last time and won the tournament. So maybe it's starting this new trend that whoever rings the bell has good luck at the Northern Trust.

**Q. Taking you way back to the PGA TOUR Latin America days when I wrote the piece on you when you were very young and green, compare yourself now to the guy then and how far you've come and how confident and just the person and player you are today.**

KEITH MITCHELL: I would say the main difference is experience, and it's experience in a way that's hard to describe because when I was on the Latinoamérica Tour I was so excited to be there, so happy to be able to compete, have a place to play no matter where in the world it was, and just having a great appreciation for having PGA TOUR-sanctioned events to play in.

Take me then to now, sometimes it's hard to imagine the steps I've taken and the road I've traveled, but I always remind myself of those days because they seemed incredibly fun, but knowing how tough it was now would be -- it makes me even more grateful for those times because 17 weeks in I think 14 countries, making the cut and not even being able to afford to pay for the whole week itself and then having a great week like last week and propelling to try to win a FedExCup is two completely different feelings. It all started down there, and it just -- one step at a time, and here we are.

**Q. I just wanted to ask you, this is the first time the PGA TOUR has returned to Baltimore since 1962, so I'm curious what kind of reception do you anticipate receiving?**

KEITH MITCHELL: That's a great question. The only time I've been to Baltimore I went to the Orioles' stadium one time and it was one of my favorite fan experiences. I don't have much experience with the Baltimore fans, but the one I had was incredible, especially not being an Orioles' fan at the time. It kind of led me to follow them a little bit just because the ballpark was so awesome. Hopefully we can get some sort of atmosphere closer to that this week. I know it's going to be hot, but it's a beautiful track, fun golf course, and hopefully we have some great fans show up.

**Q. I think you referenced this earlier, but you have not played this course before. You just got down here. How much does that put pressure in terms of trying to familiarize yourself with this course quickly before Thursday?**

KEITH MITCHELL: I'm going to have to lean on my caddie a lot. He's going to be able to walk the course a little bit more than I am. He'll probably get out there tomorrow, watch some balls bounce in the pro-am.

But it's definitely difficult. Usually we get two or three looks at a course before we play it, and then now this being my fourth year on TOUR, a lot of times I've had four tournaments on a specific course.

Definitely a challenge, but I think a lot of guys are going to fight the same thing this week. I don't know how many have actually played here before, so it won't be -- it'll be pretty familiar for the rest of the field to have to, I would guess, cram before the first round.

**Q. Going back to the days when you were sort of grinding on mini-Tours, what piece of golf advice would you give your younger self like nowadays? What would you tell him about how to play the game?**

KEITH MITCHELL: I would say stay patient and stay positive. Fortunately I did that to be able to be here today, so sometimes I kind of look back and question myself how I actually did it, and I try to channel some of those inner motivational factors to keep me going out here, especially when you get off to a bad start or a really long stretch. But honestly it's a step-by-step process to get on the PGA TOUR. It's almost impossible for someone to come right out of college and make their way straight to the PGA TOUR, so you kind of have to learn the ropes and go through some of the lower tours, and the only way to do that is to really keep your mind focused on doing the best

you can in that specific moment, and the better you do in those moments, the easier the next and the next become because they only get bigger and bigger. I still haven't competed in a major and some of these WGCs and bigger tournaments, so I'm still going to be learning, and it's going to be the same process that really started right after college, like Doug said, on the Latin American Tour.

DOUG MILNE: That's all we've got for you. We appreciate your time, as always. Best of luck this week. Always good to see you, and especially here this week.

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