

The American Express™

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La Quinta Country Club

Matthew Wolff

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Making your second start here at the American Express. First start since the Masters, official start on TOUR. First of all, how was the break and how is the game feeling heading into this week?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, break was short, but nice, which I could have had a little more time off. It was a pretty hectic end of last year with the times right now. COVID is getting pretty crazy and I had, kind of had to like squeeze as many tournaments in as you could ending last year to, just because that's what everyone else was doing. I feel like the break wasn't quite long enough. I feel like I'm still a little tired and stuff.

But gotten some work in the last couple weeks with George and came down here a little early to work with him in person, which was really helpful. And definitely feel like I'm making strides in my game to where I want my swing to be and just trying to focus on conserving energy and making sure that I have a good time out here, because with, like I said, with everything going on in the world right now, I think it's most important to go out there and try my best and always go out and win, but just make sure to put everything in perspective and, like I said, have a good time.

THE MODERATOR: We'll just go right into questions.

Q. Can you just take us through what you felt like the highlights and sort of the low lights were of last season, your first full year?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, I definitely think the majors were the highlights for me. The top-5 in both of those with a runner up at the U.S. Open, just giving myself a chance to win in both of those events was just, it was big for me. The experience-wise, coming down the stretch at a major, not only coming from behind and playing well on Sunday at the PGA, but also holding a lead on, going into Sunday at the U.S. Open. So kind of the same experience, but obviously a little different. I could say I slept a little better at the PGA than I did at the U.S. Open the night before the final round.

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But yeah, I mean, it was just a lot of golf. I feel like I had a lot of highs and a lot of lows, and my game was where I wanted it to be some weeks and other weeks, I felt like I couldn't find the map, and that's golf. I feel like when you play so much your body gets tired and you're not having someone constantly check up on you, it's easy to get a little off. And like I said, it's just golf and that's part of the game.

But I feel like the most important thing that I tried to do is focus on the positives more than the negatives and sometimes that might be hard, but I feel like at the end of last year in that stretch of golf that I played, I feel like I hit a lot of good shots, but had a lot of good tournaments and a lot of good finishes and even though the ones that I didn't play well at or missed cuts and stuff like that, it's, like I said, it was a pretty crazy year last year and glad I got some rest and going to be able to work on my game a little bit and I'm ready for this next year.

Q. I was going to ask you what you thought maybe the most important lesson was, but it sounds like maybe scheduling. And I don't know how you could have change that last year given situation, but will that be something you address this season?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Absolutely. I think scheduling is, it's extremely important and it's kind of hard sometimes because you've seen, like, every single TOUR event out here is so strong and so good that you feel like you can't miss each one because every single one that you're missing is more opportunity for other people to jump you in FedEx and everything like that.

But, yeah, last year was pretty crazy with three months out of the year being gone, I feel like everyone, once the restart happened, just tried to play as much as they can, and I feel like I played nine straight weeks once the restart happened and that kind of killed me right from the start. And I had a really good stretch of golf, and I played really well, and it was a good learning experience, for sure, just to see how much I could handle or how tired I was and I think I learned a lot from that stretch of just knowing what my body can take and how many events in a row I can play. And I'm not sure exactly what my schedule's going to look like this year, but I know that I'm definitely going to try to allow myself a little more off-time in between stretches just to let my body relax, and my body and my mind. I

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think golf is one of the hardest mental sports and you get so tired mentally out there and it's important to just once you're off the golf course not really think about it and kind of let everything go because for five hours you're locked in and focused and definitely takes a toll.

Q. Is it difficult for you to relax and find some down time?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, it's definitely hard, I think, especially when your game's not exactly where you want it to be, you feel like the off weeks that you do have are the times that you're not competing, that's the time when you really should be relaxing and trying not to focus so much on golf. But at the end of the day, you know that even the off weeks aren't really off weeks. It's not -- I feel like other sports you can really relax and not really work as hard, whereas in golf if you feel like you take a week off when you don't have a tournament, you're going to be really rusty coming back and so many people are going to be in stride and playing and have all that confidence from good play.

So yeah, it is difficult. I feel like I'm trying to balance that and that's just part of the learning curve. I feel like I'm still really new out here. Even though I feel like I've been out here for a long time and experienced a lot of things, I'm just a little blink in the eye of some other people's careers. And it's definitely taking a little time to learn and adjust to the new life that I live.

But yeah, I mean, it's, I would say it's pretty difficult in order to relax and rest, especially when you know your game's not where you want it to be because if everyone out here is like me, which I believe they are, they're very focused and they always want to have their best stuff coming to each event, and if you don't have that, sometimes you feel like you're going out there just to try to play your best, where you don't have all the confidence in the world. And I feel like the off weeks are times to build confidence and times to work on your game, but to balance that with rest is a little tricky and I'm still trying to figure that out.

Q. What are the best things that you can do to conserve energy? What are the things that get you to conserve energy?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I think for me it's definitely just relaxing off the course. I think there's no really way to conserve energy while you're on the course. You're focused so much and you're playing for so long out there. I mean, I'm sure there are ways on the course, in between shots, to be external and look around and not focus on where your ball ended up or anything like that, just try to focus on enjoying yourself out there. That's one thing that I need to learn to do a little better.

But, yeah, on the off weeks, I think for me it's just having people around me that I really enjoy being around, my friends, just anyone who can kind of take your mind off of golf and take your mind off of, like, the stressful life that I live when I'm out on the road. It is pretty difficult and I think the TV only kind of shows the good parts of everyone's careers and it's definitely not what everyone thinks. But the good times are great and we're compensated really well and I'm definitely living my dream of playing out here, so I'm not trying to make it sound like I'm miserable, because I'm not, but it is a really hard balance of trying to enjoy family time and be with your friends and relax over the golf course, but still stay focused and sharp in those times when you're trying to relax.

Q. Lastly, you've played once in the last two months. Are you worried about how quickly you're going to need to shake off that rust?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Maybe a little bit, but I know that this is a long year and I started off last year pretty good. I haven't played too much lately, but I definitely know there's going to be more than enough time to shake off that rust, and I'm a pretty competitive person and I know that I'm not going to be satisfied with not playing my best or not having the most confidence in my game. So I'm definitely going to work hard and it might not be this week, it might not be next week, but I know eventually I'm going to have a good stretch of golf. And it's, so many players out here are hungry and looking to win and so am I, so it's going to be a good competition, and definitely each week I like to learn from the goods and the bads and see what I need to work on and I think the rust will kind of shake itself off pretty quickly.

Q. I wanted to ask you about what it's like day-to-day to work with George. I know that his emphasis on speed is something that he's famous for. What's that experience like? I know you've worked with him for years and where is your speed now and where do you want it to be in the peak of this year?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Do you mean, like, speed, like, how fast I swing the club or?

Q. Yeah, clubhead speed, ball speed, all those things that he emphasizes and is famous for.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, I definitely don't think that we work on any of those things. I feel like I have enough speed, clubhead speed, ball speed. I swing the club fast enough. And honestly, right now, I feel like I'm kind of doing the opposite. I'm trying to work on controlling my swing a little more. Distance control's a big thing for me



because it's obviously very nice to hit the ball far, but with how far you hit it, your gaps in your clubs become longer, and those shorter shots become a little more touchy-feely. And I think right now, I'm working on the same thing that we have been working on for a long time, which is rotation and getting through the ball and not getting stuck at impact.

But right now, I'm trying to actually tone it back a little. And that doesn't mean hit the ball any shorter. It just means work on hitting my numbers a little better and not, maybe not trying to kill every single shot that I take. I feel like I swing it fast enough and I don't, I'm not looking for distance at all. I'm really just looking for consistency and to have a ball flight and trust it and a pattern that I can really have confidence in. We have been working pretty hard on that and I feel like we're definitely making a lot of progress.

Q. So the fact that you and Viktor and Collin come out here and taking it by storm at a very early time in your career, I wonder how much do you, do you guys feed off each other? And also, why do you think all three of you were so well prepared to do this at such an early stage?

MATTHEW WOLFF: I feel like for the most part we all just played each other in college and we were the best there and we kind of, we were back and forth. I feel like me and Viktor went back and forth in college; he won and then I won. And then Collin was always up there. And we played in different conferences, but we would play in tournaments that are similar and we were always kind of at the top battling it out.

I feel like that just salutes amateur golf right now and how competitive it is and how many great players there are. And I feel like now more than ever the players in amateur golf are much more ready and able as soon as they come out here. I couldn't have told you that we were, all three of us are going to come out and kill it like we did. That's definitely unheard of, because I think there's only been like, I don't know the stat, but there's very few people that have come out in their first year and made it on the PGA TOUR, and for three people in the same year to do it is pretty special.

But I mean, it just goes to show that we were all ready and we all, even though we did leave college early, or I did, so did Viktor. I know Collin stayed. But we all did what we needed to do and worked hard and surrounded ourselves with the right people in order to get to the places that we're at. And I think our competition between all three of us is definitely a key role into building our games and it's worked out for all three of us and I'm happy for the two others.

Q. I'm wondering, what do you like to get out of

practice rounds? Do you like to see where your game's at? Do you like to play games with other guys? Do you like to research the course? I mean, what's priority No. 1 when you're out there on a Tuesday, Wednesday?

MATTHEW WOLFF: Yeah, I think it definitely switches from week-to-week. I would say for the most part I like to keep it light. I like to -- if I have the opportunity to play with people that I know, I really enjoy doing that, playing games, not anything that's like stressful, but just playing games with people.

I think probably top priority is seeing where my game's at and getting a feel for the course, around the greens. I think, like, chipping and putting is probably the most important thing for me because the putting green and the chipping green, it's easy to hit good chips all the time when you're putting it in good lies and stuff. But I like going around the courses and the different slopes and I think that really helps a lot.

But for me, I mean, I feel like I do that with my coach and my caddie and we go around and each green I give myself different lies and different uphill, downhill, different clubs, and just kind of judging how I feel around the greens and what shots I'm playing well that week. And then when I play games with people, I think that's just a good judge of where my game's at because it's definitely easy to hit, like I said, when you're on the practice range or anywhere practicing, it's easy to repeat and hit the same shot over and over again and feel good. But when you got water left and bunkers right, it's a lot harder to make the same swing that you do when you got a wide open field that you're hitting at.

So I think in practice rounds, I really try to keep it light and just get a feel for the course. But I would say for the most part, I try not to wear myself out in the early weeks just because I know tournaments are a really long time over four days and it's a lot of hard work and I feel like each round you're even, like, seeing what you could work on, and the conditions change so much throughout the week, too, that the practice round might be important to see what you have to work on. But by the end of the week, it can be completely different. I think the most part is just getting comfortable out there and making sure that have you a lot of confidence in your game.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks again for the time, Matt, and best of luck this week.

MATTHEW WOLFF: Absolutely. Thank you, guys. Peace.



