

THE PLAYERS Championship

Monday, March 9, 2026

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Tommy Fleetwood

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Tommy Fleetwood to the interview room here at the 2026 PLAYERS Championship. Tommy, our reigning FedExCup champion making his ninth start at this event.

Tommy, welcome back. If we can get some comments on being here this week.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Just nice to be back. I think it's always a tournament that everybody gets really excited about. I think the biggest compliment you can give the golf course is that I think everybody holds it very high on their list, and I think that there's always a widespread of opinion.

But nobody can ever really say anything negative about Sawgrass, which is always an amazing sign for the golf course. I think it's an amazing test of golf. One of the best we play all year.

Yeah, there's been some big tournaments already this year, but I think THE PLAYERS sort of is where it sits now always marks the start of a big period coming.

THE MODERATOR: Let's talk about the state of your game. Two top 10s this year in three starts. How are you feeling coming into the week?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I started the year well. I think I didn't play particularly well the first two events in Dubai at the start of the year, and then last week I felt like I was scruffy again.

Like I either -- I played poor for the first two days and then I felt like when I started hitting it better I was having one of those weeks where then I scored terribly, like I chipped and putted really poor.

Last week was like a bit of a battle, but Pebble Beach and Riviera I felt like I played some really, really good golf and had some really good results there.

So there's been a lot of positives. I would love to be playing a bit more consistent, but I still think there's been



so much good and just looking forward to getting in the process and preparing for this week and getting myself into the best place possible come Thursday.

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started with questions.

Q. This is not a golf question. Your clothes lately, are you going into the pro shops and buying the hats yourself and then how are you picking out the outfit?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No, I've been given the hats (laughing). But this one, I actually traveled with this hat when I came out to America a few weeks ago. I genuinely think my middle boy, Mo, bought this about two or three years ago when he was here last. He's much more of a hat connoisseur than I am so I trust his judgment.

But I threw this one in. I thought it was a great hat. I sort of didn't even pack with THE PLAYERS in mind, but I ended up having THE PLAYERS hat, so this is what I've got on for now.

Q. What about the rest of the outfits? When you're putting those together, how are you doing that?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I've been given a lot of stuff, which has been really kind and very, very cool. But, yeah, I'm just in that period to where I have the freedom and the luxury of trying what I want or wearing what I want and seeing what I like.

So I think there's just such a widespread of clothes that I probably never paid attention to for such a long time. Like I had what I wore and everything and, so it's pretty cool, really.

I'm enjoying finding things that I like, whether that be the look or the material or whatever it is, and going out there and wearing that.

So like I say, I'm one of the few that's in that kind of lucky position at the moment that I just get to experiment and try a bunch of stuff and wear some cool stuff, because there is a lot of great stuff out there.

Q. With recent events in the Middle East, have you had to make any arrangements for your family and



whatnot, and their safety and movements?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No. They're still in Dubai at the moment. Yeah, it's been a strange time. I can honestly say that my -- you know, my family have been very, very safe. I think the UAE, the country, have done an unbelievable job at making everybody feel very safe and very secure and handling that.

So I think we feel very lucky. You know, they're supposed to travel like soon, so I think they're looking at traveling whenever they can, but the main thing has been that they are safe.

I honestly can't speak highly enough about how well the country has handled things for the people that are over there. Just I haven't experienced it. I've been over here.

But, no, my family are sort of happy or as comfortable as they could be in the situations that are going on. So I think we're all very grateful for how everybody's handled it over there.

Q. Was that tricky at all to be playing a golf tournament while managing that as well?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I don't really -- I don't really like to make excuses. I definitely won't be one to say whether it has a role in how I play or not. I think Bay Hill's hard enough, you know (laughing).

But I think you just do the best with whatever cards you're dealt with and try and just, when I'm working or playing or practicing, just throw myself into that.

No doubt I would love my family and everybody that's involved at the moment or in and around the area to be in a sort of more comfortable situation, but like I say, they have handled it unbelievably well.

All I can say is that my family have felt very, very safe.

So, yeah, like I don't know. I'm here trying to play golf and working on it. Golf has its ups and downs, but I'm sort of still enjoying the process of practicing and working on that everything's okay.

Q. Do you feel like after winning in East Lake, has it correlated to opening up your expectations at all or has anything changed in your own game since your triumph at the TOUR Championship last year?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, that's always the battle for everyone, right? I've said it a lot. I think one of the hardest things to manage in sport or in life is your own

expectations.

Without them high expectations you don't get as far as maybe that you could, but at the same time, you still have to manage those things.

So I went through an amazing period of golf last year and I found myself in a position in the game that World Ranking wise, and of course winning on the PGA TOUR, winning the FedExCup, it's position that's I've never been in before.

But at the same time very, very, very enjoyable, and I've enjoyed finding that new level and then working towards trying to first of all maintain that level and then trying to improve as a golfer as well.

Because I think ultimately the goals and the process doesn't really change. Like I had a great period there. The FedExCup was amazing, something that's very special. I had a great finish to the season on the DP World Tour.

But you still just want to improve every day. So it's just, if you can fixate yourself on that process and whoever you are as a golfer, you know, world No. 3, world No. 3000, doesn't really matter. You have to wake up every day and you have to try and keep on track and trying to keep up with everybody else in this game, because there's an unbelievably large amount of good of players that can play well at any time.

So I still find myself very good at focusing on that, and I'm not -- when it takes you, I don't know how many years did it take me to win, I think it sort of sets you up to manage the next period well.

Just because I won once, like I might never win a tournament again. I don't know. I think I will (laughing). I hope I win a bunch. But I'm not really too worried about that stuff. Just continuing to focus on trying to be the best golfer I can be and whatever I turn up with today try and be better tomorrow.

Q. Tiger for the first time in forever is not eligible for this event. We know the history of this event not giving exemptions. If Tiger wanted to play...

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Is Tiger's not eligible for this event?

Q. He's not.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: That's unbelievable.

Q. If Tiger wanted to play what would you say?



TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I would say yeah. I would love Tiger Woods to play. I can't believe he's not eligible. How bad is Tiger Woods at golf?

No, no, I am actually very surprised. I didn't realize. You know, I wasn't really sure what criteria goes into this tournament, but like, yeah, if Tiger Woods wants to play anywhere in the world I think, yeah, I think Tiger Woods should be able to play.

Q. During practice rounds would you ever consider going over to the drop zone on 17?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah.

Q. Have you done that before?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah.

Q. Why? You're the first by the way. Congratulations.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Am I really?

Q. That I've talked to anyway.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Well, yeah, I think you just don't want to -- well, for me I think that just -- it's my frame of mind in preparation really. Of course I'm not planning on hitting it in the water, but at the same time, I think the hole has its -- has enough like mental challenges that if you do hit it in the water, you just want to be prepared.

Like I would -- you know, you've hit it in the water; okay, like well what's the drop zone? I've hit this shot, knock it on the green, and go from there.

So I think it's just -- like I don't do it in any negative way at all, I just do it in a form of preparation, you know. Hey, like, I mean, if somebody said to you now you can go to the 17th hole with a two-shot lead, but you're going to hit it in the water and you got to walk to the drop zone would you take it? I would probably say yeah, and I'll go practice from the drop zone.

I just think that there's an element of preparation there, and it's just something -- as much as it's like you drop it and it's like 80 yards or 70 yards or whatever it is and, yeah, it should be pretty simple, I just think that I prefer having hit those kind of shots, and that's just how I feel.

Q. Have you ever gone to the drop zone at 11 at Augusta?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: At 11? I haven't actually. I've hit it from the drop zone on 11 in the tournament (laughing).

I've not done it in practice.

But you're right. That's the same kind of thing, I think. Just preparation and know that nothing's going to catch you by surprise or you're not going to be in a situation that maybe you haven't sort of done before.

Q. You and probably everybody else on TOUR can empathize with what Shane Lowry went through a few weeks ago when you have a tournament in your hands and it gets away from you. How do you explain to average people that even guys who have clinched Ryder Cups, you know, under that pressure, can still have trouble closing out a golf tournament, and is it just that hard to do?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, it's a really good question. My experience of it was I think, yeah -- so the longer it goes on I think you can make it -- you know, as much as you might have your own thoughts, I think negative thoughts are a very natural thing to creep in. They're just thoughts at the end of the day.

But I think when you know people are watching and talking as well at the same time I think that's an added layer to it.

And yeah, like winning, I think winning is very good habit to be in. I think there's definitely players in the game right now that are winning plenty, but they're in that sort of mode of knowing what they have done a few times that got over the line, some events they might not feel like they should have won and they did, some events they win or -- you know, like I think it just happens that way.

I think for me Atlanta was great for me because I felt like I didn't do anything that different to the times that I would have been looked at as giving it away or having lost that, but I was lucky to have that experience where I did win.

There's no doubt Shane is going to win, like probably pretty soon and it could be something really, really big. And when he does, I think like, you know, or whatever experiences have come before will be a good thing.

Because you learn from them all the time. But yeah winning can be difficult. But at the same time he could win a tournament and feel like maybe he shouldn't win it because he didn't hit the shots -- I don't know, Shane's won a lot of tournaments, and, yeah, you look at the Ryder Cup.

So I don't necessarily think it's like -- I don't think it's like a pressure thing. I think it's just the fact that, you know, winning a tournament maybe just needs to happen and then he'll win a bunch maybe.



Q. To follow on that, did anybody ever say anything to you after you went through something that meant something to you, and do you talk to guys like Shane or other guys who have had the same thing happen? What do you say to them?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, of course I would talk to Shane and I would say what I would say to myself. Like you're much better at being there and that happening than not being there at all.

Like, you know, I guess you could easily look at Bay Hill last week. I would have rather been in contention on the last hole and hit it in the water and lost by one than, you know, finish 49th.

Like I would have rather done that. Like so I had -- you know, the close people to me like my friends out on TOUR would give me words of encouragement and a pat on the back or whatever it would be after the weeks where I didn't get it done.

Like I said, there will be times that I do that again and I'll get the same thing from my friends, and I'll do the same to guys where it doesn't happen and then you celebrate the times that it does.

That's just how it goes.

But like I say, I always believe you're better at being there and it not quite happening than not being there at all.

Q. Along those lines, sorry if this is a little redundant, but when you have a mediocre week like last week you have a knack to be able to bounce back. Did you it in after Dubai. You came over here you had a couple back-to-back top 10s. Is there a way that you reset?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Not really. I think every week is a fresh week. I hope I do have a really good week this week after sort of struggling a bit last week. I will definitely have worse weeks in my career than finishing 49th at Bay Hill. I know that.

But, no, I think, again, you try and I think you try and work and you try and practice to have your game at like I highly consistent level. And then I guess recently just when I've had a poor week like my game has come around and I've done things well and I played well the next week.

I don't get caught up in what might happen this week or expect that I'll play great or like go all out to sort of, right, I'm going to bounce back this week after not having a good week.

Just know that you always feel better when you know you're doing the right things and working on the right things in your game, and whether that takes two, three weeks, four weeks, two months for it to come through, for it to come good.

Because a lot of time you don't get the results straightaway from doing good work. But I think if you know you're doing the right things, then good things will happen at some point. That's sort of the mindset that I have. If you can bounce back straightaway and have a great week, then that will be great.

But it's always every week is a fresh start and whether you've won last week or whether you finished last, everybody starts again on Monday and everybody starts at level par at the start Thursday, and you have a chance to potentially have the best week of the year or whatever it may be.

So always try and go into the following week with a good mindset.

Q. Luke going to captain the European team for a third straight time, and I think it feels universal that people just think he does everything right as a captain. I'm curious from your perspective has he done anything specifically for you that made you feel more comfortable? Has he managed your preferences in a way that you would point to when you talk about his captaincy?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think he's done great job of being very -- he's had a lot of communication with all the players. I think he's done that. I think he has like a great leadership style. He's definitely grown into that leadership role that he has.

He's not going to be -- he's never going to be the loudest in the room, but he, as a leader and a captain, he probably has the strongest presence. I think we all respect that very, very much.

For me I've always been close with like anyway over the years. I think I've always felt very comfortable. If he ever asks me a question or wants to talk about things I've always felt very comfortable talking to him and being open.

I think that's a big compliment to him. I think does he that with everybody. I think nobody ever feels like they can't say anything or anything like that. He's definitely been very good.

I mean, like he's been great he's given me great partners in the Ryder Cup. I think I'm very grateful for the people that

I've played with in the Ryder Cup. He's done a good job of that.

Yeah, like he just -- like he never really asks sort of what position you might want to play in, singles or foursomes or four-balls. I think everybody trusts him to do that.

But then he always makes you feel great about it. Like he makes sure you know why you're playing in that position and all of that. So like he continues to learn all the time. I think he's very keen on that.

Yeah, he's been an amazing leader for the last few years. Looking forward to the next two years under him.

Q. Does he make you think about how you would want to be a captain?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I have learned off every captain that I've played under in any tournament, in any format. I think I probably have a lot of similar personality traits to Luke, so I probably resonate with a lot of his leadership.

So, yeah, I'm trying to, if I was to ever get the opportunity in the future of course I'm trying to learn as much as I can and take that I think. You know, there's definitely players at a certain point in their career or players that do it very, very well and you try and pick up as much as possible from them.

THE MODERATOR: All right Tommy, we appreciate your time best of luck this week.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Thanks, guys. Thank you.

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