

Valspar Championship

Wednesday, March 18, 2026

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Matt Fitzpatrick

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Matt Fitzpatrick. Matt, welcome back to the Valspar Championship. This is your fourth appearance here. You had a T-5 in 2022. Coming off a second at THE PLAYERS Championship must feel pretty good coming here this week, right.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, yeah, obviously I like this golf course a lot. I think it's a great test. It's a great one to follow the Florida Swing, Bay Hill, Sawgrass and here is a great run, as well as Cognizant, it's four great golf courses. Yeah, happy to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Four top T-25s in six starts this season. How would you say your form is?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, my game feels good. I kind of said even before last week that I feel like I've just not really got the most out of my game. Last week obviously got a lot more just not quite enough. It's been a good start.

THE MODERATOR: A week like last week when you're in contention, it takes a lot out of you. How is the fatigue level or the fitness level right now.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, definitely. Definitely. I definitely feel a bit slower. A bit slower this week so far. But fortunately off in the afternoon tomorrow and sort of finish the pro-am now, so got a little bit of practice to do and it won't be a long day so I'll have time to recover.

THE MODERATOR: Viktor surprised us in his press conference yesterday. He talked about coming out here on Monday and playing before the storms came. He was asked about playing on Monday, does he ever take a break. And he kind of said, not if he can help it. He's out there all the time. What about you, what's your theory on that?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I'm probably the same. I don't really like to take too many breaks, just because I feel like I lose the feeling of what you might have. I think particularly for me, I didn't come over until Monday



morning, so I couldn't join Viktor on that one. But my plan was to come and chip and putt on Monday, but obviously it didn't work out with the weather in the afternoon. But definitely I know how he feels and I feel the same way for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Questions, anyone?

Q. While on the subject of Viktor, what is it that you admire about his game and what did you learn about him being a Ryder Cup teammate?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, his work ethic. His work ethic is fantastic. He's always looking to improve. He's always looking to find that perfection and play great golf. I think that's, you know, I feel like everyone out here is that -- obviously Viktor is a fantastic player, and what he's achieved in the game already at his age is incredible. I think that obviously comes from his work ethic.

Q. You had a little chance now to digest Sunday, what are your takeaways from the finish?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, disappointed, obviously. I felt like saying this morning I feel like I only hit two poor shots really the whole day. I didn't really feel like my tee shot on the last was that bad, it just, it's a little bit too straight, didn't kind of get the wind off the right.

Q. Which were the two bad shots?

MATT FITZPATRICK: One of 'em was on 7. I missed a wedge, I missed the green with a wedge. That was a bad one. To be fair, the other one is probably the tee shot on 16 was a poor one. But even with that, it would have been difficult, my bag style probably didn't allow for me to go for it anyway. But, yeah, disappointing. I played more than well enough I felt like to win and obviously played so good on the Sunday. Missed a couple opportunities on 9 and 11 to get up-and-down for birdies there. I feel like that was, obviously looking back it's easy to say that that's kind of where you lost a bit of ground, and even though Cam didn't birdie those holes, those were chances at the time to catch Ludvig even quicker. But, yeah, just, yeah, proud of obviously the way I played and I'm really pleased with the



way I played, obviously just disappointing not to come away with a win.

Q. When you did realize that Ludvig had made some blunders?

MATT FITZPATRICK: When I made birdie on 13. Obviously I looked back at the leaderboard and Ludvig had disappeared from the leaderboard. So that was kind of when I knew it was like, okay, well, I'm leading now. This is what's going on. I knew Cam was 12, obviously, and then from getting on to 14, seeing it again, it was like, okay, it's kind of between me and Cam at that point. I think it was a two-player affair at that point, and with four to play.

Q. Interested in your decision about going back to your old bladed putter. You played really well in the fall last year with the mallet, won in Dubai, and obviously in the Ryder Cup. So the reasoning why you went back to the old one Bay Hill and then last week?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, just didn't start the season putting well. Obviously looking at the numbers there wasn't really, there wasn't really much of a difference in improvement. I think make rates with my blade was significantly better, but strokes gained in general was pretty equal. I think my make rates sort of between 5 to 15 feet were much better with the blade, and that kind of convinced me to go back. If it isn't broke, don't fix it. Just, yeah, that's all there was to it really. Just kind of looked at the data, felt like I had long enough with the mallet and, yeah happy to be back using what I have now.

Q. You spoke Sunday about getting 15 to 5 and then it's another level to get 5 to 1. How much of that is mental psychological and how much of that is just refining your game?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I think it's more refining the game. I feel, like I said Sunday, I feel like I can, if I get myself in those positions, I feel like I'm strong enough mentally to handle that and compete and push for the win. But yeah, over the last 12 months I've really seen a big improvement with Mark Blackburn on my approach play, and that was always something that I felt was lacking that didn't necessarily get me to the top of the game. Since that improvement I feel like I've become more of a whole-rounded player, and you continue that and the more opportunities you give yourself with your irons, you hopefully are going to take some, take plenty one week and, you know, you walk away with a trophy. So that's been the biggest thing I think, just the improvement in approach play. With that is, you know, just then it's about sort of getting all four of your areas of your game to work together in a given week.

Q. How much did you have to change your approach to approach play?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, yeah, a lot, yeah. It's a big technical difference from how I was swinging it before. Definitely felt different, but in a positive way. It's been really beneficial.

Q. Why do you think this field keeps improving, the strength of this field keeps improving at this tournament?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Why?

Q. Why, yeah.

MATT FITZPATRICK: I think the golf course is obviously great. It's a great test. Guys want to play good golf courses, tough golf courses, I think. I also think the big thing is the schedule. The way it is, you know, I think if you swap this one for Cognizant this week you would probably get the same strength field. You would get a stronger field at Cognizant. I know that's been a bit of a gripe by a lot of people that -- you know, I really wanted to play the Cognizant this year, but if I play that it's then seven in a row if I'm playing this one as well. It just becomes a lot. When you look at the best golfers in the world, they're not playing seven in a row, the majority of them. So you really have to manage that really well.

Q. What's the best, what's the change that you made with Mark Blackburn that has helped the most?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Just sort of retracting my arms, really. Like I naturally have quite long arms, so just the retraction, feeling like the shorter, you know, it just creates, means my body has to work a little bit better, and using my body better it results in better shots, basically.

THE MODERATOR: Was that part of the preshot routine last week? I hadn't seen you do that before.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I've been doing it since I started working with Mark. But yeah, I needed to have a bit of an extra emphasis from Friday onwards. Thursday we did some work and felt like I wasn't doing it enough, and that kind of led to a little bit more rotation in my right. Then Friday onwards I played much better and I think it's mainly down to that.

THE MODERATOR: The other thing that you do that's a little different and unique from everybody else is the cross-handed chipping. We're starting to notice more guys doing that. Have you had questions from other players?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, loads of questions, yeah. Actually, I spoke to, obviously, Kevin Kisner about it. A few guys have asked me when I started, why I do it, and stuff. So, yeah, I've had good conversations with other players about that. It's been interesting.

Q. Cam Young mentioned in his press conference that his thought on the 18th tee was, I want to hit the best drive of my life. I'm curious, you had just taken one left on 16, the day before had trouble, what were you thinking at that moment?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Well, last time I finished top 5 there I think I played the 18th in 3-under. I hit driver every day, ripped it, basically hit it to, not 375 like Cam Young, but like hit it 320 down there every day. Like I say, I made birdie three of the four days. So I had that in my mind all week. I had that in my mind all week. I knew I could play that hole well. I like driver. I felt like it suited my shape for that hole. Particularly with the way the wind was. I felt like it worked really well. I stood on that tee, it was the same thought. Obviously saw Cam hit it down there, straight to driver. Obviously aimed to do the same. Felt like I hit probably a decent drive, didn't necessarily get enough help from the wind, and maybe started it a hair too far right. But it probably bounces five yards further left and you're in the semi rough and it stays there and you've got some form of a shot at least, rather than having to chip out.

Q. You picked the tee up fast like you knew you liked it. On the second shot, was there any thought of going more, going a little farther or were you worried about the water?

MATT FITZPATRICK: No, we didn't have the ability. The way the slopes are all towards the water and just trying to land it in the fairway in the pine straw, get it out and hope to try and get up-and-down for par, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: You showed some real class and sportsmanship last week after being defeated by Cam and you congratulated him, but also his entire family, on the way in. Is that something that was instilled in you like as a real youngster, and is there an incident that occurred early in your career that kind of helped teach you that?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, definitely. My parents have raised me to be polite and, you know, and kind. Yeah, it all comes from my parents. The biggest example would be, I won the U.S. Open, my dad ran past me and went to shake hands with Will Zalatoris, you know, to say, obviously, commiserations. I know Will has mentioned that before to me. So, yeah, it comes from my parents, they raised me to be that way. I think -- I know a lot of people say, Oh, Cam

didn't really show any emotion as well. I'm sure he probably understood the situation. Obviously I'm right there, it's not like you give a big fist pump and cheer. That to me was a huge sign of respect too. You know, not to be fist pumping in my face or anything like that. So that's another reason why I've got a lot of respect for Cam for not just his play, but just as a person as well. And sharing, you know, two seasons in TGL now we got to know each other a little better. And my brother went to college with him, so I know he's a good kid.

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