

# Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open

Wednesday, 30 September, 2020

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

## Tommy Fleetwood

Press Conference

**Q. Tommy, welcome to a freezing room. Talk about your recent form, great finish in Portugal but disappointing week at Winged Foot?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, to be honest, you know, I think since being back out playing again from late summer when I first came back out and after that COVID lockdown, I think I haven't played great, and again, I think, the way it's been, the year has been very different. Some guys have had lots of things there. It's been great to get home to kind of start seeing -- even sporadically just getting that kind of guidance, some positive practise sessions after Portugal. Portugal I played great and I chose to play because I knew I had gone home and I was having to work on things. Struggled with a few things. I didn't putt very well but overall I hit it great on what was a very, very difficult golf course to hit fairways can get into position, which is disappointing. This year, three events -- a bit of an asterisk on your career, if you like. That week, Bryson did great.

But again, been home and feel like my game is progressively -- I'm feeling a lot more motivated is not the right word but I'm feeling more optimistic about every sort of practise session I'm having and going out there and hitting it this week, which is great. I'm not like, you know, particularly happy with my form, but I feel positive.

**Q. Your first Scottish Open since 2016, Castle Stuart?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Maybe, yeah. I genuinely love coming to Scotland. I get a great vibe every time I come here, St Andrews, one of my most favorite places in the world. Staying here, sat in the room last night -- but the last few years, I've kind of taken the decision where I feel like having a week off before, the way the schedule has worked, I feel like having a week off before majors is giving myself the best chance to prepare. It's just always fallen that week before The Open, and I remember the first time I missed it, I was -- I said this is what I want to do. Kept it like that most of the year. So this year, it's been nice to get a chance to come back, even if it is a bit later on in the year and a bit colder.



A Rolex Series Event

**Q. Pictures of you out on the course. What are your impressions of it?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I didn't watch much last year, I was in Ireland at the time, but I know the scoring was really low. I turn up here and I don't see any low score out there the way conditions are out there. I think for the first few holes, we were talk, me and Tony Finau were saying, it's great, every hole is a different challenge. I think especially with the wind is pumping the way it is, there were so many crosswind shots, you're going back and forth a lot. Especially today, I think it's been a really good test. You have to change what you do on each hole, and given all the different demands of the hole. I enjoyed being out there. Felt like stretching my game a little bit. And again, when you're working on things, having those kind of conditions on a pretty tough golf course is nice because it challenges you.

**Q. The last few years, following a different schedule, how weird is it with all the interruptions and stop pages, Scotland in October, Augusta in November? How difficult is it?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I just think there's been changes that have been out of our control. I think just getting to play -- I could easily get to take it for granted at the point where we are in the year, yeah, the schedule is funky and things have changed, but I think it's easy when you've played for a while now to take it for granted that we are playing all the time. You look at when everything first happened, oh, we're done and we're going to be in lockdown for a year, everybody, you always think the worst.

There's definitely things that I have missed. Again, playing the week before the U.S. Open, something I haven't done before. I think for sure people have missed having -- you don't have your coach every week, you don't want to do that, you're professional golfers and you should be able to figure things out on your own but the truth is you can't and everybody needs a bit of guidance now and again. Definitely missed that.

Yeah, it is different and it's a strange year but at the same time, you know, turning up week-in, week-out with a chance to play golf tournaments, to win golf tournaments,



to win majors, that's the way you've got to look at it. You kind of nailed that straightaway that yeah, things are different and a bit weird, but it doesn't actually stop you from having the ability and having the chance to have a great season still.

There's still plenty of good events to play, and it's been -- I would say, as strange as it's been, I had a long spell in America which I -- again, I'm not going to use terms -- say I enjoy it, rather be home rather than seven weeks away or whatever but I feel like I've learned a lot from things being taken away from you or things being slightly different and I think I'll take them with me forever, FOR as long as I'm playing, really, maybe knowing what I missed at certain times or what I didn't mind about it. It's just been very, very different.

**Q. You've got some great Scottish golfing memories. How confident are you that you can add to that collection this week?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I always -- every week in golf is a blank canvas. Everybody has the opportunity, and I always feel like my good golf is clearly good enough to be there at the end of the week. I am excited about playing here again, and like you say, I do have some great memories in Scotland.

I was thinking of it while I was traveling over actually, was that one of the -- just at Archerfield, a match-play event and I got beat by Graeme Storm in the first round. I actually look at that as the turning point when I started coming out of my slump that was for like a year that was well documented. I actually lost that match but I played and drove home and thought, I haven't played like that for a year. I didn't miss a shot.

So Archerfield was a turning point where I got things going on again, and that's a nice little positive and nice memory coming here, which is one people probably wouldn't think about a lot.

**Q. You're much-loved give Scottish fans. How much are you going to miss them this week?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: That's always, I think I turned the golf on the first time they started playing in America when it was the first event back and I kind of watched -- I was watching the players, and I said, well, yeah, there's no fans, but everybody looks like when they are playing, what they are doing is just the same. They are going through -- everything is the same. Same routines. Everybody looks really focused. When it comes to winning, it means the same.

When I started playing, again, it's different, but there's certain times when it feels more different than others. I think that the majors clearly have that feeling, and certain other points where you're on the golf course where you might have a good moment or a bad moment, and you think, that could have been very different.

I think playing in front of Scottish fans, because they are such good fans, they know exactly what they are doing. They will be missed. Me personally, I'll miss the odd dog roaming around on the golf course.

**Q. I know when you won at Gleneagles -- the dog -- pretty special to you, wasn't?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, it was. I actually got asked about it a couple of times. I think it was like two Nike calls to like ambassadors or friends, whatever you call it, and Robin, he asked me about that time, and I was like, I can't believe it. Yeah, fond memories, Scotland, the country, the golf course, always looked fondly upon me for whatever reason that. Is I've always loved coming to Scotland and played. Had some great experiences. That was one of them. That was great,

**Q. Apologies if you asked this already because I came in late for the interview. Talk of playing the CJ Championship and ZoZo ahead of Masters, are you committing to those two events ahead of the Masters and what might you want to be playing ahead of Augusta?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I haven't committed to those yet. The guys were very kind. I got invites into those events this year which is great. Yeah, I want to keep playing, obviously. Like I said earlier, part of the reason why I'm playing quite a bit at the moment is because I feel like I've been working hard and I feel like I'm progressing in the right direction, and I want to get out on the golf course and I feel golf can change at any given week and hopefully my time will come again and it could be any week from now.

I want to play those events that are clearly great events until world golf and that will be it until the actual Masters which is November.

**Q. From one Fleetwood to another, at Ryder Cup, your energy was phenomenal. How easy is it to replicate that energy at all the competitions?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Pretty much impossible, I think. The Ryder Cup seems -- it's been my one experience, and it was for sure -- it's definitely like it's own individual event, and it brings with it emotions that you just don't seem to be able to get every week. I mean, you don't really see

moments like -- that you get at The Ryder Cup on a Friday morning and Friday afternoon, still two days left of the tournament, and you just don't seem to get that. I think what makes The Ryder Cup, for us golfers, for starters, it's the biggest sporting occasion in the world when it comes to The Ryder Cup, and we're lucky enough that we get to play in it, and the fan interaction, seems impossible to replicate. You have 60,000 fans and there's 16 people on the golf course, it's not a lot.

For me, that was just -- it was, it was an amazing experience. Again -- you look at it and I think it's more -- it's more of a massive motivational factor that you know what you experienced that week and you want to do it again. Everybody just wants to do it again and keep playing in those things and I think week-in, week-out, you're not going to feel like that all the time but you look at that and it is definitely a motivation for you.

**Q. Just for the record, I would like to see Tommy Fleetwood replicate that in a major?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Me, too.

**Q. If there is one major where you would like to see Tommy Fleetwood on the trophy, which one, and which golf course?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's The Open by a long way. I'm not overly picky about the golf course to be honest but I think coming from where I'm from, very, very lucky that I have -- I mean, Birkdale is my ultimate. I'm from that town. Hoylake is just down the road and Lytham is just down the road. Those are pretty much as close to home as people ever get to play in their careers, and they are all Open Championship for me, and it's the Old Course, winning at St Andrews.

If I win all four of them, then great, but take one.

**Q. Just to follow up on The Ryder Cup, apologies if this was asked earlier, late in the call, but we haven't seen Molinari this year, I believe he's just moved to California. Are you keeping in touch with him? Is he in good spirits, working hard? What is the latest from the Molinari camp?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, we speak. I mean, we speak quite regularly, anyway. He's been a busy man moving home, moving the family and everything. That was something they really wanted to do and they have done that now. I'm sure he's very happy with it.

I think he'll be looking forward to coming back. I think they have done that move now, and he can start progressing to

where he wants to play again and stuff. I think everybody will be happy to see him, but I think he's just taking care of things that he knew he wanted to do and the family wanted to do, and then he'll be back very soon, I'm guessing.

**Q. Since Tiger won the Masters, do you think that maybe took him longer than expected to get over that, that mental hurdle that he had to get over?**

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No. I think -- I saw him the following week at Harbour Town, I played a practise round with him and he was absolutely fine. Golf, as in life, you go through great spells, and for sure, about, what, six, seven months, he was the best golfer on the planet pretty much, not far off. I think everyone had expectations, huge for somebody like that when he's playing like that. He's gone through a slight loss of form, and then this all happened, COVID and everything, and he's moved house.

I've had my good times and poor times in my career so far. I'm sure my poor times will come again like everyone else, but he's far too good to not win again and start playing well again.

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