

U.S. Open Championship 2022

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Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

Matt Fitzpatrick

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area here at the U.S. Open Championship at Brookline. We are joined by Matt Fitzpatrick.

You obviously have some history here. What do you remember about that week at the U.S. Amateur?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I remember everything. I've been back a few times since, and love coming back here. Obviously love having my family here the whole week and having my brother on the bag was really special, so yeah, it was just great memories.

THE MODERATOR: Talk about the golf course a little bit; how does someone need to play to perform well here and what have you seen so far today?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I have not been out today. I'm going to go out tomorrow. But yeah, back in 2013 it was -- you had to hit fairways and greens. The fairways were really, really tight and the rough was thick, and that's why we really did well that week, as well as scrambled really well.

I think by the looks of it from what I can see, it's the same again, which is nice, and yeah, I'm just really looking forward to going out there tomorrow and playing.

Q. Talk a little more about the experience of your brother on the bag and just that whole week, I'd seen some other interviews of him talking, and just how special that was to share that with him.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it was amazing. It's a memory that will live with me forever. I can't believe it's nine years ago really. It's crazy how fast it's gone.

But yeah, to have him on the bag and to have, like I said, my parents there, as well, and to win such obviously a special event was amazing.

Q. Was there one moment that you recall from your conversations with him during the course of any round or match play or whatever where it just sort of stuck

with you if he said something?

MATT FITZPATRICK: No, not really. It's too long ago now. I've forgot most of it. But I just remember in particular I think it was the semifinal, he left my wedge by the first green, and we became really good friends with the police officer who's here this week.

I've not seen him since. I was like, oh, he's left my wedge on the last green; can you go get it. That was something that was interesting that happened.

Q. You're playing so well right now. You're one of the few guys that has experience here. How do you manage that? How do you reconcile that you're essentially a favorite in this championship?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I mean, for me, this U.S. Open is obviously different for obvious reasons for me just because of winning the U.S. Amateur here and just having such an amazing experience last time.

For me I feel like this week is about just enjoying it and knowing that I do have a chance because, A, I've had success here before, even though it was a long time ago, and B, like you say, I've been playing well.

I'm just really looking forward to it. It's been on my radar for years that I knew it was obviously coming here.

Yeah, that's all there is to it for me this week. I'm staying with the family I stayed with when I played the Amateur here and my parents are here, as well, so I'm just really excited for the week more than anything.

Q. What special preparations do you have before a major championship like the U.S. Open, and especially one at a challenging course like this?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Nothing different to a normal event to be honest. Just do the same sort of stuff, same practice, just figure out where to hit it, where not to hit it, and yeah, no different from week to week.

Q. As far as the LIV stuff goes, with the guys who are

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considering it or seem to be considering it, do you get the sense that everyone is kind of discussing it with each other, or is it something where guys are keeping it close to their chest before they make a decision?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I don't know, no one I've spoke to personally has said, oh, yeah, by the way, I'm going to make the jump. I don't know on that front. It's obviously the talk of the TOUR at the minute. Everyone wants to know what's going on and who's going and who's not going.

Yeah, it's an interesting time, and obviously sort of things have been shaken up a little bit, and I guess it's just interesting.

Q. Are you guys tired of hearing of it?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I am, but it's like everyone was fed up with hearing about it and they were like, all right, just start already, and now they've started, and everyone is like, oh, actually this is quite interesting, what's going to happen now.

I think it's sort of kicked up a little bit more interest again, and we'll just see what happens the next few weeks. But yeah, it's interesting.

Q. In the nine years since winning here, what has surprised you about those nine years with your career, and what has gone pretty much according to how you thought it would go?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Probably almost that I beat Rory McIlroy in driving last week (chuckling).

If I look back at my game nine years ago, I would say I'm the same player but a very different player. My strengths are still my strengths, but they've just got better in my opinion. I think looking at what I've achieved, I think sometimes maybe I don't give myself enough credit for what I have done, but my personal opinion, I'm always trying to get better, I'm always trying to do things better and find ways I can improve.

I think for me, if someone had told me I'd be stood here and this is what I've achieved and done, I would have snatched their hand off.

Q. Your strengths being what?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Putting and driving. Yeah, putting and driving.

Q. How did you sort of reflect on Southern Hills, both

maybe immediately on the Sunday night and then the days and weeks afterwards?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I mean, I've still not really had a chance to do a full reflection, to be fair. I was home for a few days and then left to go to a wedding and then played -- this is my third week in a row. So I've not really had a good chance to sort of sit and look back.

Obviously it was disappointing at first when you come off the golf course and sort of the realization that you had a chance to win and you've not taken it. But it's funny, I was just talking to my coach, it was kind of -- I looked back and I was actually more angry about my finish in 2021 when I tripled the 17th at Kiawah than I was finishing the way I finished a few weeks ago.

I think that probably shows me how much I've come along as a player and also maybe just sort of got better mentally, just kind of accepting it is what it is, and more taking the positives out of it than the negatives.

Q. Does sort of the 95 percent of that week which was positive, does that give you a big boost coming into an event like this?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, definitely, definitely. I feel like I'm playing well. I feel like I just made so many mistakes last week, just simple bogeys that you clear them up and all of a sudden you're picking up a lot of shots. Sure, everyone can see it, but they didn't see how bad mine were, so...

But it's things like that that when it's your week, those things, you clean them up and pick up another couple of shots, and before you know it you're winning. It's just about trying to keep doing the same thing, keep doing what I've been doing all year, and yeah, just I'm looking forward to it.

Q. You said you're staying with the same host family this week; what are their names, and is it something where you guys keep in contact a lot or did you just hit them up after all these years?

MATT FITZPATRICK: No, no, we've been in touch a lot. I actually came for Thanksgiving when I was in college briefly, 2013, and then played golf with them a couple years ago here, saw them just before the U.S. Open in 2016. We came for a week and played the course and stuff.

But yeah, they're called the Fultons, Will and Jennifer Fulton, and they've got three kids. Yeah, staying with them this week, which is going to be good fun.

Q. Was that your first Thanksgiving?

MATT FITZPATRICK: It was, yeah. I don't really like Thanksgiving food. It's not for me.

Q. What's your least favorite food?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Of Thanksgiving? Green beans. Worst thing ever invented.

Q. Given your strengths that you mentioned, driving and putting, do you like U.S. Open setups?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, before U.S. PGA, I finished my -- my best major finishes have been in U.S. Opens. I've had a couple of 12th, I think maybe another top 20.

I do probably prefer the U.S. Open setup the most, just because I just love how tough they tend to get the golf courses.

Particularly I know it got -- didn't get the best reviews, but I thought it was fantastic, was Shinnecock in 2018. I thought it was absolutely unreal. You had to know where to hit it and where not to hit it, and that's point of a practice round, and when players were complaining about that it was obvious that they didn't do their homework.

That's what I like about the USGA, when they set up golf courses they set them up tough, and normally the best player wins during that week.

Q. Just wondering what Billy might've said to you on the Sunday because it started well for him with the lead surviving unfortunately, did he say anything about going forward and your chances to win majors, because he's obviously had a lot of experience?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Not a lot. Not a lot really. He's obviously experienced that a lot himself, and he just sort of said the same thing, kind of what I was thinking really, is just keep doing what I'm doing and just keep giving yourself chances.

The more chances you give yourself, you're eventually going to knock one of them off. I think that's what he told me, and that's what I believe in.

Yeah, just got to keep doing what I'm doing and hopefully it'll work out.

Q. If you don't get that flier on the first hole on the final round, different?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, of course. Like I said earlier, it's the same for everyone. Everyone can kind of say this and that. Those things happen. When it's your week, things like that don't happen or they hit the TV tower and come back on the green.

Q. It feels like over the last month, maybe it's started at Southern Hills, but you're just getting more attention as far as you're doing a press conference here, you're playing in feature groups. We can see it from the outside; can you feel that? I don't know if it's different interactions with players or more cameras around, but I'm always interested when guys make that jump what that feels like.

MATT FITZPATRICK: It's because everyone is leaving the PGA TOUR. That's why. They're digging up the dregs. (Laughter.)

Listen, I feel like I've been lucky in Europe ever since I came out on TOUR that they've treated me incredibly well. I've been in TV groups, been in a lot of media stuff that they do. The European Tour have been great with me for that.

I know particularly coming over to the PGA TOUR not really having a ranking or -- I know for a fact, Billy has told me stories, Westy was World No. 1. I don't know if he was a member of the PGA TOUR, but he was first or second group off, so he's best player in the world and he's not getting good tee times.

I just think it's -- I don't really know what it is, but you sort of come over to the U.S. as a European and you don't necessarily get thrust into the limelight straightaway compared to Europe, whereas if you're American you go over and you're straight into the TV groups.

I think there is a little bit to do with guys that have jumped ship and gone to LIV, and I think at the same time I have played a little bit better, as well. I think it's a bit of both.

Q. How would you say the trajectory of your career changed when you won here in 2013? Do you think things would have played out any differently had you maybe perhaps not made it through to at least the final?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I mean, I guess I probably would have -- I don't know if I would have done four years. I don't know if I would have passed my first year.

I think for me sort of looking back, winning the U.S. Amateur, all of a sudden it opens up all these doors. I never realized how big of a deal it was over here until after

winning.

You play all three -- you play three of the four majors, got invited to Bay Hill, got invited to Memorial, RBC Heritage. So I've got all these events that I've been invited to, and just opportunities to get experience playing professional golf.

I think without that, you don't win a big tournament, you kind of go to Q-school having not really played much professional golf experience, and I just think having the experience playing against some of the best players definitely helped me. You see where your game is at, and you see what you need to improve on, what they do well.

Obviously because of winning here, it sort of gave me that experience.

Q. Given your recent comment on green beans, someone would like to know your thoughts on clam chowder given it's a classic New England dish.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Also terrible. Never tried it but probably terrible, yeah.

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