

U.S. Open Championship 2022

Friday, June 17, 2022

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

Matthew NeSmith

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Matthew NeSmith, 1-under 69. Talk a little bit about your round.

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Yeah, I just played solid, very simple, boring golf as they say. Hit a lot of greens, didn't give myself too much work on any par putts or anything like that. Hit it pretty good, just did everything you're supposed to do for the most part.

Q. How does this course suit your game? Two rounds in the 60s at the U.S. Open.

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Yeah, it suits my game very, very nicely. It's not overly long, which is nice for me. I don't know if I could compete with the big hitters in distance. But it's just if you put yourself in play, I can let my iron game shine. That's kind of where I like to live, and hit a bunch of greens and see what we can do on a weekend.

Q. Your last four finishes on the PGA TOUR, T31, T51, T57, T37, so you're making cuts but haven't exactly been up near the top. How important were those weeks, though, to get you to a place where you are right now?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Yeah, I'm never going to be mad at playing four days of golf. I'm always happy making cuts. Obviously we'd want to win golf tournaments and be in contention, but if we're playing four days, I always feel like my game is trending in the right direction. I feel like you can focus on a few areas here and there and just tighten your ship. But I feel like everything is moving in the right direction, it's just a matter of time.

Q. Do you feel like you can win this week?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Yeah, absolutely. I think everybody here feels like they can win. I would hope so.

My wife, we watch a lot of horse racing and stuff. We're not going to enter any races that we don't think we can win. I'm just going to go out here and keep doing what I've been doing and see where the chips fall on Sunday.

Q. How has that been working out for you, the horse racing?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Thank goodness I'm not into any of it. My wife has some horses, and not into any horse racing but they train horses so she likes to watch and root them on on the weeks, so we watch a lot of it.

Q. When you first got out and even going through this process of playing, was there ever a time where when you made the cut, when you're in decent position, you look at the names around you and did that ever get your attention?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: At some point in time you kind of start to notice some names here and there. You start to -- every kind of round feels the same. You start to settle into some rounds.

They're just guys. If you saw Rory McIlroy in the locker room, he's just a nice dude. He's just going to say hello. Everybody is the same. We put our pants on the same way, put shirts on the same way. There's just a lot more people following him. But that's what we do in this business. We try to play golf, and the better you get, the more people follow you around, so you'd better enjoy it.

Q. I guess what I was leading to, in an event like this for most players, is it more likely the names get their attention or the golf course?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: I would say for me it's definitely the golf course. The cream to the crop rises, it always does for the most part. If you keep of keep your attention on the golf course, then you're just trying to do what you do, and the only reason we play with other people in this game is for them to make sure we don't cheat. You have to play with somebody. They're just regular people. We see them each and every week. We're just going to keep doing what we do.

Q. What's been the round that's felt the biggest for you in your life pressure-wise?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Final round of Q-school was pretty



big.

Q. How did you handle that?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: I played pretty good. I shot a couple under, did exactly what I was supposed to do and ended up getting through.

First round of the U.S. Open in 2015 was pretty big for me. That was my first major, a couple professional golf tournaments in. Sunday of Valspar, pretty huge for me. It's been a while since I had been in that position, so to be able to kind of get my bearings again and feel the heat and be in the last group and do some things was pretty cool.

It all feels the same. It all feels the same. It feels the same being in the final group of Valspar as it did when I was 12 years old playing nine-hole events.

Q. So you think tomorrow will feel the same then?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: It always does. It always does.

Q. If this is to identify who's playing the best golf, when you've got the score you do through two rounds, does that give you any confidence that it's obviously identifying you as playing some of the best golf?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Yeah, I've played some great, very consistent golf this year. It's what I've kind of hung my hat on this year. I think I've made 15 or 16 cuts in 23 or 24 events, and played a lot of four-round days. I feel like I've just been playing really consistent golf, and I'm not going to be afraid to fail going out there, I'm not going to be afraid of success if we go out there, I'm just going to keep doing what I've been doing, keep working on the things we've been working on and we'll see where the chips fall.

Q. Have you ever been afraid ?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Oh, yeah, for sure, absolutely.

Q. Give us an example.

MATTHEW NeSMITH: Every round of golf I ever played before probably three months ago, four months ago.

Q. What changed?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: I just don't care anymore. Well, I obviously care. I say that, but I'm not going to be afraid to go out there and play like garbage. Like it is what it is.

I spent too long of my golfing career being afraid of success and being afraid of playing bad golf. I just want to

go out there and play the way I play at home and play the way I do when I feel free.

If I'm going to go out there and lose my PGA TOUR card because I played scared, I'm going to regret that 20 years down the road. I'm not going to do that anymore. It is what it is.

If I play like shit, it is what it is.

Q. Can you articulate what it means to be scared of success?

MATTHEW NeSMITH: I mean, it's more so -- it's kind of like what you said a little bit. Like you come down the stretch and you just kind of keep doing what you're doing and all of a sudden you look at that leaderboard and you're in third place with names like McIlroy and Jon Rahm, guys who have been there and done that before. It's like 15 years ago when people would crumble with Tiger. They're like, oh, no, here it goes.

It's being afraid to succeed because you don't know if you're quite ready for it. Scottie Scheffler said a great thing a couple weeks ago at the Masters. He's like, am I ready for all of this, and it's something that we don't really know until we get there. You've got to be in that situation. You've got to go through those tough days.

Even though it looks like a lot of success on Mr. Scheffler's part of Sunday of the Masters, I'm sure it's one of the hardest rounds of golf he's ever had to play.

Q. He said that.

MATTHEW NeSMITH: I can imagine.

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