

# U.S. Open Championship 2022

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Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

## Matthew Fitzpatrick

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We are here with the Champion of the 122nd U.S. Open. Matt, how does that sound?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Unbelievable. Yeah, it's just -- the feeling's out of this world. It is so cliché, but it's stuff you dream of as a kid. Yeah, to achieve it, I can retire a happy man tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: There were so many expectations on you this week that probably made this even harder. What have you learned about yourself?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I think there were expectations, but I didn't feel them, in my opinion. The field's such a strong field, so many great golfers playing.

But I think for me, obviously, the expectations were for me to play well, but I feel like having won the U.S. Amateur here as well, I just felt so comfortable around this place. Know where to hit it; know where to miss it.

Yeah, just happy to be unbeaten around this place.

**Q. Did you believe in destiny before this week? If not, or if so, do you now believe in it?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yes and no. Actually, no, I'd say yes. Billy had been saying for a while, the time will come. You're playing so well. Just keep doing what you're doing. It will come. It will happen. It will happen.

I put myself in position after two rounds and then played well yesterday. I just really believed this could be the time. Yeah, for whatever reason, because of my success here before, it just felt like this was the time.

**Q. The shot on 18, your approach, can you walk us through? You walk up, you see it, and trying to decide, okay, play it safe, go for it? What was going through your mind there?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I'll be honest. One thing that I've been really struggling with this year is fairway

bunker play. Had a good session at US PGA, and my coach kind of helped me a little bit. Still not 100 percent out of it.

One good thing is the way the lie was is it forced me not to go towards the pin. It kind of forced me to go well left anyway. If I had to hit straight, it was kind of a chip across the green or whatever it was.

But I just feel like I'm a fast player, and when I look back, it just all happened so fast. It was like just kind of natural ability took over and just played the shot that was at hand, if I was a junior trying to hit it close.

And I didn't mean to do that, but I just committed to the shot we kind of planned and came out of it squeeze fade. Yeah, it was amazing.

**Q. If you're playing fast and you're just hitting a shot, is there any calculation of, okay, I'm up one, I can play it safe, or you see it and hit it?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I just felt I had to hit the green. If I could hit the green -- if I made par, it puts pressure on Will. I knew full well Will was going to hit it close. He's one of the best approach players on TOUR. That's the good thing about knowing your stats. Who know who you're playing against.

I knew he was going to give himself a chance. When I hit that shot, I thought at least I've got a chance too. I was a little worried I gave him the line. I was saying to Billy that I had that putt in the Amateur in the morning session in the final, and I actually really fancied it. I thought it would turn more than it did, and I practiced it in practice as well.

I think the whole situation, I was just trying -- make a par on 18 and put the pressure on him and force him to make a birdie.

**Q. Scottie was in here earlier and he said, I don't know how Matt's hitting it farther than he was months ago. Maybe he's on the Bryson plan. How did you do it? How did you remake yourself --**



MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I've done my drug test, and it was negative, so we're all good (laughing).

Since 2020, I spent a lot of time working with Mike Walker and my coach and biomechanist Sasho Mackenzie. We did a little bit then, and he gave me this speed stick called The Stack. I've been doing that religiously week in and week out. It's like going to the gym basically. It's like a training program. I'll be honest, it's worked wonders.

I feel like maybe three years ago if I was in this position, four years ago, and I was playing with Will in the final group, I'd be concerned that I'm going to be 15, 20 behind him. And I felt comfortable all day that I was going to be past him, which to me gives me confidence obviously going into the next shot knowing that you've got less club.

I don't know. There's a bit of a mentality thing that when you're hitting it past people, it's quite nice.

**Q. Can you take us through what happened on 15? You wait for ten minutes on 15. You hit it right, and then hit an unbelievable shot there. What was that sequence like for you?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: I didn't realize how far right it had gone. I should have shouted fore. I hope I didn't hit anyone there.

It's funny. I feel like all year we've just had moments where I've just not caught a break, just not had a lie, just not had a bounce. This time I get there, and the ball's sitting perfectly.

It was one of the best shots I hit all day. It was a 5-iron from 220 and hit it to 18 feet. It was a great shot. To do that and take advantage of the break I had was fantastic.

**Q. You stole my thunder a little bit, but just back on the length, I know you do your stats on everything you do. Was there a time during the training when you realized, okay, this is happening. Can you take me through the progression?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Just before the end of 2020 I started doing it. I did it loads over the winter, and I came to Abu Dhabi, and I felt like I was hitting it so far in Abu Dhabi.

And I shot a 62 in the practice round, and I was, like, this is easy. You just hit it miles and wedge it on and hole the putt.

Then as I played the season, it was kind of the same thing. I was hitting it decent. Then I came off it in 2021 around summertime, a few things going off and a couple of

injuries, and I stopped doing it. But then towards the end of it, kind of coincided with when I was driving it poor is when I stopped. So it's improved my driving not only length, but just overall, everything.

Since I've been hard on it from the start this year, I've noticed an even bigger jump without really feeling like I'm going after it. I saw where Rory was -- I don't know what he hit off the tee. I saw where Rory was. I saw where Jon Rahm was on 5. Again, I don't know what Jon hit.

But for me hitting driver and pitching it on the green, I didn't actually expect that this morning. I thought I was going to be short because a few guys I watched were shorter, and that was kind of a real good indication of where I've got to.

**Q. Can you hear the people watching you just seeing the little guy just smashing it?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: No, I just don't think they have a clue. They watch it come off the face, and they're like oh, cool, yeah. Actually when you get down there and it's a lot further up there, I think that's probably when you realize.

**Q. For those of us who don't know Sheffield, what kind of place is it, and how did that shape you as a person and a competitor?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Sheffield, where I grew up playing golf, Hallamshire. Windy, tough, tight, really small greens. All jokes aside, it's actually similar to here. Just doesn't have the length. But always really windy.

When growing up, it was kind of the same wispy, high rough as well, so you had to learn to control your ball flight and chip well because you just weren't going to hit that many greens.

**Q. The town is kind of scrappy, though, right?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: It's a steel town, but I love Sheffield. It's great. It's where I'm from. It's where my football team's from. Yeah, it's where all my best pals are from, so yeah.

**Q. Do you feel like that's kind of your personality, though?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think so. I think -- not to like compare it to my football team, but I feel like I'm the same deal. Not expected to do well, not expected to succeed. I've won a major today.

I feel like I certainly work hard for it, and that's kind of where I've grown up from is that's the mentality of everyone

around there. It's kind of you're told it's not upper class at all. It's kind of -- I can't think of the words. I've been out of the country too long. Yeah, it's certainly like underdog mentality, and you work for what you get.

**Q. So Will described that second shot on 18 as ballsy to take, incredible to execute. Can you put into words what you think that shot is?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it's one of the best shots I ever hit, there's no doubt about it. You look throughout the week, the shots that you hit and the different times, it's strange because that probably is such a huge shot in the moment. If I'm honest, I look back to my three approaches into 15, 16, and 17 as all really, really good shots. 18 was kind of just a bit of hit and hope.

**Q. All weekend long, you've been nails. To also see up close the guy you're paired with to match everything, sometimes pass. What did you have to tap into mentally, and where did you have to go to stay concentrated and focused on you and execute and obviously earn the trophy next to you?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: That was the thing for me. I had to just concentrate on my own game, concentrate on the plan that we had to play the golf course, hitting shots in the right areas. Like I said to Billy before, if I can hit 18 greens, we'll be in good shape.

For me, it was never leaving myself short-side, which I didn't do once. Always leaving myself fat side of the hole. I'd argue this was one of my best ever approach play rounds.

**Q. You were talking earlier in the week about how winning a number of majors makes you a legend. What's your target in mind now that you've got one?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Six is the number.

**Q. Six is still the number?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: That's the number that we all agreed on. I've got a bit of a way to go, but it's a good start.

**Q. Seriously, has it given you a taste for it? I know it's just only happened, but what sort of targets, and what does it do for you going forward?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: It's funny, after Shane won the Open, and we were playing somewhere, and he was telling me a story of one of his majors giving him abuse or he wasn't playing very well or something. And he just said,

but it didn't really though because I just thought I've won a major. I'll be using that one a lot for when things aren't going my way.

Yeah, it's definitely -- you want to go win more now. , there's no doubt about that. I'll just keep doing what I'm doing. I'm not trying to change things. I'll probably have a sit-down meeting with everyone and just try not to -- you know, try and make the right decisions going forward.

It's easy to still go off track. I've just got to keep doing what I'm doing, and hopefully more will come. I'm delighted with one so far.

**Q. Next one, obviously, very special, St. Andrews 150th Open. How much are you looking forward to that?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: It will be great. I love playing St. Andrews. It's a great golf course. It's going to be interesting, obviously, with the length and everything. And now I'm a bomber, I'll probably be driving most of the greens (laughter).

Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. I've got two weeks off now, which I couldn't be happier about. Get my head around a few things, and then I guess we'll go to St. Andrews.

**Q. How did you end up working with Billy, and what do you think this win means to him after all these close calls and majors?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: It means the world to Billy. I can't tell you how much it means to Billy. It's unbelievable. I know it's something he's wanted for a long, long, long time. To do it today is incredible.

We ended up working together. I was kind of in between caddies. He just split up with Lee, and just happened to work out.

It's so funny. He kept telling me the first time on the job, I'll just do 25 weeks and maybe get a fill-in for the others. I think he's had about two weeks off in four years, so yeah.

**Q. Very rarified air any time you're occupying a record with Jack Nicklaus. What does it mean to you to do something in the sport that only he has ever done in his career?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: It's just me and Jack?

**Q. Only two males.**

WILL ZALATORIS: Any time you're sharing a record with



Jack Nicklaus, it's unbelievable. So for me to have that as well is incredible. He called me up down there just at the presentation to congratulate me. Coming from someone like that, it means the world.

**Q. The crowd there on 18 seemed borderline out of control. How did you really keep the head space there? It seemed like you had to fight your way through all those people?**

WILL ZALATORIS: It felt like Billy and me were going to get stampeded, but we didn't. We're fine. I love that. I love when the crowd is excited and loud. It's what makes it more exciting.

I love football, and I love the atmosphere in that. I know golf's different, and it's got to be all nice and calm and everything, but sometimes it's good to be a bit different.

**Q. Why this week? Why this major compared to all of the other majors you played in?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: This week around The Country Club, I've won around here before. I love playing this golf course. It suits me so well. It suits my game well. I've been playing well for a while, and I think it all just fell into place that this was the place it was going to happen.

**Q. With what you talk about this week, with the added distance, with the knowledge here, do you think like your game has almost evolved to this point where you can achieve this kind of success?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Definitely, definitely. It's taken a few years obviously, but I definitely feel in that position now, yeah.

**Q. Did you ever get tired of Billy's Seve imitation?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: No, I love it. It's so funny, which reminds me he needs to tell a story to someone. Thanks for reminding me there.

**Q. The other day I asked you about the intensity of the march to the bottom of the 72nd hole. That was Thursday night. Do you have any further appreciation for that now?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yes, absolutely. It's a long week. I said to Billy going up 14, I said, Billy, I hate this. This is horrible (laughter). And up to that point really, I'd really not missed many shots.

I can't tell you how happy I am it's over, but at the same time, I can't tell you how happy I am, how well I've grinded

out there and how well I played. It means so much.

**Q. So after being down two to Will after 11, was it ever any feelings of doubt, or did that only motivate you more?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Yeah, sure, there's a little bit. You know, there's seven, eight holes left. You've got plenty of time still, but you'd rather be two clear than two behind obviously.

I think for me, like I just felt like I could keep hitting the greens and giving myself putts, my putting would take over and I'd make a couple coming in, and fortunately that's what I did. Yeah, it worked out nicely.

**Q. First of all, when you said you turned and said you hate it, which part of it do you hate?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Everything (laughter). No, it's just like -- for me last night, you leave the golf course, I'm tied for the lead for the U.S. Open. You then sit in there stewing with it the whole night, the whole evening, and I slept brilliant, but like you just kind of relax in and you're still thinking about it, you're thinking about it, you're thinking about it. And you're just trying to tell yourself, just stop. Just have a break. Just stop thinking about it. It's not there yet. But at the same time, you kind of want to go. You want to play it like straight away.

Then in the morning I'm just watching the golf. I'm like is it time to go yet? Is it time to go yet? Then the time goes, and it's like oh, shoot, we're ready to go now. I'd best start hitting some good shots. Hopefully I hit some good shots.

There's just a lot of stuff going on. And I said it yesterday, I just don't think people realize how hard it is to win a major. There's only four of them a year. Yeah, it just takes a little bit extra.

**Q. I couldn't help but notice when you were going back to your bag after you were done, you took your watch out. At that time your hands were like -- they were going?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: Were they? That's news to me.

**Q. I couldn't tell if that was the adrenaline of the moment. Did you feel that way on 18? How do you handle adrenaline?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: No. Particularly the putt on 18, I was just like just give it a chance but cozy it. Don't smash it like I've smashed a few today.

For me, hitting and chipping and everything isn't an issue whilst I'm playing. It's the putting. It's a little bit, I've noticed over the last few years, the sort of issues are a little bit more -- you're a little bit more nervous on there. Obviously it takes more control. So I feel like it's a little bit harder.

Yeah, I mean, on the whole I managed to keep them at bay for the most part. I was just happy that I made some coming in when I wasn't necessarily feeling the best.

THE MODERATOR: What club did you hit out of the bunker on 18?

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: 9-iron.

**Q. It seems like your personality has always been humble and self-deprecating. How do you convince yourself to be arrogant in the moment when you need it as an athlete?**

MATTHEW FITZPATRICK: My parents -- I mean, I wouldn't be without them. They did such an amazing job with me. That was the thing, they always taught me to be humble and to be down to earth, and if they're not bringing me back down to earth, my friends are. That will always be me.

It doesn't matter what we're doing, how well we're playing, I'll leave here tonight, and they'll give me abuse about something, I know they will. My friend is just nodding back there.

I don't know, I've always felt like I had it. I've always been competitive, and that comes from my dad as well. My dad was always competitive with us as juniors. I just love winning. I absolutely love winning. I don't care who it is, but I just want to beat everyone.

Although it doesn't come across -- like I don't show it much because I like to be quite reserved. Yeah, I just love beating everyone. It's as simple as that. Anyone else on TOUR would say the same thing. That's why the guys are the best, and that's why they play so well. Just love winning.

THE MODERATOR: Matt, congratulations. You are our U.S. Open champion.

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