

U.S. Open Championship 2026

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Southampton, New York, USA

Shinnecock Hills Golf Club

Matt Fitzpatrick

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We are here with 2022 champion Matt Fitzpatrick as well as World No. 4. Talk about being here at Shinnecock this week.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, always great to be here. Obviously been a while, 2018. It's actually hard to believe it's been eight years since we've been here.

Yeah, really like the golf course. It's looking great already. Actually a little bit disappointed that they're out there watering it right now.

Q. Obviously playing well coming into a major I'm sure puts you in a good mindset, but talk a little bit about your recent form.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it's obviously always nice to be coming in here with some sort of form. It's been a great season so far. There's just obviously a few things to tighten up to try and take it to that next level and get it across the line in the bigger events, and hopefully can kind of piece it all together this week.

Q. Knowing there's a couple factors this week, including with the wind, we're seeing some of that wind today, how do you prepare for this type of test?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I think you've obviously got to be in control of your ball flight. I think that's the biggest thing. When the wind is this strong in pretty much every direction, as well, with the holes that you're facing, you've got to be able to have a lot of shots in your armory, really.

I feel like it's a great golf course for that, and it allows for that. It allows for shot making. I think that's what makes it a great test overall.

Q. Your pre-shot routine looked (indiscernible). I'm wondering if I'm just seeing things.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, nothing really. It might have looked different on Sunday just because of the rain. I didn't want to take my normal two practice swings just because I wanted to keep the ball dry as long as possible or as quick

as possible. That would be my only difference.

Q. I feel like you hear a lot of golfers say that on really fast, scary greens, you still want to putt aggressively. You want to have an aggressive mindset. How do you do that on really scary, fast greens, have an aggressive mindset when you're just trying to get the ball going?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think that probably varies a lot player by player. For me, I wouldn't want to be putting aggressively on these greens.

I think you've got to pick and choose your moments. If you're hitting it to 12-foot down the hill, I don't care what anyone says, you're not being aggressive on that one. You're trying to die in it. I think you have to pick and choose your moments, and that's where course management comes in.

I think you can try to leave it under the hole on some. That is obviously quite a bit of a perfectionist type of course strategy, I guess. But I think with the way they are and with the wind forecast, as well, it's easy for them to get away from you this week, and you're going to have to be mindful of that.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about how perhaps different it looks today than 2018 and the last time you played?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it's obviously much more greener for now. I know that the forecast doesn't look particularly dry or hot. I think it's quite humid already out there, so that's obviously going to keep some moisture in the greens compared to previous U.S. Opens here. Fairways are a little bit wider than last time, as well.

But yeah, for me personally, I want it to get as dry and firm as possible, as U.S. Opens do, and just see where that takes us.

Q. Would you rather play on a day like today, a practice round with the wind and the gusts, or would you prefer calm and just to practice some of your

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shots, or do you like practicing in this kind of wind?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I probably prefer calm, to be honest. For practice it's nice to have the calm to get an understanding of the golf course a bit easier when there might be a hole today that I've played where I've hit one club and I might never hit that again the rest of the week. So you're not really learning anything there.

I feel like at least if you've got baseline for when it's calm, you can kind of pick and choose as to how that's going to work for the rest of the week.

Q. I know you touched on it a little bit before, but coming into this tournament with such a strong 2026 so far, what do you make of what's gone so well for you this year? Is it something you've done different? Is it more comfortability? What's gone right so far?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I've always liked to feel like I praise my team a lot. They put in a lot of hard work for me and try and help me become the best player I can be.

Mark Blackburn as done a brilliant job from a technical standpoint on my swing. My iron swing is very different to what it was in the past, and that's been the biggest change, I think, from this year compared to previous years.

With that, that's obviously given me more opportunities, and I know when I putt well, I can putt well and I think take advantage of those opportunities. That's been the biggest thing.

I think looking at the stats this season, it's a case of hitting the ball closer, and particularly the wins, just taking advantage of that, versus previous years where I've not necessarily had that and having to rely on the other aspects of my game.

Q. You mentioned the irons. What's changed about your iron swing?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Just technically, just -- I don't have long enough to explain, but just technically it's just different to the past and what I've been working on.

For me, it's more of an understanding in my own mind of how that works and how to manage those tendencies that I tend to have in my game.

Q. Can you explain what your rationale or thinking is for wanting it to be more difficult? Is it because it takes more people out of contention, leaves the better players?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I think it's more a -- yeah, I guess you could argue that, yeah. I think the biggest thing for me is that I like -- I don't particularly like playing birdie-fests.

I don't think it's as enjoyable as having to -- take today on the 11th hole, for example, the wind is pumping in off the left, and I've chipped a 5-iron in there. If there's no wind there, you might be hitting 9-iron or whatever.

To me, I feel like it's more of a test of controlling your ball if it is windy, if it is firm. If it's firm -- I said it here last time. Obviously there was a big -- what's the right word -- meltdown of, oh, they've lost the golf course, they've lost the golf course.

I never believed they lost it. I don't think they lost the golf course at all here. I think, for me, it was difficult, and the strength of this golf course is greens and the difficulty of the greens.

But I do believe, aside from maybe 10 and 11, if you miss the greens in the right spots and do your homework, that you have opportunities to get up-and-down still. I feel like that is a patience thing. That is a skill in course managing, in hitting good shots that are on the green in those tough times.

I think that for me -- this golf course, I think when it is really tough like that, I enjoy that challenge because you have to do your homework, and you have to hit good shots, and that's what I think any good golf tournament should require.

Q. How much more difficult can it get here before it gets to the stage with people start talking about they're losing control?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it can a lot. Today the greens are really soft, much softer than I thought. I know there was rain last night, I think, and it is humid, so there's probably a bit more moisture in the greens.

With this wind, though, if it continues, which I think it is forecast, and I think there is some rain, too, but obviously it can dry out pretty quickly. It's obviously warm today.

I think, for me, if I compare it to 2018, I remember them practice rounds that it was actually quite firm in the practice rounds, so it might not be the case this time. But, like I say, it's in as great of shape as it is, and I know it's going to be a good test.

Q. You said you needed to work on a couple of things. Can you describe any of those things?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, just my driver cracked at the



Trust and still didn't feel like I'd found one that I was comfortable with for these last four tournaments I guess I've played since.

I've had good spells in those tournaments with the driver, but not that I've felt super comfortable. I had a good session this morning. I'm hoping that I've kind of found something that's going to help me for the rest of the season really.

And just putting, just wanted to put more of an emphasis on putting better. Just a couple things in just the way that the flow of my stroke and a few other bits and pieces in order to hit better putts.

Q. Can you talk about playing at such a historic venue? You've done well at the Country Club of Brookline, obviously, kind of embraced the history and what it's like to play championship golf at such a historic place like Shinnecock Hills.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it's always awesome to play this golf course, golf courses like this. When I think of U.S. Opens, that's what I think of. You think of these historic golf courses that have got such great memories of great championships and great past winners and whatnot.

To me, that's what a U.S. Open is. You go to these historic golf courses, and they're set up a certain way. You grew up watching U.S. Opens. It was tough. It was tight off the tee. It was firm. It was really hot.

I feel like Shinnecock summarizes that very well, particularly its history here, and even just going out there now seeing the golf course as it is, it's kind of how you picture a U.S. Open. For me, I enjoy those ones the most.

Q. Does it inspire you to play these kinds of historic courses?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I don't know if "inspire" is the right word. I prefer playing these ones. I do prefer playing these ones; there's no doubt about that.

I think they make for better championships overall, I would say.

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