

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 29, 2017



TOMMY FLEETWOOD

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Tommy Fleetwood into the interview room. He's making his first ever appearance at Hero World Challenge. Tommy, first of all, just get some comments about being here at Albany this week.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, great, great stuff. I think it was only midway through the year it was Justin actually mentioned it to me, we were playing in Ireland, "Are you going to play in Tiger's event at the end of the year," and I hadn't really thought about it at all. I hadn't considered it because I didn't really know I was in line for it. So yeah, it's just great. Great to get into the event, it's a great way to end the year. For me it's the last tournament I'll play this year. But yeah, it's always kind of a nice little thing to have in mind as a goal just watching that World Ranking knowing that I could end up in the event and get to Albany. Great to be here.

JOHN BUSH: Speaking of this season just recap what a year it's been for you.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: A good one. I set out this year with certain goals. I wanted to win a tournament again. I hadn't won for a few years and then I kind of excelled really. The Race to Dubai, that wasn't a goal at the start of the year. Halfway through the year I was leading it by quite a bit so then it became wanting to win it.

So it's nice to, although I haven't had time to reflect on that, it's nice to know that I've sort of ticked that box on my career, which is really nice. So I'm looking forward to being able to reflect on that when I have a chance to sit down.

But it's been great. I've enjoyed coming over to America more, testing my game, challenging myself in the world's best tournaments and playing the PGA TOUR a little bit more on different golf courses. It's been great, I've loved every minute of playing this year really.

Q. If you can a little bit talk about your team, you know, maybe coaches, Clare, everybody that contributed to this huge goal achievement?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, it's kind of like I'm close with all the people I work with. There's people I've been around a long time. Swing coach Alan, I went back to him a little over a year and a half ago but he's coached me since I was 12, so somebody I know very well, very close with.

Kev, my trainer. Again, known him for a long time, we're very good friends. Ian who caddies for me, 17, 18 years we've known each other now, one of my best friends, he's

going to be the best man at my wedding. And the other guys, Phil, putting coach, Tommy, psychologist, the people I'm very close with that I know well and as well as good at the job. We have a good relationship where we can say you can always give your feedback or say what you feel needs saying. I know they've kept me on the right path this year. Yeah, I'm lucky to work the people I work with really. I'm very grateful for the work they put in, but it's nice to spend the time with people that you like.

Q. Tommy, with all the Tiger news this week, just curious when did you first meet him, how, when, where, all those details?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Well, I obviously bumped into him at tournaments over the years when he's come to play Dubai or might have played the odd similar major or said hello in passing. Never had a conversation really until yesterday so that was the first time I had a proper full conversation. So it was nice to actually meet him in full rather than just saying hi and walking past and doing what you do when you're at tournament, which is great, yeah.

First memories of him, obviously watched him win his first Masters and I am from that generation that grew up watching Tiger Woods be Tiger Woods. So yeah, yesterday was kind of the first time I had a full conversation.

Q. What did you guys talk about?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: He told me I had been awesome this year, which is kind of cool. Hi, Tiger. Thanks. And then we were just talking about normal stuff. He asked me when I was going to get my hair cut and actually I had my hair cut yesterday or the day before and he didn't believe me. Just a trim. Just normal stuff, so it was cool to have that little bit of time.

Q. Because of the success you've had this year, does your schedule next year become trickier to manage?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's been nice -- from what we have looked at, it's been nice to -- obviously all of a sudden I'm in a stage where you pick tournaments. I got to that stage halfway through the year where I had to miss one in Europe leading up to The Open, something I never really considered before and end up missing such a big tournament. I missed the Scottish Open, which is one of the biggest tournaments of the year. Doesn't often happen.

So it's been nice sort of having that choosing your schedule. I'm going to be in America more. I think Genesis is going to be my first one in America after the Middle East and then I'm going to play quite a bit.

It's been nice looking at playing different tournaments, coming out to America again because, like I say, I enjoyed coming to work this year. Different things, different environments, new courses, it's been great, so I'm looking forward to doing that more.

And yeah, scheduling just got a little bit different really. It's a Ryder Cup year as well, but just going to look at tournaments. Play -- obviously perfect time for us in America is sort of January, February until May, and then we'll go back and then come back or whatever. But it's a great time to just be over here playing these events and looking forward to it.

Q. I came in a little bit late, Tommy, I was getting my hair cut actually.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: You got a trim as well.

Q. From having the really strong finish to your schedule this year in all the tournaments you play, was there any part of you that maybe thought about just maybe taking this week off?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No. So we talked about when we knew that I could get into the tournament before like the final deadline had been in, we sort of said -- me and Clare said that if we got into the tournament, it would be a great place to get married. So I'm actually getting married on Tuesday here, so missing the tournament wasn't really an option.

Q. Where are you getting married?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: On the beach. Actually, I think she's deciding that today. She was looking at like two or three different options again. Again, so that's not really my choice but I will be there. Wherever she tells me to be, I will be there.

Q. If you hadn't qualified for this, where would the wedding be?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's not even worth thinking about. I got here so we're all right. It better not rain now.

Q. Any idea, Tommy, what kind of schedule you'll play in the U.S.?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think I've only looked at the schedule up until like the end of May and I play quite a lot. So like I say, first one's L.A. and then you have that stretch around Mexico and the match play, Florida swing. Great tournaments to play. I'll play plenty. I can't really remember off the top of my head which one like if we did -- which ones we missed around major time or WGCs, but playing a few in a row is not a big problem at all. This is me sixth in a row and I think the shortest flight's been about seven hours. But I'm looking forward to being out and playing so it would be nice to just play and see how we go.

Q. Secondly, these are some of the questions we asked of Justin Thomas as well coming off such a big year: How do you follow it up? You've kind of got the same issue in a way, don't you?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, but it's nice. I mean at the start of this year, it was a bit of a

blank canvas where I've struggled for a year before, spent a few months working really hard. I had my old coach back, Alan. Started playing, and by the time the year came around, the goals that we'd made, it was like a blank canvas and I wanted to win a tournament again, wanted me World Ranking to start moving up, shooting up, getting the top 50 in the world, that kind of thing.

So it's nice to actually be looking at targets on such a good building block of having a great year. Expectations are a lot higher and it will be -- again, it's like a lot of work to make small improvements and it's harder and harder to pick -- you know, you want targets to be realistic but then you want targets that you can strive for and that are really out there. It's nice having that problem, really. How am I going to follow up such a great year, it's a nice question to be asked.

Q. What kind of target do you have for the Ryder Cup, how high a list?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, I massively want to be there. I've wanted to be there for the last two, just haven't -- it's come at a time I haven't played well enough or been a bit young. I mean I genuinely believe when it comes around it feels like the biggest sporting occasion in the world and we get the chance as Europeans and Americans to play once every two years. So yeah, I want to play multiple Ryder Cups in my career. This year, this year I'm obviously on a good sort of building block to get into that team. I'm a little bit out at the moment since points have started, but yeah, massively want to be there.

Q. Which tournament would you most like to win?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: All of them.

Q. Which in particular?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: That's a good question. I mean, in my career, The Open will always be No. 1, the British Open because it's that. But I mean, I'm not picky, I'll take any really when they come along. We'll see.

Q. The wedding's Tuesday in the Bahamas. Where's the honeymoon?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Hey, I want to go home. I've been away a long time.

Q. Usually you get married in London, have a honeymoon in the Bahamas.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, you know, but I like doing things a little bit backward. It's nice to be different.

JOHN BUSH: Tommy, we appreciate your time.