

MATT KUCHAR

KATHIE SHEARER: A great round today, Matt, but yesterday to finish at 2 under in those horrendous conditions, that really set today's round up, do you think?

MATT KUCHAR: Sure. Yesterday was hugely difficult and I was awfully pleased to shoot 2 under par in yesterday's conditions. I thought they were extremely challenging, particularly starting on the first hole. Saw quadruple bogey. I made a 10-footer for bogey there. Just getting through a couple of those opening holes were really tricky. To end up under par yesterday I thought was a great score, that certainly helped with getting me in good position to have a nice day today. Today felt easy compared to yesterday.

Q. Matt, have you just been able to roll on from Mayakoba, or is it just kind of the same kind of thing that we're seeing? Are you sleeping?

MATT KUCHAR: Mayakoba had pretty still conditions, there wasn't much more wind. I played as well as I remember playing for three and a half rounds.

Coming here yesterday trying to play in the wind is just a whole different animal. You could be hitting it good, but you've really got to be in full control of your golf ball with that much wind in play. I didn't feel like I was nearly as sharp as I was in Mexico, but I think a large part of it was the conditions. Today with some easier conditions I felt the game was a little easier today, which you're going to see a lot lower scores today than you did yesterday, but there's confidence and the confidence comes from some good play.

Q. Matt, you strike me as a grinding type of player, never prepared to give up, but how satisfying was it when you got home last night back to the hotel room to realize that you dodged a bullet yesterday by just grinding out that round?

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, it was really tough conditions. Like I said, hugely pleased with 2 under par. It was one of those days where you could easily see high numbers be posted. There's tons of trouble on most holes where if you could just avoid the big numbers. I saw the defending champion, Cameron Davis, make a couple big numbers, and they were out there. There's still some out there today, but yesterday in particular I thought the conditions were just that hard. Anything around par was a very respectable score, and to shoot 2 under was quite pleasing.

Q. Matt, it's early Friday, but you're very well positioned. Without preempting anything, when was the last time you went back to back winning titles?

MATT KUCHAR: Oh, must be playing against my dad when I was 14 maybe could be the

last time.

Q. Obviously you're in a very good head space, next two days now the confidence is high?

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, absolutely. I know there's great players here. I don't expect 7 under to be leading at the end of the day, I expect to be a few behind, but after two rounds, I'm awfully pleased with my positioning, pleased with the state of my game, very much looking forward to the weekend, keeping myself in contention and trying to go back to back.

Q. I wonder if you're able to isolate a shot or two today that really stood out in your own mind as to quality shots that you're very happy with.

MATT KUCHAR: Must have been the fifth was one of my better shots. It's a back right pin on the 5th. I only had 144 yards to the hole, just chipped an 8-iron thinking that 9 may bring in the front bunker. There was a little wind in off the left. The shot, the pin all kind of fit my game, the shape of the shot I hit, but when I hit it I knew immediately it was a great shot. I was pleased. I felt like I was taking risk out of play by hitting a little 8 as opposed to trying to force 9 back there. When I struck it, I knew it was perfect and ended up three feet under the hole, just when it came off and in the air, knew it was good. They're good feelings when you hit a shot and execute it just the way you want to, and that one came off perfect. That was definitely a highlight.

Think of the others. There was a great save that actually was -- it was a bogey, but the 17th hole I hit my second shot in the water, went up, took a drop. Risky shot trying to put my fourth onto the green. I hit a fantastic shot from I think it was 222 in to about 12 feet. I missed the putt, but it was one of my better shots of the day under the circumstances having just put one in the water. Still, hazards abound kind of everywhere on that fourth shot for me, so that was one I was really pleased with. Still figure it's a bogey, but it was a good bogey. That was a nice shot for me as well.

Q. Matt, a lot's been made of the big-name Australian players who aren't here. As the highest ranked player and one of the marquee foreigners in the field, do you feel any sort of extra sense of responsibility to make sure that you deliver?

MATT KUCHAR: No. When you travel abroad, you certainly hope -- I mean, it's a commitment to make this trip and you don't want it to be for naught. You kind of hate to make this trip and not be able to play the weekend.

But I think I've played enough golf, I've been around enough to know that you can't force anything. There's no -- I have a number of events that are sponsor titled from the Bridgestone Invitational to the RBC Heritage and the Canadian Open, and certainly have extra hopes to do well there, but you know better than to try to force anything in the game of golf.

We all love to be playing our best golf in the majors; it doesn't always work that way. I think I'm pretty good at managing the expectations. Sure, I would love to play well this week. You know, it's a big commitment to make it down here. But I'm not that demanding or forceful that I must play well or have to because I never think those end very well.

Q. Can you talk about how hard it is to make that dash from Mexico down here and continue to play well when you're jet-lagged, and golf is such a mental game and you have to fire up especially in the conditions you faced yesterday?

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, that's one of the reasons I'm so pleased with the state of my game, the form, the work I've put in to develop a swing that I think's pretty repetitive regardless if I wake up on the right side of the bed that morning. I feel like I know how to manage the game pretty well and I have a swing that repeats well enough to play well most weeks. That's been a handy thing, that's been something I'm awfully proud of.

And to be able to come down, definitely a bit of jetlag that's involved, but you still -- you know, the ball's sitting on the ground and it's there for you to hit it, and if you put a good swing on it, it does what it's supposed to do. So I try to make the game as simple as I just explained, but we all know the game is awfully complicated. There is an element of timing, there is an element of luck involved. I've tried to minimize those and I feel like I've done a pretty good job of that.

Q. It's not uncommon on the U.S. PGA TOUR for a winner to sort of bail on the commitments to a tournament the following week, but are you glad that you followed through and came down now after winning in Mexico now that you're in contention?

MATT KUCHAR: I would never bail, but I was looking forward to this event and I'm still glad to be here. I hope to see a bit more sunny skies here in Sydney, that would be more pleasing, but yeah, I've been excited for this trip for a while and certainly still glad to be down here.

Q. Matt, we hear it on the TV all the time, I'm just wondering whether all the way down here in the southern hemisphere the "Kuch" chant gets around. Have you heard any of that at all?

MATT KUCHAR: I've heard a bit, I've heard a bit. It's not in full force yet. Hopefully on the weekend they come with a little more noise.

Q. Are you still a resident of Sea Island?

MATT KUCHAR: That is home.

Q. And forgive me if this has been covered in the last couple of days, but was it a difficult decision for you to make -- obviously there's a PGA TOUR event there this week. Was it tough for you to make that decision?

MATT KUCHAR: Yes, that is a tough one. That's a hometown event. It is hard not to be waking up in my own bed and supporting the hometown event, but this is a trip that I saw on the radar, got excited about the opportunity to play here, play World Cup. It's just a great two weeks, a great adventure for the family.

I think in talking to all the guys involved with the tournament, everybody understands, Davis Love better than anybody, that I played that event a lot and if I need to miss it this year, it's okay. They hope to see me again next year. It's nice to have a guy like Davis running the event that understands the travel and the different pulls from different events. So it was I think just a whole lot easier having a tournament director that is a player like Davis.

KATHIE SHEARER: Any more questions, ladies and gentlemen? No? Thank you, thank you so much for coming in. We hope to see you tomorrow.

MATT KUCHAR: I hope so.