

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
February 21, 2019

MATT KUCHAR (-5)



Q. We were just saying you played so well out there today. Forget the hiccup out there at the last, that happens. When you are playing that well, what's it like inside?

MATT KUCHAR: It's fine. This course is tough. Every hole, if you're not driving it well, there's some real trouble. And fortunately I was driving it well and feeling in very good control. There was many opportunities to make bogey. That was a great save on 8. And sorry I gave one away there on 9. But other than that, it was very steady golf and I like it that way.

Q. After all that's happened, you received a very warm reception behind us here on the first tee. How would you describe that moment?

MATT KUCHAR: It was nice. The fans were great. I had so many fans come up and say glad to see me and really good luck this week, and they were cheering for me, hoping that I could win again in Mexico. So, it was a great feeling to have so many people pulling for me out here.

Q. Kuch, your round of 5 under par to start, how pleased are you with it?

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, very pleased. The course is tough. Fortunately, had great conditions. And I was hitting the ball well, able to stay out of trouble for the most part, and awfully pleased to be 5 under.

Q. You have been around a long time. This golf course is a little bit of a throw-back in terms of its style and layout. What do you like about it?

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, I like it that way. Really have to drive the ball well. Have to think your way around, have to plot your way. Sometimes the middle of the fairway can be a tricky spot. You need to be on the right side of the fairway to have best angles at the pins. And this is just one that requires great ball-striking. And it's fun to work your way around a place like this.

Q. Interested to hear how guys deal with the altitude, how it's changed, lots of different strategies out there. I don't necessarily want to know what you do with it, it's how much did you do in terms of prep before the tournament to get to the point where you felt like you were dialed in completely?

MATT KUCHAR: Sure, there's definitely prep. We use the TrackMan to figure out some numbers, do that on the range, take it out on the course. And I've got a little cheat sheet

inside my yardage book that tells me how far each club goes. I try to make it easy. I try to not do any more conversions on the golf course. I try to just go with whatever it says. If my pitching wedge goes 150, instead of doing the conversion, I just know it goes 150 and work from there. So, I try to make that part easy, even though it's definitely still tricky.

Q. Could there be a harder week to be a caddie than this one?

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, this is awfully difficult. Certainly the climbs, the altitude, all the work you have to do, and figure out the shot. And then catching your breath, up and down these hills is tricky as well.

Q. There's been a bit of attention off the course the last week. We don't need to talk about that because you covered it in depth. Just want to know in terms of your performance, has it gotten in the way, or has the golf course been the place to get away from it and do what you do best?

MATT KUCHAR: Last week was hard. It was actually great coming here, having so much support from the local crowd. I had so many guys in the practice rounds come up and say, congratulations on the win at Mayakoba, I hope you win again here in Mexico City. It was nice to have fans still supporting me.

Q. The lie there in the bunker, which -- it was a near perfect round for you. That was a hard shot, wasn't it?

MATT KUCHAR: I didn't think it was going to be that hard. The ball was on such an upslope that I thought it gave me a chance to that pin. But the edges of the bunkers are packed really hard and I just bounced into it. I flew it going in, and tried to use a little less bounce, try to dig a little bit, and I still bounced into it and had a lousy bunker shot. But the one dropped shot was too bad. Other than that, it was really good golf.

Q. Because you hit so many good shots today, you're number one on (inaudible) the hole, when you finished there. What was going right for you with the ball-striking?

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, ball-striking has been good. This course, it's so important. I feel like it's a throw-back, an old-school golf course, where you really have to be a good ball-striker, have to be working the ball off the tee. And I felt in very good control. It's a good place, because if you're not, it can be a tough round.

Q. And being the third year at this golf course, do you have all the notes and altitudes so it's not that big of a deal anymore?

MATT KUCHAR: It's still tricky. I mean, for instance, the last shot on the ninth there, I thought when I hit it, I thought I had a perfect shot, and it just came off a little too far. And that's one of those things that altitude gets you. But for the most part, I'm getting the hang of it.

Q. Some general comments of your round. It's nice to be back here in Mexico after winning here at the end of last year?

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, sure is. I had a great reception here. Fun being back. Lovely golf course, love the people that come out. I know coming in that it's a demanding golf course, and you have to play some good golf, but I think it rewards good golf, and it penalizes bad golf, and I think that's a sign of a great golf course.

Q. Welcome to Mexico. What makes you play so well?

MATT KUCHAR: I wish I had an answer. But Mexico certainly has been very good to me.

Q. (Inaudible) story of last two weeks, or --

MATT KUCHAR: It's been a great reception. All the practice rounds, had so many people come up and say, congratulations on the win in Mayakoba, hope you do well again this week. It's been a wonderful reception. I remember being here a couple years ago for America's Cup and having just a great time. And I still see a lot of the same people that were out four years ago, still come out and follow. And it's just been great to see the support.

Q. What things to get better tomorrow or even play better?

MATT KUCHAR: You know, I would be awfully happy if I kept plugging along with 5 unders. I would certainly take three more of those.

Q. What about the greens?

MATT KUCHAR: They're tricky. Listen, there are a lot of putts that you get scared. You can run one just too far by. I feel like there were a handful of putts from inside of 10 feet, I felt like I was just using lagging speed, just trying to make sure I didn't get too aggressive and leave myself four or five feet coming back. So, you always feel more comfortable when you can be aggressive putting, and here you never feel like you get an opportunity to be aggressive. You always feel like you're a bit defensive in your putting.

Q. Thanks, Matt.