

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
August 11, 2021



TOMMY FLEETWOOD

HALEY PETERSON: We would like to welcome Tommy Fleetwood to the virtual press conference room here at the Wyndham Championship.

Tommy, welcome back. You're making just your second start with last year being your first appearance at this tournament. So what did you take away last year and look forward to this week?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I enjoyed the course last year, I really, really did. It was my first time here. It's playing different this week. It's a lot firmer, especially on the greens. I like the Carolinas, I think it's lovely. I think the people are great, I enjoy the courses. So coming back is a really nice feeling and I'm pretty sure it won't be my last time. I enjoy it here.

HALEY PETERSON: And 136 in the FedExCup, talk about how big this week is for your game to solidify a position to make a deep run in the FedExCup Playoffs.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's not going to make or break my year. Like I think I've had a long enough season, I've had enough events to be doing a lot better and I haven't, so I'm not going to like, I'm not going to come into this week and overload myself with pressure thinking I need to get into the Playoffs.

Fact is, I'm not there. I really want to be there and I also, I mean I just said it, I could still win the FedExCup. Like I could still have a great run and go to Atlanta and win the FedExCup and I'm not going to lose sight of that.

But also in terms of where I'm at with my game, I'm still working, I'm still getting better, I'm still sort of moving towards the golfer that I want to be and the way I want to play, and whether I make the Playoffs or not, come Monday morning that doesn't change how I'm playing or where I'm at and I still need to work on things. Playoffs or not, still need to get better. I still need to improve, but I feel like I'm on the right track.

And yeah, I'm really not going to try and force the issue or put too much pressure on myself in one event when it's been a long season where could have and maybe should have done better.

Q. Question I put to Justin first, if it doesn't go your way this week, would you consider playing one or two before Wentworth? Obviously Ryder Cup isn't an issue, but just to maybe find the form you're looking for?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, schedules change. I think the one that I would definitely look

at would be Rome before Wentworth. It's been sort of a long grueling season already, so if I get time off given to me, then nice, but I still think, yeah, I want to play, I want to continue to get on the golf course.

I'm obviously wrestling with the game and results at the moment where I feel like I'm doing a lot of things well and just can't quite sort of build the momentum that I want to or get the results that I want to, so I think playing is definitely the right way forward for me. Yeah, this week doesn't go well, I'll probably -- obviously Wentworth is definitely in the schedule and I'll probably go a week before that as well, which gives me a couple events. And then there's the Ryder Cup, which is so important to us all, so it will be a nice run.

Q. You're talking about your game not being where you wanted, Tommy, but you've spoken to us on a number of occasions about how much more difficult things were before 2018 and Nedbank. Will you sort of look back and think, hang on, this is only a blip compared to what you've been through before?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Well, it's just a blip in form and results, but if it is a blip, then it's a nice one. I mean, I've just played The Open where I had a great start. I've just become an Olympian, I played in the Olympics and actually went into Sunday night with a chance of winning a gold medal. I've got the Ryder Cup coming up in September. As blips go and if this is how it stands, I feel like I continually get better, than this has been a nice one, as they say.

Yeah, I've been in much worse off situations than this and that's probably why I feel not as panicky or a little bit more positive about it as a whole.

Q. Tommy, you referenced a long and grueling season. You look back to September and you look at all the big events we've had, six majors, you still have Playoffs and a Ryder Cup around the corner. As a player, what did you find to be the biggest challenge of meeting -- just meeting the challenge of all these tournaments?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think probably on an -- on an individual basis, I would say the travel has probably been the hardest part for me living in the U.K., whether it's been moving the family out to Florida for a couple months or whether it's been traveling back and forth two weeks at a time when we have to quarantine and stuff, and I guess making those small sacrifices, I would say that as an individual has been the hardest part.

But at the same time we've had the chance to play when people haven't. People have been struggling a lot more than PGA TOUR players. We've been very, very lucky since the start of golf again, which was the first sport to come back last year, we've had full schedules, we've continued as normal, we've had a ton of majors and it's been great in that sense.

I'm not the type to sit and make excuses, I think we've had it great. Travel being a bit harder or not, there's still been a lot of events to play and it's still been great being able to come back and forth and play.

Yeah, it's been a long season and, again, like not much time off, not much time to mentally reset and maybe that makes things harder when you're lacking momentum to kind of make a switch. Still, having the chance to play week in and week out, we're very lucky.

Q. And in a quick Ryder Cup question for you, you're firmly on that European side. What's your relationship like with Padraig Harrington and what do you think he brings to the table that's distinct to him?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think Padraig has always been from the first time I ever played with him, which was at the Dunhill in 2011, I asked him for some advice then. He's always been somebody that I've enjoyed talking to about golf, I've enjoyed playing with him, I've enjoyed watching him over the years. I think he has a fantastic record individually and in the Ryder Cup, very strong mind. From playing in Paris where he was a vice captain, there was no task too big or too small that he would do. I think he's going to be great.

And he's been sort of vocal with the players building up to the Ryder Cup. I think he has a fantastic persona and he's somebody you can be very comfortable in the company and I'm looking forward to playing under him and hopefully playing well for him.

Q. I'm just curious, here we are Wyndham Championship, we're at the doorstep of the Playoffs. You're looking for results right away, I would assume. So I'm curious with your pre-round range warm-up routine, what does that look like as you're practicing, getting ready for these important rounds here?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's getting shorter and shorter. I'm spending -- like I've cut it down to about 35, 40 minutes now. But I think as the year's gone on, what I've realized is the shorter I do it, the more I focus in, the more each shot actually means something. Like I found myself -- like I'm fortunate that I'm quite a -- my body is very injury free, I remain very sort of loose, it doesn't take me that long to warm up. So I think the longer I take, the more I end up waiting around, probably hit a few extra shots, probably tinker with something and then before I know it I'm going out and thinking about something I shouldn't.

And that probably is a good thing going into this week. The less I give myself a chance to think about things, the better, really, and just play golf. If I end up hitting it well, putting well, if I end up doing great, then that's fantastic, but if I don't, then it won't be like for reasons of me thinking poorly or being in the wrong state mentally, so I think that's important.

Q. Is there a certain aspect of your game that you tend to overthink, slip into in that respect?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I can overthink anything, really. I love the game, I love improving and I love thinking about new things. So I think I can easily slip into something like that. On tournament days especially, keeping it simple as possible is very important for me.

HALEY PETERSON: That's all the questions we have. Thank you so much for taking the time. We appreciate it, and good luck this week.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Thank you.