

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
December 9, 2021



HARRIS ENGLISH
MATT KUCHAR

DOUG MILNE: Like to welcome the defending champions of the QBE Shootout, Harris English and Matt Kuchar. Thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Obviously you guys have had tremendous success, not just last year, you've come back as champions a few times.

Harris, you're making your seventh start in the event, never finished worse than second. Just some thoughts obviously on kind of a light-hearted week to kind of head into a little bit of downtime. Just some thoughts on being back here this week.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, this is always fun tournament. Like you said, been here seven times and it's just a fun way to cap off a great year. To be here in Naples, the weather's awesome, it's a fun tournament getting to play with one of my buddies, Matt, and we've had a lot of success here and a lot of fun and it's just a great week.

DOUG MILNE: Similar question, just some thoughts on being back and having a good week.

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, this is an invite you look forward to every year. Being defending champs, you know you're going to get the invite, so it's definitely special. Harris and I have just had a great run and really been fun. Every year I look forward to getting another chance to play with him. So excited to see him bust out with a great year, be on the Ryder Cup team, do some really special things this year. It's been fun to see kind of the evolution of his career and still be able to kind of play alongside him in this event.

DOUG MILNE: I know you had the two wins, Maui and then marathon playoff in Hartford. Same question for each of you guys: What are you most excited about, what part of your game, what do you feel like's kind of clicking for you as you head into a little bit of downtime?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, it's been a great year. It's nice to get some -- get a couple more wins this year. I would like to say it started here. We played great here, I think we won by nine shots last year and you can take a lot of that momentum. I feel I was playing great golf going into Maui last year and ended up winning the tournament. Yeah, you're always working on things and you can use great weeks like this to work on your game and kind of jump start your 2022.

I'm looking forward to next year. Obviously had a great year this past year and looking forward to bigger and better things. Keep working on it, keep getting better and see if I can give myself some more chances.

DOUG MILNE: Matt, just some thoughts on what you're kind of impressed and pleased with as far as your game kind of coming around.

MATT KUCHAR: Thankfully, things have turned a corner. It wasn't a banner year for me, but it's turned a corner. I had a nice steady fall where I feel like I'm starting to get more and more control of the golf ball again. There were times when I wasn't sure if it was going to be off to the right or off to the left and that's a hard way to play golf. Now I'm starting to feel like I'm gaining control again and kind of continued working at it. We've got a great relationship and I think highly of my instructor, Chris O'Connell. We Feel like we turned a corner and starting to get back to Matt Kuchar golf again, so it's been nice.

Q. I would imagine you guys have been asked this many times, but could you give us key reasons why you've gone on such a great run in this tournament? Winning this tournament by nine shots is like Tiger winning by 15.

HARRIS ENGLISH: I don't know about that.

Q. Nine shots in a scramble? What are the keys for you guys?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I feel like we complement each other really well. We both are really good putters, Matt's one of the best putters I've ever played with and we just seem to hole a lot of putts around this place. He's obviously a really straight driver, really consistent. I hit it a little further than him so we kind of play off each other. I try to give it a rip on some par 5s and we just stay in a lot of holes.

I don't know, somehow this course fits our eye and we have a lot of looks at birdies on the alternate shot and the best ball format. Like last year I think that's where we really separated ourself is we played really well during the modified alternate shot. I can't remember what we shot, but I think we really separated. Got to hole putts, got to hit some crucial wedge shots and iron shots and I think we've done that.

MATT KUCHAR: I think the better question might be why have we not played the Zurich yet. That may be the better question. We're still working on making that work out at some point. It's been a whole lot of fun playing with Harris. I get to see parts of the course I'm not used to seeing, hitting irons I'm not used to hitting into greens and it's been a great match-up and a great formula.

Q. Have you guys ever been angry at each other in this -- down here?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Not at all, not at all. Kuch is easy to play with, easygoing. He's got Cameron, his son, on the bag this week so I kind of look at it as a fun way to cap off the year and he gets to hang out with Cameron and I've got E-Lar on the bag, so it's a nice stroll around the course. Obviously we're competitive out there and we're trying to win, but it's a very relaxed atmosphere and try to get some sparks going.

Q. Matt, how special was that to win last year with him on the bag and bring back that again this year?

MATT KUCHAR: It was way cool. Cameron's been asking for years and years to caddie and I think he's always thought he's bigger than maybe he has been. Now he is truly really big and able to caddie with no problem. Cameron's just a lover of golf and doing well himself with the game. For him to be inside the ropes and kind of see a little bit more of the thoughtfulness that goes into playing the game of golf at a professional level I think has been great for him to see.

And then this couldn't have been a better match-up having Harris and E with us. Eric's just so great with Cameron, helping out with whatever it is, any sort of discussion, any sort of ideas or thoughts as to what makes a caddie more helpful and what makes a player kind of a better player. It's been fun.

And for me to be able to share it with a great friend, with Eric and with my family, with Cameron on the bag, I think doing something is always special and rewarding when you're there kind of to enjoy it, but when you have people you really care about to share it with, that becomes that much more special.

Q. And I guess that carries over to next week for you guys, and somebody got added to the field up there.

MATT KUCHAR: Yeah, yeah, last year I think my son Cameron was thinking golf sure was easy. He caddied to a nine-shot win and then after round one we had a lead in the Father-Son PNC Championship, so I think he might have gotten a taste I think of thinking golf was maybe easier than it really is.

But excited again for next year. Sorry, next week. The more years I've played in that, the more special it's become. You hear from the legends of the game, you hear from the Jack Nicklaus, the Lee Trevinos, the Tom Watsons, the Tom Kites, the guys who have played years and years and they all say favorite week of the year. You get to spend the week with your family, your kids, they come and they hang and I think it makes it that much more special when you hear the legends talk about how much it means.

Now we see Tiger Woods committing to it and you realize he's not doing it because it's a normal tournament, he's doing it because it's the Father-Son, he gets to play with Charlie, he gets to hang with friends. It really is a unique, special week and so cool for the event. I think everybody's just so excited to see Tiger back. It's an amazing recovery, amazing comeback and certainly happy that he's in good enough shape to be able to play golf.

Q. Tapping your memory, when was the first time you guys ever played together? Did you like each other right off the bat?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I know for sure it's THE PLAYERS --

MATT KUCHAR: Oh, yeah.

HARRIS ENGLISH: -- on Saturday. That was my rookie year. I think I had met you a couple times, I don't think I had ever played with you. I think we were second-last group.

MATT KUCHAR: I think you might have hit somebody off the first tee.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Of course you remember that. We were walking up there and you were like, I probably wouldn't go see him, he's probably not doing very good.

MATT KUCHAR: I tried to give some veteran advice. I think it plunked somebody hard and I said let's give the paramedics a little time to kind of make sure everything's okay because I'm not so sure at the moment. So it was a bit of a slower walk. Thankfully, THE PLAYERS has paramedics stationed at a lot of places, it was close by. The guy was okay thankfully, but one of those things as a player, it's a hard thing to recover from. So I may have had some words of advice on kind of trying to move on. And it's always a tough situation, hard when you see somebody get hit, but tried to give some veteran advice as to how to potentially handle a situation like that.

Q. What year was that?

HARRIS ENGLISH: You won that year.

MATT KUCHAR: I won that year, that was '12.

Q. After that, when did you guys start playing a lot together?

MATT KUCHAR: I think it might have been either that year or the next that we played here.

HARRIS ENGLISH: You were supposed to play with Brandt and he got hurt. And I had been playing well, just won Mexico I think a few weeks before and you gave me the call from the bullpen and --

MATT KUCHAR: Winner-winner straightaway.

DOUG MILNE: Thank you, guys, very much. Good luck this week.