

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
May 3, 2022

BRANDON MATTHEWS



JACK RYAN: We would like to welcome Brandon Matthews into the interview room at the Wells Fargo Championship. Brandon is competing on a sponsor exemption this week, No. 4 on the Korn Ferry Tour Points List as it stands right now, won the Astara Golf Championship presented by Mastercard earlier this season on the Korn Ferry Tour.

Brandon, if I could just get an opening comment from you ahead of your second PGA TOUR start.

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah. Obviously I would like to thank the Wells Fargo Championship for giving me a spot this week, the PGA TOUR for continuously being so great to the players and giving us opportunities to play on a week-to-week basis.

I'm just thrilled to be here. You know, I can't wait to do this consistently on a weekly basis, get out here full time, but as of right now we're going to hopefully have a good week and maybe we can fast track it out here this week.

JACK RYAN: As I mentioned, No. 4 in the standings on the Korn Ferry Tour right now. Could you just let everyone know kind of the state of your game, and maybe for those who haven't seen you play a whole lot, what kind of player you are and what they can look out for from you this week?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: It's been pretty awesome the last couple years to see my game come full circle. I've had a great team around me. My swing coach, Dale Gray, is here this week. My short game coach, Brian Simmons, unfortunately couldn't make it up, but he's been very instrumental to getting me to where I am right now. My family, friends, everybody in my support system, it's just been incredible, so I'm very lucky to have the people around me that I have.

It's funny, the last couple events I've played out on Korn Ferry, I cut the golf ball off the tee and I'm looking at every shot, it's going right to left, right to left, and I get on this golf course and everything just kind of shapes a little bit to the right, so I'm really looking forward to playing this week. The comfort level's pretty high in this place. I think it could be a good one.

Q. A lot of people are interested in your distance. My first question is, how far do you carry 6-iron?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah, so my 6-iron carries about 216.

Q. And what about driver?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Driver, yeah, I mean, my normal one that I've been hitting, kind of the "fairway finder cruiser" will fly somewhere around 3 -- just over 330, and then if I kind of lift one, I can fly north of 340.

Q. Has that always been your strength? Have you always been super long compared to your age peers?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And obviously it's a big strength, but in the same breath, it's harder to control. When you have more speed, the ball goes offline easier. So that's where my swing coach, Dale Gray, and I have worked really hard to get more consistent, tighten things up and it's been really good the last few years.

Q. Brandon, 200 obviously is the number ball speed that people -- opens our eyes as far as golf goes. How much fun is it to try to get that and how did you kind of develop that power off the tee?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah, 200 is kind of a number that everybody kind of looks at, you're 100 percent right.

I got a great story. I'll make it as short as I can. My dad got me into the game. The 15th hole at my home club, Emanon, has a little lake to cover and he used to sit me on the women's tee when I was 4, 5 years old and it was probably 60 yards to cover it. And from there, as soon as I got it over, he moved me back a tee and then did the same thing, as soon as I got it over from the next tee back, move back a tee. So from a very young age I was just trying to hit it as hard as I can, so I developed power before I developed technique. So I think that was one of the main reasons why I hit it so far, because I just learned it at an early age, hit it as hard as you can.

Q. First question, is the driver back in the bag? We saw you talk about --

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Thank God.

Q. Just tell me how happy you are to have that back in the bag.

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah, two out of the last three weeks I took driver out of the bag and it's just so painful to do because for me, I've been hitting my driver so well for the past few years. We just looked at golf courses, my caddie and I, Colton, the last few weeks and it just doesn't fit anywhere. There's not a hole that we can hit it. You know, when I do have driver in the bag, obviously there's a big advantage there, especially if I'm hitting it well and consistent and I feel good with it. So I do feel good with it this week and it is nice to have that thing back in the bag.

Q. And then last question for you, you gave a couple yardages, but could you just run through your stock yardages for me, do you mind?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah. So 60, I rarely hit it over 100. I kind of feel it inside 100 depending on what I have. Then 56 is 123, 52 goes 138, my pitching wedge is at 153, 9-iron at 168, 8-iron at 181, 7-iron at 197, 6-iron jumps up a little bit, goes to 218 and then 5-iron is 231, 4-iron is at 246.

Q. You mentioned some early success on the Korn Ferry Tour this year. You basically locked up your PGA Tour card more or less for next year. Is it hard to focus on the back half of the season when you're looking ahead to this so much?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Not really because of about how much are -- how much it means to be higher up and get that No. 1 spot or 2 or 3. That's a heck of a lot different than finishing 20th. So the pressure that gets taken off is at the end of the year when you finish really high up and you realize then you have an entire year and you don't have to play extremely well in the fall to reshuffle.

The same thing when I won the Latin tour to get out of Korn Ferry, I have the entire year, I don't have to worry about a reshuffle after the first eight. That's the thing that takes the amount of pressure off, when you get out here to the next level of wherever you are is to be able to have a full year to go out and not stress if you don't play well the first two, three events.

Q. And then this is a somewhat unrelated question, but for the last whatever two years now there's been a lot of chatter about this Saudi-backed tour and there was some comments from other guys last week saying a bunch of Korn Ferry guys are about to get rich. Is it something that's percolating out on the Korn Ferry as well?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: It's been talked about, but listen, Jay Monahan is doing such a good job with this tour and everyone out here understands how well they are doing and can do on the PGA Tour. If you have a PGA Tour card, you're getting taken care of to a degree that most people don't understand. So to do something you grew up dreaming about and playing on a tour that you've wanted to your whole life, I think that's also a factor of being out here. So I don't think the PGA Tour has any worries moving forward, I think it's in great hands and I'm looking forward to being out here.

Q. Brandon, curious to know about the experience you had a couple years ago at the Arnold Palmer. That was your first PGA Tour event. I know it's been a couple years now, but what experiences do you remember from that and how you can maybe apply them now that you're here this week?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah, being my first PGA Tour event a few years ago, it was a little bit of a hectic week for me, and I let it be a hectic week for me. So this one I'm a little bit more calm in the setting. I'm doing the practice and preparation a little bit differently and I think -- I think the way I'm preparing for this event is much stronger than the way I prepared for Bay Hill. I'm definitely not as nervous and I really, really, really feel like I belong. I think

that's the biggest part.

Q. Brandon, the missed putt, did you have any idea that so much good and good feeling would come out of something that seemingly would be negative?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Zero. I had a friend, Matt Ryan, down there that literally came up to me afterwards and he said, "This is going to be great for you." I'm like, "Matt, we're in Buenos Aires, Argentina, I just did that because it's the right thing to do. No one's going to pick this up."

At the end of the day I always told people if it wasn't a story, I feel like that would be a better situation because that's just how people should react to that, but the fact that it was, I mean, maybe it shed some light and changed people's opinions on how to do things. For me, like I said, I feel like if it wasn't a story, that would mean that most people would do something like that and I don't know any other way to react in that situation.

JACK RYAN: You mentioned that your short game coach wasn't able to be here this week. In terms of family, who do you have up in the area to watch?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah, my fiancée's here, which is really exciting. My dad's coming down. I'm not totally sure how many friends are coming, but I'm pretty sure a good amount are. So I'm looking forward to having a lot of people from back home and in Philadelphia down here to watch me play. This is probably the closest event to Philadelphia and Scranton that I've ever played in, so it's going to be really exciting to see the amount of people come down and support me. I've already got a thousand texts about people coming down and wishing me luck. I mean, I can't tell you how appreciative I am of the support system that I have beyond family and friends. I'm a really lucky guy.

JACK RYAN: Could you recount the first conversation you had with your father after winning on the Korn Ferry Tour this year, the impact that he's had on you introducing you to the game?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah. "We 'bleeping' did it" was the actual first words. It's crazy because, you know, after everything was said and done, I realized that I won, you know, everything kind of flashed before me of what it took to get to that position because after I won that event, I realized that more than likely, unless something crazy happens, I will have a PGA Tour card. So to go back and look at all the hard work and the dedication my father put in for me, the sacrifices that he has made to get me to where I am, it's, you know, it goes without saying how special he is to me.

JACK RYAN: And lastly, you opened in your remarks being appreciative of Wells Fargo and the tournament giving you the exemption. When did you find out and what was your reaction like when you found out?

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Yeah, you know, listen, this is where I want to be. My reaction

was obviously elation. I was incredibly thankful that Gary called me and it's one of those things where you want to look at it as a big opportunity, but also something that you're going to be doing consistently soon.

So for me this week I feel like I just need to keep in the mindset that this is where I'm going to be hopefully for the rest of my life playing golf and take that perspective and hopefully that turns it into a good week.

JACK RYAN: Thank you very much for your time and best of luck this week.

BRANDON MATTHEWS: Thanks guys.