

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**MATTHEW RIEDEL**

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**MODERATOR:** We would like to welcome Matthew Riedel to the interview room.

Matthew, we'll open it up for questions in a couple minutes. First off, you are a Houston native making a start in your home city. How's it feel to be home?

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** It's awesome, I love it here. I just kinda got a lot of good home feeling. I watched this tournament growing up for forever. My dad like marshaled it for a few years, so it's kind of a full circle to kind of be back and get to compete out here.

**MODERATOR:** Making your first start here, being able to come out here and make a start in your home event, how's it feel to have a home game kind of in your own backyard?

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Oh, it's great. It's 15 minutes from my house so get to sleep in, get to kind of hang out in your own bed in your own room, which is just another level of comfort factor.

I'm sure throughout the week I'll see a lot of friends and family come out and support. It's just kind of fun, you know where the areas are to go. It's just everything is kind of easier, a little less stress free going into the week.

**MODERATOR:** You mentioned as we were coming into the media center that you're living at home right now actually, very convenient this week, but what's that been like this season being able to have your parents' support and also still have some chores around the house?

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Yeah, it's been great. They've been and meant so much to me just supporting me to kind of get me to where I am and also welcoming me back to when I first graduated college last year, figuring out where I want to be, what all that looks like. They've been very welcoming to that. But I still earn my keep with some chores, dishwasher, laundry, all that good stuff. It's a mutual relationship there.

**MODERATOR:** Obviously last summer, after PGA TOUR University, earning Korn Ferry Tour status and then ultimately your Tour card through Q-School, where's your game at? How would you assess your first six stars of the year and how your rookie season on Tour's going?

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** It's been solid. I mean, it's been OK I would say. Game's feeling better and coming around definitely week by week.



My goal when I first turned pro, which was not even a year ago, is just to like get out and learn and figure out what everything's supposed to look like and then kind of adapt your game to that.

I'd say through the six events like I feel comfortable out here, I'm learning the ropes and figuring out what it takes because Korn Ferry's golf a little different than PGA TOUR golf and that's a little different than college golf. So it's kind of figuring out how to adapt your game to be prepared week in and week out when you play all these great venues and be able to compete against Rory and Scheffler and all those guys and feel good.

**MODERATOR:** And last question from me before we open it up for questions, what -- being a part of the PGA TOUR University class last year and having that direct access to the Korn Ferry Tour, what did that do for you as a young pro stepping right into that game from college golf?

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** I mean, it completely jump started my career. I guess when I was first getting into college I think it was the first couple years or the first year of it, so nobody really knew what it looked like. In the past you always just hear everybody going to Q-School and kind of throwing your hat in the ring and trying to go out and get it and earn your spot.

To kind of be able to plan last spring of hey, this is what my summer's going to look like, and played great golf, and if you would have told me a year from now, or a year prior from now, it's like I wouldn't have ever believed it.

And it's all from PGA TOUR U and kind of the access we were given. And it's been great that players before me have played well to kind of earn that status and kind of keep those rewards coming in, but it's been unbelievable to kind of jump start it.

**MODERATOR:** We'll open it up for questions now.

**Q. Matthew, can you -- obviously you've got a lot of personal memories of watching this tournament. When do you think you first were in the gallery of the Houston Open?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Probably 10 or 11. My dad did -- it was when it was up at Redstone, then they changed it to Golf Club of Houston. I would say I went probably six years in a row, I would say 10 to 16 or 17.

I remember I have a video on my phone of Luke List hitting a tee shot and I think that was right before I committed to Vandy, which was probably 2016 or so.

It's funny seeing Luke out here now. I actually haven't showed him that video. I need to find it and be like hey, this was me to you 10 years ago, but it's a cool full circle.

**Q. Of course you were in the galleries then and I know your sights were already set**



**on being where you are today sitting here having this conversation and playing this golf course as a PGA TOUR touring professional. Has it hit home? Have you processed it?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Just driving in the parking lot is like OK, this feels normal because I'll come out here on some Mondays when my home course is closed and hit balls and putt.

I think it really hit when we were hitting on the grass because it's never grass ever, so it was like oh, wow, like I've never stepped foot kind of in this area. So that was one of the things on the range where it's like whoa and just getting to kind of play it all. But just kind of taking it day by day and step by step, you never really know.

**Q. How many 18 hole rounds have you played on this course?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Not as many since they redid it probably three years ago. I played the old one a good bit. I'd say probably honestly two or three, like once a year because I just haven't been back to Houston all that much just through college. We'd come out with just some buddies and play. But with it overseeded and all that, it's definitely a good bit different than we typically would see it.

**Q. When you decided to go to Vanderbilt, what were your other choices and why did you decide on Vandy?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** My top other ones were SMU. Both my parents went there and kind of the Texas connection, which is nice, and then Stanford. Those were my top 3. For me Vandy was a pretty little choice, I love Limbaugh, and Gator Todd was the assistant there when I first got there, and just all the players. There were a lot of guys from Texas that made it kind of comfortable. Just the way Limbaugh coaches everybody and cares for everybody. The program itself is a true kind of loving family. And also enjoyed the fact that it's a good academic school, kind of always have a backup plan and be best prepared.

**Q. You mentioned academics. Have you researched how many other PGA touring professionals were the valedictorians of their high school classes?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** I have not. I always put an asterisk with that because it was about 50 other co-valedictorians with me, just kind of all A's, not necessarily the top one.

But hey, it's one thing you can control and try to always work hard at everything you do whether it's school, golf, working out, relationships, it will take you a long way.

**Q. Yeah, obviously you made the PGA TOUR in rather dramatic fashion, it literally did come down to a putt.**

**And yes, you've talked about this numerous times, but will you humor be and go back through your thought process and what was going through your head as you were**



## **staring at the cup?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** It was just one of those, you're kind of like you have a little tunnel vision of you know there's a lot to that said putt but all you can do is kind of try to make that five-footer that you've always practiced with.

I remember when Nick Dunlap won the American Express the year before, he said in an interview like his caddie told him like this putt's easy, your mom could make it. That kind of crossed my head, like all right, it's a five-footer. I thought it was dead straight, I kind of pulled it and snuck in the left side, but it was one of those that's like it's nothing more than a putt, just hit it.

**Q. But you were fully aware of the consequences? There was no like, well, maybe if I make this, I'll be on the Tour, maybe not. Did you know that it was make it or --**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Yeah, I knew it came down to that. I guess to me I kind of had the outlook of hey, if now's not my time, I got time. I know you only have so many opportunities so you kind of want to take advantage of it, but at the same time it's like kind of God has my plan and I'm gonna go try to act it out and make this but this is a great learning experience.

So I would have been content if I missed it. I mean, obviously you want to make it and take advantage of those opportunities and I'm glad I did. It's one of those things you kind of have a good outlook on it and it works out.

**Q. Earlier this week I also covered the U.S. Clay Court tennis for the Chronical so to get ahead on that, because they're back to back now, talking to two young Americans 19 and 20 years old talking about adjusting to the physicality of playing on the ATP Tour. You don't physically play other golfers, you play a golf course, but can you weigh in a little bit on the mental side of that of being out here with the big boys, Rory and Scottie and how you process that?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Yeah. I mean, for me just the road to being a professional, whether that's Korn Ferry or PGA, it's just you're playing a lot more in a shorter term. I think in college you always play and have a week off or nine days off and be able to kind of always regroup and kind of get back fresh again.

I think for me on the Korn Ferry I played 13 out of 14 weeks and then out here you play three, you're off one, you play three. So it does kind of stack up and a lot of it's just being able to figure it out on yourself on the road because back in college you had a lot of teammates and players and coaches that you could lean into and say hey, what do you think I'm doing here and here, what's your plan on this hole. Out here it's just kind of all up to you and your caddie and your team so you've got to really have a good network group to fix issues on a Sunday and be back, ready to roll on a Tuesday.

**Q. And you can't let yourself be psyched out by the fact that you're playing with**



**some really great golfers, right? You have to just focus on what you're doing?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Exactly. You've got to run your race and see where that gets you, see what time, what score you post and how that kind of compares to those guys.

**Q. You also probably -- it's hard to do sometimes but you don't want to put pressure on yourself to get there too quickly, you've got to I guess be patient with your progress, right.**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Yeah. Going back to like I guess my high school golf, into college and then here now I've always kind of just tried to get a little bit better every day and have a good solid foundation, never really peaked I'd say too early in my career of in college golf or high school golf being the top recruit or top player, I just kind of gradually got a little better and that's always been my goal.

So I'm not too worried really about results. I mean, I'd love for them to kind of file in, but more just my trying to do the best thing I can do for myself. And I'm 24 right now so it's like you see where I'm at at 28, 29, 30, hopefully that's just a gradual steady progression.

**Q. In the beginning, why golf?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** That's a good question. I played basketball and baseball up to about eighth grade. My dad always played, so it was always fun playing with my dad and older brother.

It just got to be where I probably wasn't good enough for basketball, baseball I just didn't love. I was a good pitcher but didn't love it. Golf was kind of the best of both worlds. I just loved I guess always having to figure it out, not ever really being kind of ahead of the curve. I was always good at it, but it was just like you've got to have a lot of discipline and spend a lot of time and effort in it and I just loved it.

**Q. You went out there with your father and he kind of, you know, he didn't force you to play golf --**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Didn't force me.

**Q. -- but once you decided you liked it, it was --**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Exactly. He just really instilled kind of the love of the game and the enjoyment of it. It was never for him never trying to shoot a score or anything, it was just getting out there and hitting shots and having fun.

My grandpa was always little strict on like the scores, you've got to finish everything out. He never loved that and he kind of brought that to me, and I kind of found a happy medium of still shooting a score but also enjoying it.



**Q. Did either of them play to a handicap themselves?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** No, just your active 10 handicappers.

**Q. All right. Well, tough question to answer, but what makes this, the next five, six days a success for you?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** That's a good question. Honestly, just kind of staying in my own process. I've never really competed in my hometown like this to where I've got a bunch of texts from people that are going to be coming out and supporting me. So not get lost in that.

I looked and saw the weather on Thursday, Friday's going to be a little tough, so kind of just staying kind of grounded, focus on what you can control and kind of just staying in the moment. I know my game's plenty good to be out here and compete out here. It's just a matter of putting it all together. I feel like I've kind of done a couple good things and a couple bad things at some events but not put anything together fully, so just try to be a little better than last week and regroup and go forward.

**Q. Is there extra pressure playing in front of a lot of friends and family?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** I don't think so. I think it's kind of a privilege having a lot of people out to support you. It will be definitely a change of scenery when you're on the first tee and there's a little more people out there, but I'm excited for it, it should be a lot of fun.

**Q. Have you done a head count yet of how many you're expecting?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** I have not done a head count yet. I guess we'll get there when we get there. We may have some people fall out if it's raining or it's windy.

**Q. Going back to PGA TOUR U, obviously Gordon has his card already locked up and I know JDP's kind of in a similar situation to what you were last year. How much have you talked to maybe those guys about what to expect when they finish up their college careers?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Yeah, I've had a lot of conversation. Gordon and I were talking about a week ago about staying together at some events and stuff, which is really exciting because it's always great to have a good support group out here and people to hang out.

I talked to Jackson a little bit. I guess he's not -- he's having I think a pretty good week this week and has been the last couple so he should be pretty good for Korn Ferry. Just kind of talking him through just hey, you just got to play solid and focus on one week at a time. Just for him, just helping him for me answering help him get it done.

But he's a great player, Jackson will 100 percent get through Korn Ferry I think pretty easily



and have a lot of success out here.

It's just been fun kind of talking to them about going through that process for me, looking back towards it and a little -- just the difference between your college golf and pro golf because everybody -- you pick everybody's brain before you everybody's got a different takeaway. My takeaway's a little more of you've just got to be able to problem solve a little faster than you kind of did in college and just kind of help them go through any growing pains.

**Q. Is it still weird to you or have had to adjust to people asking you for your advice and everything about how to be a Tour pro?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** A little bit. It's funny because like Gordon's always been a worldbeater so we're always asking Sarge like hey, how do you hit this shot or what was it like playing, because he's played a few Tour events, what was it like playing here, U.S. Open, Masters or anything.

For me, he'll kind of pick my brain a little bit about like hey, what's it like playing three weeks in a row out here. It's a little change of scenery of actually being the one to give advice. We all -- at Vandy, I think we had a kind of great collaborative team, which was awesome. We'd always pick each other's brains whether it's about school, golf, anything. It's nice to kind of have that relationship with the guys.

**Q. So your best golfing moment in Houston ever?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** That's a good one. I played the CB&I, which was a big AJGA Invitational, my senior year. I think I finished eighth or something, I don't know the exact number but played really well.

And we had a bunch of Vandy guys there and that was kind of leading into college. That was probably my best one. I haven't made a hole-in-one so I can't lean on that at my club or anything. Yeah, that's probably --

**Q. And you won the state championship, but that was not in the Houston area?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Yeah, I won the state, that was in Georgetown, which was just north of Austin.

**Q. And have you ever met Andrew Luck?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** I don't think I have. I know his family decently well, but I don't think I've met him.

**Q. I'm just saying many years before you --**



**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Yeah, he's a big Stratford guy.

**Q. He didn't try to talk you into going to Stanford?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** No. He didn't have any input in that. We probably would have had a good --

**Q. Here's the thing about the two young tennis players I was talking to, they were not even born when the last American, Andy Roddick, won a major championship?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Wow.

**Q. And neither of them have ever met Andy. Golf, obviously we're kind of still in the game here. Anyway, well, welcome back, man.**

**Q. I just had one question, which you kind of referred to right now and that was going back to your junior season, is that when you won state, right?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Yeah, correct.

**Q. What was that experience like winning the 6-A state championship as a high school junior at Stratford?**

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Oh, it was awesome. I think the year before I played as an individual. The team didn't make it, but I made it through and I think finished 11th and kind of struggled coming down the stretch. So it was fun being able to kind of redeem myself there.

That's a good course, kind of one of those you get in the moment, you play well and you kind of had to post a score and wait and see. I remember played really well, birdied the last, we felt pretty good leaving and we went to go -- me and my teammates went to go grab a burger and come back to see, because there was a two-hour gap. We kept refreshing and it just looked good the whole way and got back and was like, oh, wow, that just happened, so that was really cool.

And I remember driving back, when I got home a bunch of my friends and some like faculty up there did a little something, like celebration when I got home to Stratford. That was by far I think kind of the start of one of my good golf memories of kind of winning a tournament.

**MODERATOR:** Thank you, Matthew, and best of luck this week.

**MATTHEW RIEDEL:** Thank you.

