

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**MATT WALLACE**

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**Q. Matt, you make your return after winning here in 2023. What do you remember most about that victory?**

**MATT WALLACE:** Well, I was facing that way during the press conference, not this way.

No, it's really nice to be back, it's good to be back. Obviously there's an opposite field event which all of us out here would like to be at, but my golf hasn't been good enough kind of the start of this year.

So it's always nice to come back somewhere where you've got fond memories. Hopefully this can be kind of the start, this feels like more the start of my year right now. I had a decent result in San Antonio, feel like my game's trending in a better way. So coming back somewhere where you've had past success can sometimes be a really nice sort of like bounce to your year, so hopefully that will be the case this week.

**Q. And you mentioned that and you see somebody like Billy Horschel, who won last year and basically turned his season around. Do you see that as an opportunity this week for you?**

**MATT WALLACE:** Sure. I'm confident, I'm hitting the ball well. Haven't putted how I've wanted to, but that's changed, I'm seeing some really good results in practice. Hopefully that can trend onto the course in tournament. But yeah, as soon as I kind of knew that I could come back and play here, I snatched the opportunity and it's nice to come back.

**Q. You're one of two international winners at this event. Have you spent much time at home this season?**

**MATT WALLACE:** No. I actually, I went home on Thursday for my birthday on Saturday and I spent three days at home. So I went from Jacksonville to Miami, Miami home for three days, and then straight here. Definitely a lot of travel, but I feel good. I needed to go home, I needed to see my family and my friends. Yeah, it was nice.

**Q. You talked about Valero, you got off to a good start there and you played pretty nicely in Puerto Rico. What have you been working on this season?**

**MATT WALLACE:** Everything. Yeah, I came into -- especially start of the year in Torrey, I started over in Dubai and played OK. I thought, all right, we're trending in the right direction from the end of last year where I was playing really nice. Then just my putting kind of went, you know? Like I couldn't get the ball in the hole. The closer I got to the hole, the worse it



got. I was missing more putts from shorter. But those things happen. I've spoken to enough people to know it happens in your career.

I'm in a decent spot. I'm putting great in practice, the results are really, really good, so I just need to try and blend that into tournament play and keep hitting it the way I'm hitting it. I'm hitting it nice, and Jamie, my caddie's really quite optimistic. And we've obviously got something, some team event big at the end of this year that's really on my mind. Maybe that was the cause of wanting to get off to such a good start and kind of maybe putting more pressure on my golf than I should have been.

But right now, I mean, it feels like a long time ago to start the year and I can kind of block that off and go, OK, that's done, don't need to look at that, results were terrible, performances weren't good enough, now we go from here.

And it just feels, it feels right. I want to be playing well going into the Ryder Cup, but I want to be playing well at the start and then blending off. Yeah, I'm really happy with where I'm going and hopefully this can be a nice kickstart.

**Q. You mentioned the Ryder Cup and that has sort of a similar feel for you like two years ago, got off to a good start on the points list.**

**MATT WALLACE:** Yeah.

**Q. What did you learn from that to put into practice this time?**

**MATT WALLACE:** That you need to play well. First and foremost, you need to play well. I need to try and give Luke no chance of having to try and pick me. I feel like I'm playing for one spot. There's a lot of guys there that it feels like there's a few people playing for one spot, and then there's obviously going to be a few picks.

I feel like I can take that last spot for myself. I'm in a decent position. I went back to Europe and played only in Europe at the end of last year for Ryder Cup points. So I put my decision in that, so I didn't come over and play in the Fall Series which would help me get into THE PLAYERS and things like that. I really made a conscious decision for Ryder Cup purposes.

And I'm in a decent spot. I've made up enough points -- I didn't play in the Masters, I didn't play in THE PLAYERS and I'm still right there. I'm really comfortable with that decision.

If I can push on and play well from now and show Luke that I'm playing well and hopefully get that last spot anyway. If not that last spot, play well, that will give him a bit of a headache where he can't not pick me. Yeah, that's kind of like the whole focus from two years ago and learning from that.

**Q. You just mentioned you didn't play in the Masters. Did you watch it? Where were you? What are your thoughts?**



**MATT WALLACE:** Yeah, I watched it, and that app is pretty special, isn't it? So you can watch a lot of it, staying up on top of friends of mine who are playing well. Especially watching the live coverage and just seeing the positions.

I absolutely love the Masters, I love Augusta. I haven't been back there since 2021, and even just watching Bernhard Langer and Freddie Couples give it a shot, it was mega how they can play the golf course and compete and beat some of the best still. That golf course just sets up for a golfer where you don't have to be on, you can lay up on the par 5s and take a bogey out of play and try to get up and down for birdie. Or if you're going for it -- if you're not quite on and you're going for it, you can make bogeys and doubles and we saw that.

Being a professional golfer playing with the likes of Justin Rose and Rory McIlroy, Rosie was a huge hero of mine growing up and to call him a friend now is pretty special. The way he handles things, he's the top pro (audio difficulty) I'm sure many more accolades to come, and can still compete and potentially win some more majors, but to be able to play in the same era as Rory McIlroy is pretty special.

That was cool. I stayed up all night and I got -- I kind of -- I wanted him to win. Obviously going up against Rosie as well was a nice sort of balance there, but I wanted him to win because of the history it would make. It was special, it's really special. Not many have done that, so well done to Rory and to Harry as well on his team.

**Q. Just coming back to this tournament I want to ask you about the Devil's Elbow, the stretch of holes, 16, 17, 18.**

**MATT WALLACE:** Yeah.

**Q. What are your thoughts on those holes? Is there a favorite and why?**

**MATT WALLACE:** Well, I played it yesterday in the practice round and my caddie, Jamie Lane, wasn't here. I had Sam Bernard on the bag last time, so he hadn't been here, and we had a little game going and I got it to the number of giving myself a chance in our game and then I thought, OK, 16, 17, 18, they're not easy from what I remember and blowing into the wind every single hole. Yeah, you're hitting 6-iron, 4-iron and then a 9-iron into the last if you hit a good tee shot.

They're spicy holes so you need to play well, you need to hit the ball well. I managed to birdie 16 last time, which was probably the one that got me the championship. Hit 6-iron in there to six feet and it gave me good memories of that hole.

Yeah, they're tough holes, but they're beautiful as well, on the front (audio difficulty) over the sea and the edge of cliffs is really nice.



**Q. Finally, where do you keep the trophy?**

**MATT WALLACE:** And the jacket and the hat? Yeah. I haven't worn the jacket or the hat since. My dad's worn the hat. The trophy's at home up with, luckily and fortunately, some of the other trophies in my career. Special moments.

The jacket is there, it's actually on a coffee table, it's just splayed out. I hardly ever go out there to be fair, but it's splayed out on the coffee table out there and it's a nice memory, and obviously the cards and everything.

Yeah, this is, it feels like defending because I haven't been back and Billy's not here, so I guess I'm the last person to win here at this tournament.

