

# RBC Canadian Open

Press Conference

Wednesday, July 20, 2016

## Matt Kuchar



DOUG MILNE: Matt Kuchar, thanks for joining us for a few minutes prior to the start of the RBC Canadian Open. I know it's an event that you've had a lot of success with. You've had four Top-10 finishes here, three of which have come in just the past three years alone, so I know it's good to get back here, and with that, just a few comments on being back.

MATT KUCHAR: Nice to be here. You've got nice, comfy chairs up here. This is quite pleasant. I've enjoyed coming to the Canadian Open. It's an event I've learned to, I have a much greater appreciation to play a National Championship like the Canadian Open. The history here, as being an RBC Ambassador, I've looked around a little more and seen just the great history of the past champions that have won this event.

And to see what RBC has done with this tournament, this field, it's great to see this event grow and continue to get stronger and stronger, continues to attract better and better players. I know they are losing Glen Abbey at some point, but this course, I've learned to really enjoy.

It's in amazing shape right now. I know they have had some struggle with lack of rain but it's made for a firm, fast, challenging golf course, and I think you'll see some good golf scores. May not be quite as low as they have been in the past with the firmness of the greens.

DOUG MILNE: Not only enjoying success here, but coming into the week overall, you're playing really well. Your consistency is showing through your finishes. I think you've had five top-six finishes in your last seven starts. So you've obviously got to be feeling confident and good coming into the week with your game.

MATT KUCHAR: I am. This is a big stretch of golf. I knew this on the calendar, kind of early in the year, was going to be a lot of golf. I had aspirations to make the Olympic Team and knowing from the British Open through the Olympics was going to be five weeks in a row.

I was hoping to be on good form at this point in time. It's just great event after great event after great event. I was glad to get on some good form leading up to this. My British Open wasn't my greatest form, but you kind of never know what's going to happen over there with

the links golf. I took a quadruple bogey on The Postage Stamp and kind of struggled a little bit after that, which is too bad.

But I still feel like my game is good, and excited for a good week here and continuing the run for the next couple weeks.

**Q. With all the players withdrawing from the Olympics, there are a number of them; what went into your decision to decide to go? What did you weigh in terms of that decision?**

MATT KUCHAR: I certainly tried to be as educated as possible in making the decision. I know guys don't withdraw for no reason. It's not just for scheduling or something. There's a reason why everybody's withdrawn.

I think as far as the homework I've done, trying to be as educated as possible in my decision; now, granted, there's an ulterior motive of just wanting to be an Olympian. That's pretty strong, and wanting to go play for the United States is something that I thought was just an amazing opportunity when golf became an Olympic sport.

So there may be some sway and some more weight that's carried by just the sheer fact of an opportunity to compete in the Olympics and being an Olympic athlete.

But as far as the decision I made to play, to not withdraw, I did as much homework as possible, and security seems to be the main issue that people are scared about. I think a lot of the issues tend to get blown up in media. It certainly attracts headlines when a foot washes up on shore. It's a big headline grabber.

But the people I've talked to, are people I trust that have been down a lot, spent a lot of time down there and assured me there will be no issues. It sounds like they have taken all measures to be sure we'll be safe.

I feel very comfortable. I feel like it's going to be an amazing event. We'll look back and laugh that we were worried once about security. I know it happened to me last year at Presidents Cup, going over to Korea. I knew the North and South were having some issues on the border, and I had some serious concerns about going over. And at the end, I laughed with the people I

shared my concerns with saying, man, it could not have been a smoother, better, more enjoyable experience.

And I anticipate that the end of this, the end of the event in Rio, I'll look back and kind of laugh at the worries that we once would have had.

**Q. I assume you talked to your wife about the decision, I assume she factored; are they coming with you? Are you doing in terms of additional security to waylay potential issues?**

MATT KUCHAR: No extra security. My wife is going to join me. But as far as any extra security, she'll just kind of tag along with me.

**Q. When do you go down?**

MATT KUCHAR: Play Hartford and go down Sunday of Hartford.

**Q. Can you gauge your level of excitement? I know you have business at hand here, but yesterday they announced the Canadian team. To be an Olympian, you're a sports guy; you've seen the American basketball team, the dominance they have had at the Olympics. You get to do something that few people in the world get to do, and that's be an Olympian. Can you allow yourself to be excited? Are you getting there?**

MATT KUCHAR: It was certainly a big carrot that was out there a couple years ago when they first announced golf as being part of the Olympics. I think I was inside of the grouping that would qualify. And then my number struggled; Jordan Spieth and some other guys started really solidifying their spot.

It was an amazing sequence of events that happened to allow you me to get in. I birdied 16 and 18 Sunday of the Bridgestone Invitational and crept into a tie for third. I never look at my World Ranking. Somebody called me and said, "You moved to 15th."

I said, "Holy cow, that gives me a shot." I knew the criteria and that gives me a shot to qualify. I knew I was the sixth American, and that it would take two guys withdrawing. And I hear pretty quickly that Dustin withdraws.

Certainly would have much preferred to have been inside the top four. You never hope somebody -- you never wish anything bad on anybody, but I sure was excited when I heard Jordan was going to pull out, and that allowed me to get in. So I'm hugely excited to be an Olympic athlete. I'm a fan of sport and I've always been a big fan of Olympics. I love getting in front of the TV and watching all day, watching the obscure sports, watching the mainstream sports.

I thought golf was a great addition. I thought golf was a game that people around the world know or should know, and I think it's a great vehicle to see the game hopefully grow and continue to prosper and be a better game.

**Q. Will you allow yourself the full Olympic experience? Will you take in other events?**

MATT KUCHAR: It's a tough call in that you want to compete. You're there and you want to do yourself justice; if you went as just a fan. I certainly am I fan. I certainly hope to make another event or two. Schedule doesn't allow me to walk. But there's something about putting on a uniform with the flag, a patch on your sleeve and knowing that you're representing your country.

I've done it now several times with Ryder Cups, Presidents Cups, and done the opening ceremonies. To me, you know you're part of the team, and when you put that uniform on, like that's a special feeling. I think that gives you that feeling, like it's for real, like you are now playing for your country.

That, to me, hits home more than any Opening Ceremony I've been a part of, and I've not been part of an Olympic Opening Ceremony, and unfortunately I can't make this one. But putting on that shirt, teeing off, being announced for the United States, is kind of what does it for me.

**Q. What an Olympic Gold Medal regardless of color**

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MATT KUCHAR: Olympic Gold Medal, regardless of color -- (laughter) is a funny --

**Q. To have an Olympic medal.**

MATT KUCHAR: It would be amazing. It's something that -- I only know a handful of people that have done it, and the pride they have, regardless of how long ago, it still beams. I think it would be something that you would beam about for life. You would just be proud and honored, and show it off at every situation you could possibly show it off.

**Q. It's been a busy last six weeks with three majors obviously, and it's going to be busier after Rio. Do you like all those big events kind of jammed up together, or would you like some space in between where you can build into an event?**

MATT KUCHAR: You could build into an event several different ways, either by playing your way into it or by being at home resting and practicing.

To me, golf is an interesting event, trying to figure out how to best prepare. I still am tweaking my schedule

around majors, trying to figure out how am I going to best prepare. I knew this was the situation. I don't know if you look at it as a problem. It's certainly a good problem to have; that there's just big event after big event after big event.

You kind of hope to get on good form. I knew this summertime schedule was going to be a hectic schedule, but I tried to do my best to allow myself to be prepared and on good form come this time. But if you could get on great form right now, there's just a lot of opportunities to do some great stuff.

**Q. Obviously today with the announcement of RBC continuing their sponsorship of both events for the next six years, you as an RBC Ambassador and a past champion at The Heritage, can you just comment on that announcement today and what it means?**

MATT KUCHAR: I was very excited. I was unsure; I knew that kind of hung in the air for a little bit, and sure was excited to hear that RBC is continuing the relationship both here and Hilton Head. Hilton Head is one of my top favorite events of the year. I love it. I love the fact that RBC is a sponsor. I mean, for me it's great, being a brand ambassador. Come up here, to have them continue their support of this event. It's a big deal.

It's been a long run for me, at least seven years that I've been an ambassador. To see that golf is a platform that truly works and means a lot to RBC, it's great to see them kind of show that golf really does go a long way with their brand, with their clients, and I'm certainly glad to be a part of it.

**Q. You talked about the condition a little bit, but how do you think that's going to impact things this week?**

MATT KUCHAR: I tell you, there's not a lot of rough, but enough rough, and the greens are so firm, that it's a challenge. I think a course becomes more of a challenge; the winning score becomes a higher score, and the cut always becomes a higher score when greens are firm. No matter how deep the rough is, if greens are soft, guys are going to shoot low numbers. No matter how long the golf course is, if greens are soft, guys will shoot low numbers.

When greens are firm like they are, it's really challenging to get balls close enough to the hole to give yourself really makeable birdie putts. I think you won't see as low of a winning score. I don't think you'll see a cut be near as low. I think you'll see some guys kind of scratching their heads a lot, struggling, struggling to make any sort of run of birdies out here.

It's really a great test of golf. I know a lot of people are accustomed to seeing lush, green grass and beautiful conditions. It doesn't look beautiful to the eye, but it really plays well and it will provide a great test.