

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
February 15, 2018

PHIL MICKELSON (-1)



GENESIS OPEN

Q. Four birdies, three bogeys, so a solid round. Are you satisfied with your round?

PHIL MICKELSON: I played well but I didn't score well. I let a few too many shots go on the greens and around the greens. But it's a solid start. The golf course was not playing easy. It's a solid start and I just need to go a little bit lower tomorrow.

Q. You talked about this after Pebble Beach last week in your final round, the fact that you come here with momentum, had some great finishes in your starts here, you love the golf course, you're very comfortable, you've won here. What is the challenge for you to manage expectations with all of that coming into this tournament?

PHIL MICKELSON: The challenge is just to slow it down, slow down my mind from jumping ahead to the weekend, try to get two good rounds Thursday, Friday just to get in contention for the weekend. And so tomorrow I just need to play a solid round, shoot anywhere from 3 to 6 under par and I'll be right in the mix for the weekend.

Q. Anything you need to clean up for tomorrow?

PHIL MICKELSON: I didn't start the ball on line very well, I missed a few too many short ones. I had two three-putts from just off the edge and just gave a couple shots around the greens. So I'll go home, work on the short game a little bit and see if I can get that dialed in for tomorrow.

Q. Phil, burned a lot of edges on that second nine coming home. Your thoughts on how you played today, 1 under, but could have been even better?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, I played well and didn't get the -- probably didn't score as well as I played, but that happens. I let a few too many shots around the greens go that I normally don't. I'll work on that, I'll get my touch a little bit sharper for tomorrow, but it's a good solid start. I feel like I'm playing well, and if I shoot something in the mid to high 60s tomorrow, I'll be right in it for the weekend.

Q. I heard some fans say Phil looks really good. I don't think they were talking about your game, I think they were talking about you. Compare your mental and physical health to maybe three, four years ago. You look great.

PHIL MICKELSON: I appreciate you saying that. I've worked hard, especially in the offseason, to be able to accommodate the practice sessions that I need and so forth. I feel great. I feel like my game is sharp and that I'm physically able to put in the work needed to

do it. So it's been fun, but it has been extra work before the round, extra work after the round to get ready, get activated, get moving for the round, and then to recover and be ready and fresh for the next day. So it's a little more work, but it's worth it when you play well and you have good results.

Q. Phil, you obviously know the history of Riviera. What do you like about this golf course, and does it fit your game?

PHIL MICKELSON: If I were to isolate one of the many things I love about the golf course, I love the kikuyu grass, how small the greens are, and how the kikuyu forces you to chip and fly the ball on the green. It's not the easiest to hit bump-and-run shots through it. You can sometimes putt it, some of the areas are shaved tight, but I love how you have to fly the ball on the green because that's the way I like to chip. And the kikuyu grass allows you to get the leading edge of the wedge underneath the ball. So many of the courses we play today are shaved so tight you can't do that, so your only option is a putt or a bump-and-run or a complete flop shot, you know, hitting it fat. Around here you can really slide the wedge underneath it and hit some cool wedge shots. So I always like coming around here because if I don't hit it great, I feel like I can still get up and down.

Q. Do you feel like after today, tomorrow you're that close to going low?

PHIL MICKELSON: I feel like I am. I mean, I played really well today. The score didn't reflect it, but if I play like I did today, if I play like that tomorrow, I'll shoot something in the mid 60s.

Q. You say you didn't score well.

PHIL MICKELSON: Little things. I had two little three-putts, a little up-and-down on 2 that normally would be a no-brainer, a little four-footer for birdie on the second hole today, 11. Little things like that where I let shots go. But I played well enough to shoot the mid 60s, I just didn't do it. I think I'll have a chance tomorrow to do it.

Q. Following up on that, you do look great. Was it nutrition in the offseason, was it weights? You really look great. What was it?

PHIL MICKELSON: It's a combination of all of it. So I can't really -- I have to -- I can't really leave anything unturned at this age because I need to recover, I need to get fit, I need to put in the work on the golf course. It's just a little bit extra work. Again, it's worth it. If you play well, you're in contention, it kind of feeds the motivation that makes me want to work even harder.

Q. So have you ever gotten waved up for your first shot of the day before?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, here every year, yeah.

Q. The wind was the problem here today. Do you have any physics knowledge that helps you to play against this wind?

PHIL MICKELSON: It was an unusual wind in the morning. It's the opposite wind from what we usually have. However, we have seen that wind over the years here, and having played it you might know what to expect, but really the guys out here adjust so well to the conditions that I don't think it's an issue either way.