

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
August 2, 2018

RICKIE FOWLER (-7)



Q. How did your round go, Rickie?

RICKIE FOWLER: You know, I hit 3-wood in the fairway on 18, 9-iron to two feet and tapped in for 63. It was a good day.

No, it's fun being able to take advantage when the golf course is playing on the easier side. We've seen this place play very firm and it makes it very hard to hit fairways and ultimately to get the ball on the green or close. So to go out, I feel like I hit a lot of good drives today. A couple bad ones, that's going to happen, but it wasn't very far off. Made a few good putts, hit a lot of great approach shots and just a solid day of golf. I think it was -- did a good job of not getting ahead of myself and moving through things too quickly and stayed patient. But off to a good start, that's all you can do Thursday.

Q. Tiger said he was a little surprised the scoring is as low as it is. I'm sure you are as well. Do you think it was an advantage going in the afternoon?

RICKIE FOWLER: I always look at this golf course, if you drive it well, it's very gettable. You're going to get a lot of short irons and a lot of wedges in your hands. But if you don't kind of get off to a decent start or get that momentum building early, you can shoot 3, 4, 5 over just as quick as you can shoot 3, 4, 5 under.

So I think this golf course does a really good job of separating how guys are hitting the ball, how they're driving it and also the approach shots as well. Putting becomes a bonus. Obviously if you're not driving it well and you're having putts for par all day, you're not always just going to make those. The more fairways you can hit, more greens and kind of keep it stress-free. This golf course like is always scorable, but it was in probably one of its easier states right now with how soft it was.

Q. Can I ask you an off-topic question?

RICKIE FOWLER: I don't know. Are you allowed to?

Q. How do you get ready to play on foreign soil as far as what you might do as far, as what the crowds might do to you at the Ryder Cup?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, for me, I've been over there and played a Ryder Cup overseas, so I look forward to that opportunity. Nothing against playing at home, I love playing at home, but there's something different and cool and very fun to play overseas. I definitely enjoy playing over in Europe for the Ryder Cup. Playing Celtic Manor was my first one.

Walker Cup, playing over there at County Down, Gleneagles. It's a blast over there. You feel a little bit like an underdog in a way, but the first tee over there, they're there 5:00 in the morning, songs and chanting. I mean, you guys have been there, you've seen the energy. I look forward to it. I enjoy playing Ryder Cups away from home. But it's been a while since we've won one over there, so it's time for us to bring one home.

Q. What's the most derogatory and the funniest things you've heard from the crowds?

RICKIE FOWLER: I don't think -- I mean, I would say at this point there's nothing that I haven't really heard. I mean, from playing all around the world, whether it's home in the U.S., you hear a lot of crazy stuff at Scottsdale, when you play out on Long Island or Boston. Like I said, there's not a whole lot of things that I think a lot of guys who have played in some of those big events or played around the world and especially Ryder Cups, you've heard just about everything.

But I will say, I mean, I feel like the fans, especially in the U.K., Ireland, they've always, I feel like, have been some of my favorite and some of the most knowledgeable golf fans, and hopefully the same goes for being in Paris. I've never been there. I heard a lot of good things about the golf course and heard it's going to be a great venue for the Ryder Cup. I've just got to take care of my end of it and make sure I'm on the team. I'm looking forward to it.

Q. A lot of big names on the leaderboard right now. Does that kind of get your juices flowing a little bit more for the next three days?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, for sure. You've got to take care of business just to get in this golf tournament. There's probably some names up there that people may not have seen or heard of as much, but they've earned their way here. No one's here by accident. You're bringing together the best players in the world, so there's no reason why you're not going to see big names up there. And especially kind of how I talked about with how the golf course is playing, you drive it well, it's scorable. So it's fun to see this place like this where you can -- you know, you're getting to see a little bit more of the offensive sides versus when it gets firm, it can get scary at times.

Q. You're wearing the yellow for Jarrod Lyle (inaudible.)

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it hasn't been easy for anyone. Jarrod, he's definitely had a huge impact on the golf community, especially when you look at the PGA TOUR locker room. I spent a lot of time with him and got to play with him a decent amount my first years out on Tour before his second fight with leukemia, got to be pretty good buddies with him. He's just one of those guys that didn't matter how he was doing, how his day was going, how bad or how good he played, he made your day better. He's a special person.

Q. It was a great round. There's something about this golf course you like. You haven't won it yet, but five top-10s in eight appearances, tied for second back in 2011.

What do you like about this course?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's very demanding off the tee. It's a great driving golf course, and if you do that, then it allows you to use that to your advantage. Approach shots, you can actually hit the green there. If you drive it in the rough, it gets very tough to get around this place. Driving's very key and approach shots, and then the putting becomes a bonus once you hit greens in regulation.

So it suits my eye, love the look of it. We've played it in firm conditions, soft conditions like we're seeing this week. So a little easier to hit fairways, but no, just enjoying it and making some putts.

Q. I know you're all about prepping for the big events, you have a big one coming up next week, but this is a big one as well. You're one of those players, you seem to maintain this patience even when everyone else is talking about winning the big ones. How are you able to do that, especially knowing the PGA's coming up next week?

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, you can never force the issue. All we can do is take care of the prep and get ready and make sure we're playing well. We were in a good spot going into The Open a couple weeks ago and obviously I didn't have the Saturday I wanted. Back in a good spot, off to a good start here this week.

When you look at the beginning of the year and obviously the majors are the four that you really look to, PLAYERS and the WGCs, those are our nine big events for the year. So kind of running out of time here and kind of coming towards the end of the season, so it's nice to get off to a good start here and see the work that we've put in the last week and towards the beginning of this week. Excited for the finish.