

ROUND 4 INTERVIEW
July 24, 2022



TONY FINAU (-17)

DOUG MILNE: We would like to welcome the winner of the 2022 3M Open, Tony Finau.

Tony, congratulations on your third career PGA TOUR title. With the win, move up to 17th in the FedExCup. I don't even know how to begin to explain what exactly happened in the last couple hours.

TONY FINAU: Golly.

DOUG MILNE: So that's what you're here to do. Congratulations and take it away.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, thanks, Doug, I appreciate that. It's awesome to get my third win here in Minnesota at the 3M Open, a golf tournament that I've loved. I've always come back ever since they've had it here.

Man, talking about the last few hours, I think I'm still trying to catch up, still trying to figure out. I think the win is finally settling in.

I was just chasing all day, that's all I remember. Really all week. Scott played amazing golf and the thing about out here, I just know what the experience that I have, you just have to keep playing. Anything can happen and that's what I did. When I really needed to hole putts, I did starting on 11, again on 14, 15, 16. I mean, I made some really crucial putts when I really needed them. Then a little bit of some heroics on the stretch on 17 and 18. A crazy bounce on 17. I called bank in the air, so I think that cancels everything out, but I did get a great bounce there and I took advantage of that.

But it was quite a different feeling when I got on the 17th tee because I was just -- I thought I had -- I was almost chasing 20 under all day I felt like. Seemed like Scott wasn't letting up all tournament, so to all of a sudden have the lead, I will say I got quite nervous on 17 just because it was a whole different feel on how the week was going. I never was near the lead. I was near the top of the leaderboard, but I was never within four or five shots. All of a sudden I was the one leading the golf tournament. Sometimes you've got to learn how to play with a lead, so it was a tournament that I just -- I didn't know I was going to be in that situation. A couple squirrely shots on 17 and 18, but I willed my way in and really happy to get that W.

DOUG MILNE: There were a lot of highlights. I'm going to take questions, I just have one more question for him real quick. A lot of highlights throughout the week, but one of the ones that I thought was really special was here at the end with Scott coming up to you with the congratulations hug. I know you've been on both sides of things before you came out on the

good side. How cool was that for Scott to have come up and shown you the deserved respect that he gave you with that?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, Scott Piercy's awesome. I've known him for a very long time. We go back to 2007 playing in the Ultimate Game together. I was 17 years old and he had won that tournament, but I've known him for about that long, 15 years, over 15 years now. So we've had a good relationship for a long time and it means everything to me.

That's the great thing about our sport I feel like is again, I've been on that side of it where you take your hat off and you just congratulate the guy that gets the job done because it takes a lot. It's tough to win out here. I mean, I think I'm about as good an example as any of how tough it is to seal the deal. Anytime you win one it's awesome to get the respect of the guys that you're playing against and I was really happy to see Scott. He was genuinely happy for me, which I think makes our game so great.

Q. (No microphone.)

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I finished with a 66 last week and I knew I was playing well. I made a clutch putt on Friday just to make the cut and then I kind of pushed my way up towards the middle of the pack. I finished 28th last week, but it was like a good 28th. I kind of struggled all week. And then to kind of back door a Top-30, I shot 66 on Sunday, anytime you can do that in a major championship, in a major championship setup, I think it gives you some confidence.

I just kind of knew my game was good going into this week. I played about as clean a tournament as I've ever played from tee to green. I hit a lot of fairways, I hit a lot of greens and I just, I stayed patient with my putter. It didn't go my way a lot, really all week I didn't make a lot of putts, but when I really needed them today, they fell.

And again, it goes back to your question. Last week I made a lot of putts on Sunday and out here, if you want to pick a day that you want putts to fall, Sunday's probably the best day.

Q. When did you start to think that the tournament might be there for somebody other than Scott? Was it not until the 17th tee?

TONY FINAU: I didn't -- yeah, I didn't see a leaderboard until 16 green. When I made that putt on 15, I thought that could be maybe to tie for the lead, maybe still one back. I didn't know what happened at 14. I still don't know what happened at 14, but obviously something happened because when I got to 16 green and I looked over to the left of 16 green, I had a three-shot lead. My heart almost skipped a beat, I couldn't believe it. I said, Wait a sec here.

I thought that was a really nice up-and-down I had on 16 to give myself the cushion coming into 17 and 18. Anything can happen. Again, my ball-striking is something I relied on all week and unfortunately my short game's the one that saved me on a day like today when I didn't hit it quite as good. Down the stretch I got up and down on 17 and the two-putt I made

on 18 to win the tournament was big as well.

Q. Tony, you've talked about your family all week, I see them in the back. How special is it to share it with them? I know they're all here this week.

TONY FINAU: Yeah, it's incredibly special to have my wife and my kids here, as my wife dabs at me. They traveled with me all season this year pretty much every tournament. I can -- on my hand I can count how many times they weren't with me throughout it season, so they've traveled with me.

So to get a win with them here just means everything. It's an amazing feeling to walk off a green knowing you won the tournament and walk right into your family, your kids' arms. It's quite a special feeling. It's something I've thought about and dreamed about for a long time. For that to come to fruition for me and my family today is pretty amazing. I'm humbled by it and hopefully my kids will remember this for a long time.

Q. Tony, after you made the putt on 17, you kind of grabbed your chest a little bit. Was that just kind of the sigh of relief after making that?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, no question. I double crossed my shot on 17, which is why I went so far, it started to ride the wind. I tried to hit a hold shot to hit it up towards the middle of the green. Again, I've been swinging beautifully all week, there's no reason I couldn't trust that shot and I made a bad swing at the wrong time. I just got lucky. Sometimes you get bounces that go your way and I've had many times in that situation or near the top of the leaderboard where I needed a bounce and I got the bad bounce. Nice to see that I got a good bounce today and was able to just capitalize on it. I still had a pretty squirrely lie just to get up and down and I was happy just to get that one down in three.

Q. Tony, when you won the Northern Trust and then Puerto Rico, was your family there for those as well?

TONY FINAU: No. This is the first one my family's been at.

Q. So this is different for that reason then?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, this one I'll remember really forever. I didn't have them there with me either one of my two wins, so this one's extremely special. To witness this with my kids, have them witness me winning on the 18th green, again, it's kind of what dreams are made of. For that to come to fruition for me and our family today is very special.

Q. You've had some close calls this year, a couple T-2s, a T-4 at Charles Schwab. Does this mean a little more with some near misses, close calls, now that you finally got one here?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, all the wins mean a lot, but for sure after I won the Northern Trust, I

knew I had a lot of confidence that I wasn't going to have to wait another five years to get one. You earn them out here, that's just how it is.

My game is as good as it's ever been in really all aspects. I expected myself to contend and win again this year, so to be able to do it this late in the season when you're running out of tournaments and you put that type of expectation on yourself, it's so satisfying. That's what makes the game so great, so satisfying, when you get the job done because you know that it doesn't happen very often, but this one's very special.

Q. Do you keep many balls and are you keeping the one that bounded off the corporate tent and came back?

TONY FINAU: Say that again?

Q. Do you keep many balls from signature moments in your career? Are you keeping the one that bounced off the tent and stayed safe on 17?

TONY FINAU: I'm not a ball keeper. I might have given that away honestly. I gave it a nice kiss, though, after the 17th green. Yeah, I'm not really a ball keeper.

I have some. Like my infamous hole-in-one at the Masters in 18 where I sprained my ankle, I actually have that golf ball. I don't know why. There are a couple that I have, but I can't say I'm a huge collector.

But that went -- again, I think it's going to go down as one of the luckiest shots, however you want to look at it, but at the end of the day, again, sometimes you need the bounces and I got that one today.

Q. So this one might already be gone?

TONY FINAU: Potentially, potentially it might even be gone. I might have given it to the scorekeeper.

Q. You've been mentioning all week the AirBnB you're staying in on the back nine with your family, said you've fishing a lot with your kids. Is there a correlation between being in a good head space off the course and when you come in and have a week like this?

TONY FINAU: Yeah. My dad taught me when I was young, when you're on the golf course, you're here. When you're off the golf course, you're not at the golf course anymore, you're there. So I've learned how to do that pretty much my whole life, so it helps me a lot.

When I'm off the golf course and I'm with my family, I kind of forget about golf, which is big for me, especially when you're in moments like this. It can consume you and start eating at you if you allow it, but what I learned having my family out is it takes me away from golf off

the golf course. I'm a husband, I'm a dad, I'm their friend, I try to have a good time with them, we go fishing. All that allows me to just be a dad and not worry about the golf part.

Then when I get on the golf course it's all business, I'm ready to play golf. But it's nice to have those different hats, especially when you're facing immense pressure like I was really all week and today.

Q. Going off that facing immense pressure, what type of pressure is that? Where do you feel that pressure? Where did that come from this week?

TONY FINAU: Well, honestly, I didn't know what type -- I didn't know that I was the highest ranked player in this field until pretty much on Wednesday when I read something and I was favored to win. For some reason that just like all of a sudden put some added like expectation and pressure on myself. I knew I was playing well, but then it was like, oh, well, this is a crazy situation because if you win, everybody expected it. If you don't win, well, he can't win, right?

I think that just added for some reason on Wednesday, there was like this added expectation. I know how golf is, that doesn't mean anything, everybody starts from scratch on hole 1, but to be able to be the top ranked player to play like I did, to win breeds a lot of confidence for me. I know I have what it takes when I play well to win golf tournaments no matter what magnitude, but you still have to win them to keep that type of confidence.

Q. Is there anything you would attribute, and your results the second half of the season have been much better, you've contended a lot more than you did in the first half of the season, is there anything in particular you would attribute that to?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, I changed my setup a little bit. I think anyone that follows me closely noticed it was kind of like the week of Match Play where I kind of found something in my swing that I could address, helped me aim better I think. I'm not going to go into too many details, but I do think that that allowed me to swing more freely. Sometimes that's all it takes is a little setup change and all of a sudden some things are going your way, you start hitting it better, thinking less over it. So I would say my ball-striking has been elite since that time and it was just a minor setup in my golf swing, and I think it's just kind of bled its way throughout the second half of the season and right into this win.

Q. And what does it mean just in general to be coming down the stretch as an athlete to channel that energy and pull it off and feel those vibes of what it's like being in the mix on a Sunday on the PGA TOUR?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, no question, winning is a process. I think we heard that before by a lot of great champions, but it really is. I feel this has been stirring up for me learning about the swing and the little changes that I made, you just continue to learn about it. When you start executing shots under pressure in tournaments, no matter the situation, oh, that works, this works, that doesn't work. I try to be a student of the game, I have been my whole life.

My golf swing is something that I've worked just extremely hard on. I wouldn't say I have a natural ability to swing the golf club since I was a kid. I do think I swing the club pretty athletically, but I haven't always felt -- I worked extremely hard to get my golf swing to where it is. It's not a natural thing for me to swing a golf club. To get to a point where I do feel like my ball-striking is really good, it humbles me because it's just taken so much trial and error to get it to here it is. All these little gems that you find whether in setup, whatever it may be, are huge. Then it bleeds you right into a day like today where you're not thinking as much, you're hitting shots and when you execute them down the stretch, it feels amazing.

Q. Tony, winning, what does that change for you in terms of your schedule the rest of the year leading up to the Playoffs?

TONY FINAU: Yeah, my schedule's not going to change. I'm going to play next week in Detroit, see if we can keep this horse rolling, but I'll take the week off of Wyndham and then right into the Playoffs. It's nice to have jumped from now, did you say 17?

DOUG MILNE: Yep.

TONY FINAU: I think I was entering the week at 30th in the FedExCup to now 17th. Winning takes care of everything.

Those guys at the top of that FedExCup are going to be extremely hard to pass, but the great thing about the Playoffs is they're triple points, so those tournaments mean a lot in the grand scheme of the FedExCup Playoffs. Now I've put myself in a situation where I win some of those tournaments coming home and I'm going to have a chance at East Lake. This is extremely important on that journey to try and win a FedExCup.

DOUG MILNE: All right. Well, Tony, congratulations on the win.

TONY FINAU: Thank you.