

ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

ROUND 4 PRESS CONFERENCE
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RICKIE FOWLER (-24, won 1st playoff hole)

JACK RYAN: We would like to welcome the champion of the 2023 Rocket Mortgage Classic, Rickie Fowler, into our new interview room here. Rickie earns his sixth career PGA TOUR title and first since the 2019 WM Phoenix Open.

Rickie, you've had a little time to digest it now. Can you just give us an opening comment on what this victory means to you?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's just nice to have this one out of the way. I'm obviously going to soak this one in and celebrate a bit. Yeah, it's just been a long road. I'll get emotional at some point, whether it's -- I already did up there -- in here or when we're heading home or over this next week. We're just going to be home for a couple days. We're actually heading over to London with J.T. and Jordan and our wives. Yeah, we should have fun.

JACK RYAN: You've had a great season to this point, just not getting over the line, but now you've accomplished that. What does this win do for the rest of your season in terms of your goals?

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, this was definitely one of the main goals this year was to win. Outside of that was obviously playing well and doing what I've been doing to make it to the TOUR Championship, and kind of the -- one of the end goals was to be a part of the Ryder Cup team and that's still what we're focusing on right now. Been a part of a handful and that's -- they're very special weeks, so that's where I have kind of my eyes.

But planning to continue to play well and looking forward to a couple weeks over the pond with the Scottish and the British coming up, especially with how I've been playing and how I am playing.

Q. Rickie, it looked like it started to get away on the back nine, you hadn't made a birdie since No. 7, and the play of Adam and Collin was scintillating down the stretch. What did you do to get it back together?

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, I felt like I made some pretty good swings shooting a few under on the front, and I felt like if I could kind of continue to do something similar and keep moving forward, I thought if I could kind of -- rough idea I was thinking, you know, trying to get to 26. Obviously that would have been enough, but that was kind of what I was shooting for.

I think the speed bump was 14. I hit a great drive and then a nice 5-wood in there, just kind



of either misread or had a putt bump a little bit there on the second for birdie. Adam makes a nice birdie on 15 and I couldn't convert mine, so that's kind of where I lost a little bit of momentum.

Just kind of kept pushing. That was kind of the nice thing with being out in front, gave me a little bit of cushion for either me to make a mistake or guys to make some birdies and still be in there.

No. 17 would have been nice to get one there, but going to 18, basically knew what I had to do, our back was against the wall.

Yeah, that's kind of it. I felt like I did a good job out there today, just really didn't convert and take advantage of some opportunities that I had on the back nine to ultimately win it in regulation, but I'll take it any way we can get it.

Q. You obviously had a couple years where things weren't going your way. I know you felt like you could get it back, but did you feel like this was always attainable even in some of those lower moments?

RICKIE FOWLER: Not always. You never really know with this game. You definitely learn to appreciate the good times and when you're playing well. Yeah, you hope the struggles don't last, but sometimes they last longer than you would hope for.

Like I said, even when you're playing well, it's not going to last forever. Being that I've been one of the best players in the world, plenty of good finishes and wins, I knew what I was capable of, but it's tough when you're struggling for that long of a period of time.

But I knew it wasn't far off and just kind of had to keep putting the time in, keep grinding, keep pushing. Then started to see some positive results and starting to build some confidence and momentum last fall.

Q. When you obviously had the struggles that you had and you get back to this point, do you have to kind of go through the kind of Sunday pressure a little bit to remember how to execute in that situation? Did the situation in L.A. help you today?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, definitely. Any situation prior helps, but the more recent, the better. I've been in contention plenty of times and I've won, and I've also not played well or been close and not been able to convert. But definitely over the last couple weeks with L.A. and last week I felt better and played better, just didn't score, but it was ultimately too far back and Keegan played very well throughout the whole week.

Yeah, the last two weekends definitely helped going into today, just know that I didn't have to be perfect, just had to keep doing what we've been doing. Like I said, I felt like we did a really good job of it other than not really converting a few opportunities there on the back nine.



Q. Rickie, when you go through your career and you get older and things like that, and you go through changes, whether it's coaches, swings, whatever, how much are you trying to change and adapt versus also kind of like trying to find what made you great earlier, if that makes sense?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, everyone's always working on stuff and ultimately we're all trying to get better. Even when we go through struggles or tough times, might be working on stuff and go the wrong way to ultimately end up better than you were before. I would say this year and how I've been playing as of late is probably the best I've ever felt about my game and played.

But yeah, it's kind of tough. I mean, like I mentioned, you're not always going to be playing well. It's not going to last forever, and you hope the same for the struggles. Yeah, everyone out here, we're all trying to be the best that we can be. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, and when it's not, sometimes you might have to go to something different and try to keep moving forward that way.

Q. You've had a lot of iconic images in your career, you've been a part of memes, you've had the Olympic rings tattooed on your arm. The image with you and your daughter Maya after the playoff today where will that rank in your list of images in your mind as a golfer?

RICKIE FOWLER: It will be very special for me to have Maya and my wife there with me on the 18th green, especially with the last few years, how they've been on the golf course, dealing with that. It was tough just because everything else in my life was amazing and then to have the one thing that I obviously love doing -- it's not everything to me but it's a big part of my life -- it was kind of the missing link.

So to kind of have everything start to click and come together, and obviously all this started prior to Maya being born. No, it's been an amazing ride. To finally get one finished off, Maya may or may not really ever remember it, but at least we'll have some special images to help her remember today.

Q. That moment you sink the putt, Ricky comes over, gives you a big bear hug, what were you thinking in the moment as the final putt drops and proceeding after that?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, going in there I had a pretty good idea of what the putt was going to do after seeing Adam's, he was on a pretty similar line.

Yeah, just kept telling myself just hit a good putt and give it a chance. I didn't see a whole lot of the putt until kind of the end, it hung on and caught the right center. Yeah, I was kind of just still and quiet and everyone was going crazy around me. It was a nice moment just to kind of feel like the weight on my shoulders was finally off.



Q. This is a very pro-Rickie crowd. Did you feel that support throughout this weekend? They've been with you throughout the years here at this tournament, so is it extra special to win here?

RICKIE FOWLER: No, definitely, the fans here have always been great. I feel like we've seen this tournament continue to grow and grow and more fans come out every year. To feel the support this year, I feel like it helps that I've been playing well and have more people in my corner, so it seemed like it just kind of got bigger and bigger every day, especially today.

I'm glad the weather cooperated for the most part, and to kind of see the crowds grow over the day, especially come the back nine, yeah, I could definitely feel it. They were pretty much pulling for me. I know that playing with Adam, he was grinding it out and trying to obviously go win the tournament himself, and Collin was up in front of us playing very well. So to get it done and I feel like please a lot of the other people obviously pulling for me, rooting for me, yeah, it felt great to get this one.

Q. In those times that you've talked about, I think you used the word "struggles," but in those times when you still had sponsorships and expectations that are so high, could you just maybe in hindsight describe what the weight is like when a lot of people are kind of waiting for it to end? Like how does that actually feel to be the center of attention at that time?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's tough, but also it comes with the territory. I feel like a lot of guys, you don't really understand it or get it until you've really been in the position. There's plenty of guys out here that understand it and get it.

Yeah, it's tough, but at the end of the day I feel like us as players, we're the ones that have kind of the highest expectations and put the most pressure on ourselves.

Yeah, you do feel the outside, whether it's support or the other. I mean, going through struggles you hear both sides of it. It's amazing to have the following that I've had and then the people that have always been in my corner and pulled for me and supported me, but you also deal with the other side, which is unfortunate.

So to be back playing well, to have had a lot of good finishes and to finally knock off a win, yeah, it feels good because I know a lot of people are excited and happy, and also probably quiet down some other people.

Q. Rickie, can you just take us through the two approach shots on 18 in regulation and the playoff?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah. Regulation, I was in the first cut, which can kind of be a little bit of a blessing because with the soft conditions and the back pin, it can be tough. You could see how Adam's ball reacted in the playoff, tough to get it close to some back pins when you're coming from the fairway, just controlling spin. Had to play a little bit of a jumper. I had 147



hole and kind of tried to hit like a 135 shot with a wedge just with the jump and a little bit of help. That one obviously came out the right number.

In the playoff I was a little out of position, but I joked to Rick after I hit the tee ball over there that it was a good angle, which it is, but a little bit far right. It was pretty wet over there. I got relief from casual water, but I was still in a pretty wet area because I was close to that. Really just was trying to make good contact. I had I think 190 hole and hit 7-iron. I was really just trying to kind of catch a little low on the face because there was a bit of water and didn't want to catch it too clean or towards the heavy side because you get the water and the ball can kind of go anywhere. That one came out perfect. Again, I didn't have to worry about the ball spinning too much coming from wet rough over there.

Q. Rickie, is it more gratifying to win a tournament this way, in such dramatic fashion on 18 and then the playoff?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, I would have much preferred to win it just in regulation and convert some of the ones or opportunities I had on the back nine. I feel like I played well enough all week to do that, but unfortunately a couple things here or there and end up in that position.

At the end of the day, take it any way I can get it. But to hit some of those shots and ultimately make a couple putts when I really needed to, yeah, definitely feels good. Especially that last one in the playoff to about 11 feet or so, that one felt good to see go in because I've had -- I had some miss over the week or today. It kind of all came down to that, just hit a good putt and hope for the best.

Q. Two people that kind of are different since you last won, your caddie Ricky and then Butch, working with Butch again. How much have those two people been a part of this journey to kind of get back on track?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, both have been great partnerships. Butch was nothing new necessarily since we worked together for quite a while through the middle part of my career. Our split was really just because he stopped traveling, and then things weren't working the last few years.

I'm not someone that necessarily needs a whole lot of attention from a coach or anything like that. I think over the last 10 months or so I think I've seen Butch four times. So it's more just the communication and talking and going back and forth and him looking at videos or what he sees on TV or stuff he can see on course from, like I said, TV or on the Tour app or whatever it may be.

That's been big because I think Butch is a very -- he's the best golf coach out there. He does a great job with players, taking what they have and ultimately I think making them the best that they can be with who they are and how they swing and making what they do well that much better and bring up the weaknesses.



And Rick's been amazing on the bag. We've known each other for a long time, grew up in the same town. So when Joe and I split, he was basically at the top of my list because he's a great player, one, and I've known him a long time. I knew we would be comfortable and a good fit and an easy one to move forward with.

So to kind of put everything together and start to see results, all this kind of started right before Napa last year. Yeah, it's been a fun ride, kind of just getting going.

JACK RYAN: All right. Those are all the questions we have. Congratulations, again, to the 2023 Rocket Mortgage Classic champion, Rickie Fowler.

RICKIE FOWLER: Thank you.

