

ROUND 1 QUICK QUOTES
March 28, 2024



MACKENZIE HUGHES (-4)

Q. How would you characterize the round today?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, it was solid. I felt like I was in pretty good control of the golf ball and gave myself plenty of good looks. I think it was like a handful of holes out here where you're pretty happy with par and on those holes I kind of made sure I was just playing to the fat of the green, and when I had my chances I tried to take advantage. Yeah, I felt pretty good. I made a bad swing on 15, but yeah, besides that, a lot of great shots.

Q. Do you feel like this is a continuation from last week, you rolled it into Houston from Valspar?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, there's no doubt that there was like some confidence gained from last week. But I'm working on the right things and I'm trying to not be so caught up in the results. I'm just trying to control what I can control and done a pretty good job of that over the last week and a half. I'll try and do that the rest of the week.

Q. Are you working with anybody right now on your swing?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I had a couple lessons with a guy in Charlotte, Mark Wood, and that was before Bay Hill. I've been on the road for four weeks since then though. I had a couple lessons, got some things looked at.

I work on the mental side with a guy named John Sherman, who has kind of wrote some books on the mental side of things. We kind of connected last summer. Yeah, we just kind of talked through things and the way he lays things out kind of resonated with me last summer. I was in a not great place back then and kind of work towards a more positive frame of mind and working on the right things mentally. So that's been very positive, so yeah, that's been going well.

Q. How much -- do you allow yourself at all to look ahead six months to the Presidents Cup or do you kind of have to suppress that a little bit?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I mean, it feels like on a daily basis I talk about it with somebody, mainly media, so it's hard not to have it come to the front of your mind, but it's so far away, there's so much golf between now and then. Yeah, I would love, I would give my left arm to be on that team, but worrying about it right now is not going to do me any good. Just need to kind of day by day kind of take it slow, and I'm just trying to get a little better every day and hopefully in a few months I'll be on that team.



Q. Does it help the mental side a little bit more too when you were able to kind of carry last week's performance into this week and not have any falloff?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, definitely. It's nice coming off a great week and playing again right after that. I think there are times when you almost have like planned weeks off, like if I wasn't playing here and you have a great week and you go home, sometimes that can kind of fizzle out a little bit that form and whatnot. So I feel like coming straight here after that week, feel like I was able to kind of build on what I did in Tampa.

Q. What are your thoughts on the presentation of the golf course? A lot of the players are raving about it.

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, it's immaculate. I've played every edition of this tournament when it was in the fall. When I came here, I was speechless. I was like I didn't recognize the place. It was just a complete makeover. Just around the greens and the way they manicured the rough, I was blown away. It's perfect, it's really, really good.

I think the word will get around and that guys will want to come here prior to the Masters if this is staying in this spot on the schedule. I think guys will see this and kind of be like this is a good place to come and prep for Augusta. Yeah, super impressed so far and hopefully we'll put a few more good rounds together.

Q. Scottie told me Wednesday he almost felt he had to relearn the golf course. How much was that the case with you this week also?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, there were some spots last couple years where you would put in your book that this is a complete X, like this was jail. Now you're kind of going around some of those spots and being like I can play from here, I can actually hit a chip from down here and the grass is really nice and consistent. Even the rough, like the rough, playing some of these greens, you kind of have a bit of control coming out of that rough.

Yeah, it is a bit of an adjustment. It's still a hard golf course with a lot of long shots, but there are some opportunities now to be a bit more aggressive than maybe could have been in the past.

Q. What's one example of a technique or a thought that John Sherman has kind of helped implement with you and that's helped you?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: You know, to be quite honest I don't think it's really a lot of new stuff, it's more just reinforcing what I did know but like getting back to that stuff. A lot of it is like I'm pretty hard on myself and it could be over something I had no control over.

Like last week in Tampa during that final round I had some really bad breaks in some bunkers (no audio) but I didn't control that happening. I hit a bad shot, but I got penalized for it. To waste more energy on it being upset and frustrated was going to do me no good.



So it's stuff like that where I'm trying to put my energy in the right places, stay pretty even keel out there and yeah, just control what I can control because obviously there's a lot of things in an outdoor game like this that you can't control, but there are a number of things I can control, which is like my main focus right now is control those things and let the results be what they be. I think it's more or less reinforcing some good habits.

Q. It's been Bay Hill, PLAYERS, being in contention at Valspar, that's like a high energy three weeks. Was there any thought of taking this week off or were you pretty fresh --

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I was pretty set on coming here. I like this golf course and had pretty good results here in the past, so I just felt this was a part of my schedule. Valspar was a late addition after THE PLAYERS, I added that one kind of late. This one was always on the schedule.

I like the test, I like what it asks of you. Obviously I came here not knowing what it would be like this year with the overseed, but yeah, it's incredible, a much different golf course than we played in the past.

Q. Was that in Valspar part of a late push to try to get in the Masters?

DAVIS RILEY: Yeah. Also felt like if I didn't play Valspar and I didn't get into Augusta, I wasn't going to play for three out of four weeks and I just felt like I wanted to add a start there. So yeah, wanted a chance for Augusta and obviously this kind of filled in a little bit of a gap there.

