

**ROUND 3 INTERVIEW: RICKIE FOWLER**  
**May 7, 2016**



**MODERATOR:** Rickie Fowler, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Tough day for scoring out there but you managed a 4-under 68 tying the day's low round. Just a few comments on today's round and how you're feeling on your position heading into tomorrow.

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah, no, it wasn't easy out there. With gusty winds I had shots that went a lot longer than expected and a lot shorter than expected, so it was tough to dial in numbers and get the ball close to the hole. It was nice to drive it well, that's going to be a positive going into tomorrow. And I've continued to swing it better and better as the tournament's gone on. It wasn't very good the first two days and nice to finally get into a little bit of a rhythm out there today and hopefully it's even better tomorrow.

**Q. Given what you've done in the last year, how much more confident do you feel now in a position like this going into tomorrow?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I mean, from about a year ago to two years ago to where I'm at right now, whether it's being in the final group or having a chance to win, being in contention, it's completely different. You know, it was I would say before maybe not the complete belief or knowledge of knowing what to do and how to win to get the job done, but now it's fun to go out there and go take care of business.

**Q. What did the victory here a couple years ago, what did that do for you?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I think that one, the biggest thing was just getting the monkey off my back and getting the first win on the PGA Tour. I wasn't -- I was in contention but I kind of just was able to hold on and get myself into the playoff. And obviously made some great swings when I needed to in the playoff there, which helped me when it came down to it. But I mean, The Players is still probably the biggest one for me as far as what it's done confidence wise. If I didn't have the win here going into The Players, I wouldn't have been able to do that. So it's just been a built of a process and building on top of each other.

**Q. A few guys putted balls off the green today. How difficult are the greens out there right now? Can they lose them?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** They won't lose them. They're still a little, I say soft but they're not that soft, but you're still making pitch marks. It's just tough with the wind. You get down wind, down grain, you can putt it off pretty quickly. It's a fine line. But as far as losing them, no, they won't have any chance of that. I'm looking forward to them drying out and firming up even more tomorrow. You're going to have to be in control of your golf ball, especially out of the fairway. You're not going to be able to play this golf course out of the rough tomorrow.

**Q. When you went to work with Butch, was there any fear that there would be a**

**regression before there would be the jump forward that you were hoping to make? I'm sure there was a little one but it doesn't really look like it. That was the year you had all the top-5s in the majors. In your mind was there any fear of having to kind of go backward?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah, we knew there was the possibility of potentially having a down year. You know, I was at a point where I wasn't getting any better. I wasn't -- I wasn't getting as much out of myself as I wanted to. Possibly with where I was at, I was getting about as much as I could swing wise and game wise, but I wanted more. So to take a step back, yeah, I knew that I was possibly taking a risk of having nine to 12 months where I would be a little slow and then back off and running. Luckily, I was able to work on a few things before we started working full time after seeing him at the Open. And then when we started working full time, I had a little bit of a slow start to the West Coast Swing and Match Play was a good -- a little start to the year there and then it all got going from Houston. Yeah, it was a historical year, pretty quick turnaround for sure. But yeah, I guess if you look at the first time I actually worked with Butch and started working on things and you're looking at from then until the Match Play, it was probably seven, eight months. I officially start working with him more end of November, December. So I guess you could look at it both ways.

**Q. What was the biggest thing you took from that, whether it was physically, mentally, a swing, or is there any one big thing that came out of it?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Well, the swing's completely different. It's more fundamentally sound, it's more efficient, so obviously that. But the belief in the game and knowing what I'm capable of now.

**Q. Driving the ball, is that what you've done the best this week and was there a drive or two out there today that you really liked, maybe 14?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** No, actually I've played with what I've had this week. I haven't been turning the ball over very well and there's been a few holes out here that are dogleg lefts and the wind's been off the left. So you have to be able to turn the ball pretty hard right to left to hit the proper shot for the hole. I haven't been turning the ball over very well, so I've actually had to kind of just trust myself and play a bit of a straight ball and let the ball drift with the wind back, which isn't easy to do on dogleg lefts. So I think the commitment and the patience that I've had this week has been very good. Like I said, I haven't had my best tee to green. I've definitely missed some short putts as well so I'm looking forward to cleaning it up even more tomorrow. By far the best ball striking day today and I'm looking forward to being better.

**Q. Rickie, you nailed three birdies in a row there on the back nine. Is that confidence bred from having won here on this course before, does that help you a lot?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I just hit some good shots. Driving the green on 14, that doesn't happen

a whole lot, especially from the back tees. I hit a great one there. It was all set up by three good drives. I mean, 15 you're kind of expecting yourself to birdie the par 5 up the hill. 16 was a bit of a bonus. Played the hole exactly how I wanted to and just, I didn't get lucky, I made a good putt but not every day you make the 20-, 25-footer up the hill.

**Q. (Inaudible) Is there something about this time of year, peaking right about now?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I mean, a little bit. You like to be peaking every week and play well through the year but the meat of our schedule is from now til September. Really, I know June through August, or June -- just June and July we have three majors and a World Golf Championship in seven weeks. I think that's right. So yeah, if you could pick a time, I guess you would pick this time of year to go. But no, this time of year has been good to me, obviously last year and then winning here before. Golf courses that I like I've played well on. I'll take it. It doesn't matter what it is, I'll take the good playing this time of year.

**Q. Did you set any kind of goal today to maybe take the lead or get into the final group on Sunday?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Main thing was just to go out and make sure I was in position to win tomorrow. I didn't want to take myself out of the tournament. So whether it was out in front by a few shots or tied for the lead or a shot or two back, I just didn't want to be out of position. I'm comfortable playing whether it's out front, behind, whatever it may be. I've won from all areas now. I'm just looking forward to getting back out there tomorrow. Like I said, with the way it's been going, the game's even going to be better tomorrow and should be fun.

**Q. You talked about it a little bit already but did that trip to Bakers Bay, do you think that did any positive for you on the golf course?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Oh, definitely. Having some time away just from almost like the real world in a way. I mean, we were still playing golf over there, having a good time but it's almost like a reset button. I do that once or twice a year when I get two-week breaks, and that's why I take two-week breaks is actually to get some time away to relax and reset. You try and play at a high level continuously throughout the year, it definitely wears on you and it can become tough. If you can split it up a bit and get the times where you just go have fun with your friends, and obviously you see we had a great time. I think it's been beneficial to me this time, before and in the past and I think it's going to be beneficial for all four of us.

**Q. Before that, any way to explain Augusta? Was it just a blip, one of those things that happens in a year in golf or was it, you know, just didn't have it?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I had it, it was fine. I was even par through 12 holes, I just made a couple bad mental mistakes that you can't do around there. And this place is probably as close as you're going to get to it as far as how much on top of it you have to be. You talk about a fine line. Guys putting it off greens, it can happen. That's what happens at Augusta

as well. So I just made some bad mistakes there but I was swinging well coming into the week. I didn't swing bad the next day, but obviously I had to shoot a bit of a number and wasn't able to, so there's the weekend off. Just learn from it, moved on, went and had fun with the boys and we're back out swinging.

**MODERATOR:** Rickie, thanks for your time.

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Thanks.