



MICHAEL BALIKER: I would like to welcome Rickie Fowler to the interview room here at the World Golf Championships-Mexico Championship.

Before we begin, I want to make sure everyone knows, remind you that this is Rickie's only opportunity to ask questions. So after the press conference is over, he's going to have to leave, so please get all your questions now.

Rickie, before we begin, big week for you last week obviously, winning the Honda Classic, fourth PGA Tour victory. Just start us off by recapping that week a little bit and your thoughts heading into this week.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it was a great week. Nice to get a win at home where I live now. Been in the Jupiter area for almost seven years so to be able to do that, have some family there, friends around, it was nice to finish off the job and to finally get to celebrate a win. A lot of times we're on the road and you're flying out that night or traveling to the next event or heading home. To be able to be at home and to celebrate with some friends and family, like I said, it was pretty special.

To play the way I did and ultimately finish off the job and hold the 54-hole lead and, like I said, finish it off, it was nice to finally get that monkey off my back. I hadn't really thought of the times that I hadn't done it just because I had won before from the lead through 36 or 54, just not on the PGA Tour but I have done it worldwide. Yeah, it was a special week. Excited about this week down here in Mexico City.

Q. Is it difficult to make sure you don't have a letdown after such a big emotional win?

RICKIE FOWLER: No, not really. I mean, you kind of ride the high a little bit. You've seen already this year, you've seen Justin win Kapalua and go win the next week at Sony. You kind of -- I think there's a popular saying that a lot of people know if they've spent time on the tables, it's "never leave the table on a heater." Kind of let it go and keep rolling with it.

Like I said, I'm excited about being down here. It is a different style of golf. It's similar to Honda in a way, it's still kind of placing your ball, and placing it around this golf course is not exactly bomb and gouge. But being on different surfaces, elevation, it is going to be play a little bit different. I'm excited about it, just trying to get rested up so we're ready to go tomorrow.

Q. Your initial reaction to the proposed changes to the Rules of Golf? Are there some that stood out to you, some that make sense, some that don't make sense?

RICKIE FOWLER: I haven't even seen the proposals yet. I did have -- I haven't seen the exact proposals. I had one of the main guys from the USGA walk a hole or two with me at Torrey and talked about some of the stuff that they were looking at. I thought a lot of the stuff was good.

I think simplifying a lot of the rules is a great idea, whether it's drop related, what the ball does on the green, what you can fix on the green. Just making it a little bit more to where the average weekend golfer understands what they can and can't do and how to take a drop and there's not seven different ways to do a certain thing. I think a little bit more simple is a good thing.

Q. Do you feel favorite after your win on Sunday in the Honda Classic to win this tournament?

RICKIE FOWLER: I feel very good about myself and my game. We are playing with the best players in the world here this week. It's not going to be an easy week to win. But with the way I've been playing and coming off the win last week, yeah, I feel very good about my game, but I still need to play very well to have a chance to win here this week.

Q. Rickie, there's a few trees out there. I was just wondering what your plan is having seen the course from the tees. Are you going to be mixing in very many drivers this week, a lot of long irons? What's your strategy here?

RICKIE FOWLER: There's only going to be a few drivers. For the most part I'm going to play fairly conservative off the tees. The big thing here is getting the ball in play. I think that's kind of the strategy going forward, just trying to make it as simple as possible because there are a few trees and it's pretty dense. It's not like you can play many shots from the trees here. So I think first and foremost we're just going to try and take the easiest approach off the tee, get the ball in play, and then there are a few holes out here that it allows you to play a little bit more aggressively.

Q. (No microphone.)

RICKIE FOWLER: I haven't memorized the course exactly, but the par 5s really, other than when the tee is left on 11, probably be hitting 5-wood off the left tee there. Off the right tee I'll be able to hit driver because it's a little bit more straightaway. Yeah, there might be one par 4 that I'm hitting driver on. I want to say it's No. 8 back up the hill, it's a long one. I haven't memorized it by going through yet, I've only been around the course once. Went and played the back nine for the second time this morning and I think I hit two drivers on the back nine today because we played the right tee on 11.

Q. What are your thoughts on the tournament being played outside the U.S. again?

RICKIE FOWLER: I'm looking forward to it. I love getting to travel. I love getting to see

different cities around the world, seeing different cultures. I love Mexican food, so I'm looking forward to kind of getting to see some different restaurants through the week. I'm going to enjoy some time at night with the food, that's for sure. But no, I think it's great. Getting to play around the world and getting to travel to different places.

And ultimately it would be cool to see how much of an impact this tournament can have in this area and potentially the growth of Mexican golf in the younger generation. We may see some juniors that are out here this week and some years down the road they might have been a spectator out here and then playing professional golf in the future. So it will be interesting to see how much of an impact we can have and it would be cool to see that.

Q. Hi, Rickie. In order to what do you think that Mexican golf need to do in order to have a golfer in the top 100, I don't know, but in order to improve our golf level?

RICKIE FOWLER: I think it's just getting the excitement of the game. Obviously futbol is a very popular sport here in Mexico, a lot more popular than golf, but I think this tournament could build some excitement in the youth and maybe inspire some kids to want to play more golf and ultimately play professional golf. But there's still -- there are a lot of good Mexican players, I look at a guy like Carlos Ortiz, he's a very good player and it's just a matter of time before he's back definitely inside the top 100 in the world.

Q. You mentioned Mexican food. I was just wondering sort of in general, some athletes like Tom Brady are very, very strict about what they eat, Novak Djokovic is another one. How do you tend to eat on the road? Do you have some cheats where you let yourself go crazy a little bit?

RICKIE FOWLER: I definitely had some cheat last night. No, I definitely like to enjoy myself. I am aware of kind of what I eat and I try, especially more so as of late, but trying to stay a little bit on the cleaner side. But no, I enjoy food as do a lot of people, and getting to be here in Mexico City, we're only here for six days and it's just I want to be able to -- kind of a fine line, you want to be able to enjoy a little bit but also I'm here to play golf and make sure that I'm ready to play. We're not going to be going crazy or anything like that, but indulge a little bit, try some desserts and some of the local food, but at the same time keeping it somewhat clean and simple.

Q. Hi, Rickie, the children and young people that follow you a lot, could we, the Mexican children can be inspired by you in our country. How do you think about that?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's pretty cool to be able to come and play here in Mexico City and have that young following still and see the excitement that some of these junior golfers, whether they're members or kids that are coming out to watch the event. I think today was the first day that the golf course was open to the public and there wasn't too many people out this morning but it seemed to grow as the day went on. I'm excited to see the kind of turnout we get through the week, especially once the weekend comes around.

But no, so far when I came out to practice, I think there's a few guys coming off 18 green and there were a couple hundred fans around trying to get autographs, pictures. They seem very excited, especially the kids.

No, like I was talking about earlier, I'm interested to see kind of the impact this tournament can potentially have on the younger generation of golfers not just in Mexico City but in the country of Mexico.

Q. Even from Justin Thomas to Jordan Spieth, and I think you mentioned it on Sunday, you've said it's important to win before Augusta. Can you explain how winning more than a month before Augusta National will help you at Augusta?

RICKIE FOWLER: I don't think it's something that you have to do, but it helps just for -- I mean, just for me personally, I think just as a person, as a player with confidence and knowing your game is good enough and gives you time to tighten things up. It hasn't happened a whole lot for me. Abu Dhabi two years ago and this year here for Honda. No, it is nice to see that form is there early in the year, especially when you -- we don't get an offseason but we try and slow things down after the fall, after whether it's the Presidents Cup or Ryder Cup. To be able to do that and kind of trend in the right direction through after missing the cut, by going to Phoenix and getting two weeks of work in and getting the win at Honda. I'm looking forward to the preparation leading up to Augusta. It's a good spot to be in. Like I said, I like the way I feel about my game right now, my health and the time that we have to prepare.

Q. How are you feeling coming from Florida to Mexico City?

RICKIE FOWLER: I feel good. I mean the game's obviously in a good spot coming off the win last week. I'm just making sure that I'm going to be well rested. It is, it's different being at altitude with your body but also with what the golf ball does. So physically just making sure that I'm rested and ready to play golf tomorrow. It's nice that we don't have early morning tee times, everything's pretty much middle of the day, so don't have to worry about 4:00, 5:00 in the morning wake-up calls, which is nice. I think come tomorrow we'll be set and ready to go, but I think the last two days coming off the win and the excitement and getting to celebrate, and I played the Seminole pro-member on Monday so I needed a little bit of time to relax and recharge and we'll be good to go tomorrow.

Q. Just curious, how important is it in terms of how you win a tournament? Is it overrated by a lot of people or is it understated? How important is how you win?

RICKIE FOWLER: I don't think it matters how you win. If you're holding the trophy on 18 on Sunday, you did good.

Q. I just say that because there were two schools of thought last week which I thought it was completely unfair. Obviously players got close to you and you buried

two brilliant putts and got your lead again. Do you take a lot from a situation like that or do you just look at the end of the day I got there, it doesn't matter how?

RICKIE FOWLER: I think it's great when I had the cushion, it gives you the opportunity to, especially on a tough course like that in tough conditions, you're going to make mistakes so it gives you that a little bit of cushion where if I was trying to come from behind and I make a mistake, you fall further behind. You almost have to play perfect golf at that point. Being four shots out, I didn't have to be too aggressive. I could allow for a bad swing or mistake, which I kind of pulled one a little on 6 and it got on the other side of the wind and I make double. But I'm still in control, I'm still in a fine spot. And then I go and roll in a few putts and it was good. Never lost control of the situation or anything like that. I kept moving forward. I think Joe and I did a great job of managing our way around. Yeah, I had enough cushion the last couple holes, and I wish I would have made a better swing on 17, but really didn't matter.

Q. Just coming back at the Honda there and the putts you started making again then, when I look at your putting, it looks so free and it was impressive I thought to see it continue with all the pressure. Is that something you work on more than maybe some people do?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's not something I necessarily work on a lot during a tournament week or leading up. I consistently work on it. It's not a chunk of time each day, it's just consistently staying on top of it. I work with a mirror to make sure my setup's consistent, in the same spot every day which helps me see the same line, hit the ball consistently in the center of the face which helps control speed. No, putting is something, like I said, I worked on it consistently for a long time. I worked a lot through junior golf and amateur golf, spending time in the Scotty studio with Paul Azonco (sp). Have learned a lot working with him and just understanding how putting works. And putting is very individual. You can only be so technical. I feel like you want to have your own feel and your own touch and your own kind of characteristics to your putting stroke and I've just always tried to make it as simple as possible trying to, you kind of talked about it, it seems free and kind of just let the putter swing.

MICHAEL BALIKER: Rickie, we appreciate the time and go get 'em this week.

RICKIE FOWLER: Thanks.