

FARMERS INSURANCE OPEN
January 23, 2018



Rickie Fowler
Mike Linton
Jay Monahan
Peter Ripa

MODERATOR: Good afternoon again, everyone, and welcome to the 2018 Farmers Insurance Open. As many of you know, my name's Ben Higgins. I'm the sports director here in town at ABC 10 News and I am extremely honored to be invited to help make a special announcement today.

Perhaps it's because I'm a fourth generation San Diegan, I was a junior golfer growing up here, I went to Torrey Pines High School over there, and I've been attending the Farmers Insurance Open since I was about -- I don't think I was ever that small, but I was in sixth grade when Craig Stadler built a stance, I was a senior in high school when Phil Mickelson won as a first-time as the pro, and I was just starting my career as a sportscaster when Tiger Woods won for the first of many times out here on the Torrey Pines courses.

So it is a pleasure to be here today. It also means I understand how important the Farmers Insurance Open is to the community, our local charities, golf fans in San Diego and the entire community of San Diego. The spectacular imagery that we get of our beautiful January weather broadcast across the world every single year, it's just awesome.

I also understand we couldn't put on an event without some very special organizations, and representing today Farmers Insurance is Mike Linton, chief marketing officer; from the PGA TOUR, Commissioner Jay Monahan is back, and of course the CEO of the Century Club of San Diego, Peter Ripa.

So first things first, I will turn things over to Mike Linton for a very special announcement.

MIKE LINTON: Thank you, Ben. So in our advertising we like to say we know a thing or two because we've seen a thing or two, and we've seen eight of these tournaments and we're about to see obviously our ninth, and I'm here today to announce that we've seen enough to add our sponsorship on for the next seven years through 2026.

So the announcement is we're going to be sponsoring this for the next seven years with our two great partners who I'm honored to be sitting with, Peter and Jay, and we're really excited for the next seven years and what we can do for this tournament, and we're also very excited to be in partnership with the city.

MODERATOR: Absolutely. Mike, we see all the signs out there. We see Farmers on -- yeah, big round of applause.

Seven years is an extremely big deal to everyone sitting in here who loves golf in San Diego who's associated with the Farmers Insurance Open. We see the signs, we see the title sponsorship, but what does this tournament do for Farmers and your strategy, Mike, as you look ahead?

MIKE LINTON: So there's a couple things this tournament does for us that we really like. First, we're a California company, southern California company based in Los Angeles. This is pretty close to home so we like that.

Second thing, our employees really, really like this tournament a lot. You'll see them volunteering and sponsoring -- I mean helping the tournament. We launch a lot of stuff here. It's also a big charity thing for us. This is where we start our give-back really for the year and you will see us every day have a special charity event. We have First Tee actually right after this. This is big for that.

And then from a business and marketing standpoint, as the chief marketing officer, I'll say this really works well for our company, appeals to a lot of folks that buy our product. It really works well for us as a marketing platform in addition to all the other good stuff we said. In fact, we're going to be launching new -- every year for the last three years we launched a new golf spot and we are launching a new spot tomorrow. You may be able to see it on a lot of television stations, maybe on ABC Channel 10. That was a pitch for you, Ben.

MODERATOR: Thank you.

MIKE LINTON: Starting tomorrow, and it features obviously a real live claims story and also our brand ambassador, Rickie Fowler, who we are really honored to work with Rickie on a lot of fronts. We think he is great from our advertising standpoint, for our customers, and also great at giving back to the community, which is something that's very important to us.

(Applause.)

MODERATOR: I heard a brand ambassador was going to be here, I thought it might be Professor Nathaniel Burke, but this is even better. Everyone, Rickie Fowler.

Rickie, how did you know that Mike was talking about you? Your ears were burning out there?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I was just walking by, I'm staying close by up here. I'm lucky enough that Farmers helps me get a room at The Lodge, heard the boys talking about me so I figured I'd stop by.

MODERATOR: How did it look out there today?

RICKIE FOWLER: I actually took the day off, I just practiced. I went and practiced from

about 10:30 to a little after 1:00, and we have a clinic coming up in a little bit with some juniors, so kind of a mellow day. I played Charley Hoffman's pro-am yesterday on the North Course to see that, and we'll play the pro-am tomorrow morning. Get to sleep in, we're teeing off at 6:50. No, Monday and Wednesday is days on the course, so today we're trying to kind of ease into it a little bit.

MODERATOR: Rickie, I'm sure you're excited, a seven-year extension of the sponsorship of the Farmers Insurance Open, certainly one of the premier events on the west coast and so close to your native Murrieta up there. So getting to come back here as a home tournament must be great and to continue the relationship with Farmers Insurance.

RICKIE FOWLER: They're a great company. For me, I'm lucky to have a good group of sponsors, but I don't like to talk about them as sponsors; I have great partnerships. Being able to grow the partnership with Farmers and be with people like Mike and Jeff. Get to play with Jeff again tomorrow in the morning. Sorry about the early wake-up call.

(No microphone.)

RICKIE FOWLER: I like your chances.

MIKE LINTON: Give him some coaching tips tomorrow.

RICKIE FOWLER: Good thing Butch is going to be out there, so we've got that covered.

No, being able to extend our partnership, extend the partnership here, yeah, a place that's not far from where I grew up and this is very much my home tournament growing up a little over an hour away up north. Being able to do things with Farmers on the charitable side with everything that they're involved in, it's just fun to do things together and see the partnership grow over the years.

MODERATOR: Rickie, best of luck to you this week. Hope to see you in orange on Sunday contending on the back nine.

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, I've missed three cuts in a row here, so it can't get any worse. I played Abu Dhabi the last few years and we cut that out of the schedule this year, so there's a chance I'll be here on the weekend.

MODERATOR: Jay Monahan, of course the commissioner of the PGA TOUR, great news for your team and the PGA TOUR. What does this extension of the partnership with Farmers and the Century Club mean for the PGA TOUR?

JAY MONAHAN: Well, it means everything. This is a special day and a special announcement. I, too, want to thank Jeff Dailey and thank Mike Linton and all the great people at Farmers for this remarkable commitment.

I think to answer that question I take you back to 2010. Farmers Insurance is in the disaster recovery business and this is a tournament that had been played in San Diego since 1952. This is our 50th year playing at Torrey Pines. We were 10 days out and we didn't have a sponsor. Farmers stepped up and they came in and on 10 days' notice we put on the best event we possibly could.

We got to know each other and we've had great success along the way. Their impact here has been sizeable. \$20 million raised for Century Club and for San Diego charities since they've been involved, \$3 million last year.

With that kind of history to know we've got such a great partner and they say we know from experience, well, we now have enough experience with them -- we the PGA TOUR and Century Club -- to know that San Diego is very fortunate to have one of the world's best companies supporting this event for seven more years, and for us as an organization it means an awful lot and we're committed to growing and winning together for a long time to come.

MODERATOR: Just to kind of underscore that importance and this partnership, we have a little video here today to play to just kind of remember the essence of the Farmers Insurance Open.

(Video played.)

MODERATOR: As a sportscaster, never lead in with Jim Nance, you're always going to look bad, that was a mistake.

Jay, just a quick followup, we saw some of those names, the young guns. Jon, the defending champion; Xander, Rickie of course is here. Just talk about what that means right now to the PGA TOUR just helping grow the fan base.

JAY MONAHAN: Well, I think it's -- listen, this is such an exciting time. We've got so many great young stars. We actually had our rookie dinner last night right here in San Diego and we had dinner with a lot of eager players that have watched Rickie, that have watched the great young players and established veterans and are excited to get out here and test themselves against the best players in the world.

This really is a really remarkable time. Week in and week out looking back to last year, when you came to Sunday there was so many great players within -- 12 to 16 players seemed like each week with a chance to win, so many great personalities.

Rickie just to say a few things about him. He's obviously a very special guy and excited that he's continuing his partnership with Farmers, but I think he represents so much of what's great in these young players in that if you think not only is he one of the very best players in the world, but just in the past couple of months, in one week he was voted by the Junior Cotillion as the best managed celebrity in this country. And just a few weeks prior to that he

had taken a personal trip to Atlanta to spend time with a doctor, Dr. Reyes, 67 years old, who is dying from pancreatic cancer. He did it on his own and I think he represents the caring and the sense of relatability in addition to being one of the finest athletes in the world that I think so many of our younger players embody.

It's going to be great to see how this all unfolds. We've got a great field here this week, a great list of champions coming back. We've got seven more years and we've got a great city, so special time.

MODERATOR: Best manners in America, Rickie. Quick quiz, salad fork, outside or inside?

RICKIE FOWLER: Probably whichever one's closest.

MODERATOR: Efficiency, that's the way to go.

Of course I think we all know that none of this is possible -- the tournament, the grandstands, the money raised for charity -- without the tireless year-round work of the Century Club and all of its volunteers. Peter Ripa here, the CEO of the Century Club of San Diego. Peter, how exciting is this day for you and your organization?

PETER RIPA: Well, Ben, it doesn't get any better than this. An ultimate vote of confidence, seven more years for the Century Club, our partners in this city as well as the many key partners we have with us as well as Farmers.

As you look forward to these next seven years, it gives us an opportunity to build on what we've created at one of the PGA TOUR's premier events. And you look at that canvas that we have out there in Torrey Pines, this golf course and this piece of property, it never ceases to amaze, the beauty of the golf course, but also you get to that back nine and how demanding it is to the players.

And for the community, you look at those charities over the next seven years that we continue to work together to support within our community is something that we're very proud of, and I know that our membership and staff, we're passionate about it 365 days of the year, so thank you.

MODERATOR: Peter, of course the Farmers Insurance Open caters to the die-hard golf fans as well as the casual fans who come out. What's in store for the fan experience this year and what's the Century Club trying to accomplish for everyone who comes out?

PETER RIPA: As we had noted, you see the great champions who played here and we were always noted as a great championship. That golf course out there, there's no pretenders that win this championship and it was recognized as such.

But as we did our research in market, we recognize that we can deliver some experiences for those who are either casual fans or those who didn't even consider themselves golf fans.

It could be through the food and beverage, it could be from the beauty of Torrey Pines. Through that research we identified opportunities where we felt we could deliver those experiences for those fans who all of a sudden now didn't see themselves as golf fans and came to the event and realized everything that was going on outside the ropes was really something that they could embrace, and it was totally San Diego, outdoors, sunshine, beautiful views, memorable experiences. And then you go fast forward one event or two events and now they start to appreciate what's going on inside the ropes where now all of a sudden they become golf fans and they come and follow the players like Rickie and the other stars that are on the PGA TOUR.

So that's been one that we've really concentrated on, and Farmers likewise has been a partner with being very progressive in engaging with our fans.

MODERATOR: I just want to say congratulations to all of you on the extension of a terrific partnership. We have time for a few questions if anyone has more about the extension, what it means here for the Farmers Insurance Open. We have a microphone right over here.

All right. If there's no questions, pretty self explanatory what it means for San Diego. I think you guys covered it pretty well. Rickie, good luck this week, thanks for stopping by. I know you've got the clinic coming up, so thanks for taking time out of your schedule. Jay, of course, Mike and Peter, thank you very much.

JAY MONAHAN: Thanks to all the media for your support of the Farmers Insurance Open. Thank you.