

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
January 25, 2018



PHIL MICKELSON (-2)

Q. 2-under 70 today to get things started. Just a few comments on the round.

PHIL MICKELSON: It's just fun to be back here playing. I just really enjoy playing this tournament. The condition of the golf course is just immaculate and they're both very hard tests. The North course is a hard golf course now. I think the scores relative to par are about the same now as the South so it wasn't an easy day. I thought I played well to shoot a couple under.

Q. Phil, how close are the two now?

PHIL MICKELSON: They're both very difficult courses. They're long, they're hard, the fairways are tight, the rough is up, greens on the North are very firm. They're both long, hard golf courses for sure.

Q. Is the firmness of the greens as much an adjustment now?

PHIL MICKELSON: The firmness makes it very difficult to score well but the course is in such great shape, and if you know it and you play it in the right spots and so forth, there's enough birdie holes out there to shoot a good round but there are a lot of tough par holes.

Q. Have you got the North figured out pretty much?

PHIL MICKELSON: Oh, no, not even close.

Q. Because we literally reversed it, right?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, it's a hard golf course now. It's really long, it's a hard test. Like I said, I played really well to shoot a couple under. The scores are out there but it's also out there on the South. We saw so many low scores on the South, too. And if you play well, any course you're going to be able to shoot under par. But these are fun tests, they're tough tests, they're tough tests of golf. It's fun for me to be back playing this tournament, I always love it here.

Q. Are you watching the board as you play, are you watching it to see that SC and see how many SCs are up there in front of you?

PHIL MICKELSON: During the round, no, but when I got done I took a quick look and it looked like it was about 50/50 of the low scores. That's interesting because that hasn't been the case in the past, and heading over to the South course, now there were a lot of -- equally

number of low scores on the South and so you can feel like you can go get a low one tomorrow.

Q. Does it require a mental adjustment to come from the desert where it's still everybody goes low to here where it's a little more challenging?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yes, but good golf carries no matter where you play or what the conditions are. If you play good golf, it doesn't matter if the course is hard like Torrey or fairly easy like we had in Palm Springs last week, it's still the scores will translate.

Q. What's the most difficult change from when you first played here to now?

PHIL MICKELSON: When I was a kid and my dad would take me out here and we would walk around and watch the guys or when I would carry the board, the courses were totally different before all the redesigns and so forth, so my memories are a little bit distorted. But still, the feel the place when you come here and you've got The Lodge and you've got these views and a day like today where it's just a spectacular day, it just brings back all those memories of time as a kid playing here. In '93 when I ended up winning my first tournament as a professional right here, it just brings back a lot of great memories.

Q. Phil, the one thing that you always talk about or that you recently talked about is all of these physics and scientific designations that you'll use like the force of the ocean and how it plays to the course. Tell us about that, and did that do that today?

PHIL MICKELSON: The reason why this course plays so long is that we're at sea level, we get a day like today where it was a little bit cooler and the ball just doesn't quite fly as far as normal, but that was actually offset a little bit with how firm the fairways were because the ball was running. So the course didn't play probably as long as it did a couple weeks ago when I played here and it was wet. There's a lot of factors in the game. Sometimes you can overcomplicate it, certainly I've done that, but on a day like today it's pretty straightforward.

Q. I know you said you're happy with the score, but you had other chances, too.

PHIL MICKELSON: No, I think that -- I think that had I shot under par today I would have taken it. I think that it's a -- when you play it, you realize how long and difficult it is. The only difference I would say is that there might be nine birdie holes on the North where there's maybe six on the South, or maybe there's 11 or 12 on the North and there's eight or nine on the South. But they're very comparable in challenge and difficulty, so I don't look at them now as being you've got to go low on the North before you get to the South, that's not the case anymore.

Q. Is there any part of your game that you're looking to tighten after last week?

PHIL MICKELSON: No, I actually played pretty well. I feel like my game's not really -- it's just more fine tuning. I'm not really searching, I'm hitting a lot good shots. I thought I hit a

lot of good shots today. For me, now what I'm trying to do is just go play, have fun and shoot a score because the last few years I've been working on technical elements and I feel as though those are pretty much where I want them and now it's a matter of hitting shots, being creative, shooting a score, having fun.