

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 6, 2018



RICKIE FOWLER

MARK WILLIAMS: Like to welcome Rickie Fowler into the interview room here at the Mayakoba Golf Classic 2018.

Rickie, thanks for joining us. Finished second here last year and you've returned. Obviously it's a place that you've got good memories of and I'm sure you'd like to go one better this week.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, definitely nice to one better from last year. After Allison and I came down last year to Mayakoba, obviously playing well, enjoyed the golf course, but also enjoyed the resort and just being able to be a part of a -- it's a pretty relaxing, stress-free week. Small vacation in a way, just happen to be working at the same time. It's definitely nice.

Great to see Jordan decide to come down. I told him we had a great time. I know he was trying to figure out a part of his fall schedule and trying to fit in a few events. Kind of pushed him and told him you've just got to check it out. So I'm glad he made the trip down, hoping he enjoys the week.

It's definitely a nice place. The fall season is kind of a time where we're trying to take some time off, rest, get ready for next year, and an event like this is perfect. You get to kind of hang out, relax, have a good time and hopefully play some good golf on top of that.

MARK WILLIAMS: Can you just assess your game for us? Obviously you're coming off a very low round Sunday at the Shriners, 63. Just talk about that and your performance last week and your form coming into this week.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah. I mean, I was happy with the performance last week. I wish it was a little bit better on Saturday to where I would have had a legitimate shot going into Sunday, but all in all, I hadn't played a whole lot since the Ryder Cup. I think it was four, five weeks off. Got to spend time at home, get in the gym, got over to Baker's Bay in the Bahamas and that was part of the rest and recovery after a long season.

We put a little bit of work in to get ready for Vegas, but still went there, kind of knocked some of the rust off, see where the game was at. I was happy with the form. Like I said, it would have been nice to put together a little bit better round on Saturday, that way we would have had a real shot. Happy with how it went.

Q. (No microphone.)

RICKIE FOWLER: I'm definitely glad to be back to kind of sea level where the ball goes the distance we're used to. In Vegas it was adjusting to altitude and how much the wind was affecting it or not affecting it, so there's a little more thinking involved out there.

Down here, it's a little bit more of the climate that I'm used to playing in at home in Jupiter, Florida -- humid, a little windy -- and I enjoy playing this golf course. You have to control your ball flight when it does get windy, but it's not as much of -- you're not trying to calculate or adjust yardages based on altitude. The ocean's right there, so we're at sea level.

Q. Why did you come back to Mayakoba? What is so special about this tournament for you?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mentioned a little bit earlier, just kind of, you know, it's a fun, stress-free, relaxing week. A great tournament to play here in the fall, typically great weather down here. I know we had some storms last year on Saturday. Hopefully we can get through the week without any this week. It's a fun tournament.

For me, like I said, during the fall I'm looking to kind of rest and recharge and get ready for the next season. These events do count towards the next season. Also, trying to make the most out of the events that I do decide to play. So last week was great, but being down here, it's like kind of a vacation in a way. We're at a great resort, staying on the beach. It's very easy. It's a fun, easygoing week. I feel like it makes it -- when you are that relaxed and just having a good time, it makes it easy to go play good golf.

Q. Rickie, obviously it's a full-field event. (Inaudible reference to Jordan Spieth.) How much would you relish if that opportunity presented itself and you guys are playing some good golf in the final round?

RICKIE FOWLER: I think there's a good chance that both him and I are playing well. I know, I think he went back to his old driver for this week until he can do some more testing with some new stuff, so I feel like he's going to drive the ball well this week, which is needed around here. I feel like my game's in a good spot. Like I said, shaking some rust off last week, played well here last year.

Yeah, I don't see any reason why the two of us shouldn't be in contention come Sunday. Yeah, it's a full-field event, there's a lot of work to be done the first couple days to get into the weekend. I think everyone's seen how deep the PGA TOUR is. It's no gimme that if you're a top-10 or top-20 player that you should be in contention on Sunday.

Yes, if we play well, we should be there, but the depth of these fields are pretty amazing. I feel like they continue to get better and better. It's not necessarily just going to be easy to be in contention on Sunday, we're going to have to put some work in, but I definitely think that the two of us will be there.

Q. Rickie, I want to know last year you were so close, are you seeking revenge here

at this course?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I felt like I played well enough to win last year. Patton just made really every putt the last 36 holes that he needed to, whether it was for par or when he had a birdie look, so he never really opened the door or gave me a chance. I tried to push at the end, but I was a little too far back. I think I birdied 16 and 17.

So we had a good time, we had a good battle. I'm looking forward to getting back in a position where I can get go get the win this year. This is my last shot at having a chance to go play Kapalua so we'll leave it all out there.

MARK WILLIAMS: Rickie, Patton was in here yesterday and he mentioned how instrumental this event was to his victory, in reaching the Final 30 of the TOUR Championship and the FedExCup Playoffs. Do you feel like playing in a couple fall events gives you a head start on the rest of the Tour?

RICKIE FOWLER: I don't know if it gives you a head start. When I was kind of mentioning playing a couple in the fall and making sure that you kind of make the most of those events because there's been a couple times where I've played one event and had a decent event. I think one year I played the WGC in China, finished sixth, and then in January I started somewhere around 70th in FedExCup points.

I don't necessarily think it gives you a head start now, I think it's more so you don't go into January behind the eight-ball because if you don't play in the fall, if you don't play well, you're so far back. You might be playing catch-up the first few months, west coast and then Florida. So I think with me playing last week, this week, really trying to make them count, that way I have less work to do at the start of the calendar year.

Q. (No microphone.)

RICKIE FOWLER: It's definitely great to see more Latin American players, players from Mexico, players from, you mentioned even Chile. It's fun to see that more good, like, quality players coming out of, you know, countries south of the U.S. because there weren't many players. You look at, I guess there's been a few names over the last 20, 30 years, but you're starting to see more guys and I think that was the influence of, let's see, who are some players? Yeah, I would say Cabrera being that he won the Masters, he's probably been the initial push for that. And I think you're starting to see kind of that come now with some younger players that were probably looking at him when they were a little kid seeing him win the Masters. So you're starting to see that wave and that generation coming.

MARK WILLIAMS: Any further questions for Rickie? All right, Rickie, we appreciate your time and have a great