

ROUND 4 INTERVIEW
January 31, 2021

PATRICK REED (-14)



MARK WILLIAMS: Patrick Reed, we would like to congratulate you on your victory at the 2021 Farmers Insurance Open.

This is your ninth victory, largest margin of victory, five shots. You move from 65 to No. 10 in the FedExCup and it's your first win this season and it's also your 50th top-10, so there's a lot of good things that happened this week. Just talk about this victory and the week that it was and how challenging this golf course has been.

PATRICK REED: Yeah, it was amazing. The golf course is hard. I mean, you definitely know why it's a U.S. Open venue and just kind of seeing it this week and seeing kind of how tough it played in certain conditions definitely shows how much harder it's going to play once June comes around with a little firmer, faster greens and also with thicker rough.

It's a true test out there. You have to be resilient when you're out there playing because you could hit some quality golf shots and end up in the wrong spots, you're having to grind and try to get up and down.

This one was pretty special. To go ahead and get this win, especially with making such a big swing change and changing coaches right after the U.S. Open last year, to be tied for the lead going into today and in that final group and seeing the swing kind of hold up throughout the round and allowing my short game to kind of save me there towards the end meant a lot, meant that I'm on the right path.

The swing's going in the direction we want it to go and it couldn't have been better to go ahead and not just win the golf tournament, but to win it by a large margin as well as to go out and shoot in the 60s on Sunday.

Q. After everything you went through the last 24 hours with the ruling yesterday and obviously there was a lot of noise, did that affect you at all and what were your emotions going into this round?

PATRICK REED: No, not at all. Like I said yesterday with the rules official, they said -- they showed it upstairs and everything with me yesterday, that the protocols I went through and everything that transpired was the right thing. So from that point on, once it was handled, we just moved on and kind of went out there today and really just got on a game face, went out there and just tried to continue building the golf swing, continue feeling comfortable with hitting certain kinds of shots and going to see how the swing was going to hold up under not only being a final round, but also being in the final group and having a chance to win.

It's very easy when you're making changes to make quality golf swings on the driving range. It's one thing to put it in a play at a tournament in the final round at a demanding golf course like this. It definitely allowed me to feel very comfortable and confident with how the game is and what's coming forward.

Q. And then I know you're talking how happy you are with the swing. It seemed like the short game was kind of key coming down the stretch late. Can you talk a little bit about that?

PATRICK REED: Yeah, I think that's the biggest thing of what we're trying to I wouldn't say really eliminate, but to not always have to rely so much on the short game. Instead of having to have the short game save me, more use it as a weapon. Right now there's going to be growing pains with the full swing, you're going to always want to revert kind of back to the old swing and because of that you're going to put yourself in some situations where you're going to have to allow that short game to work. I think that was the biggest thing was being able to kind of get those crucial up-and-downs on 14, 15 and then for me was stepping up on 17, 18 to make two really solid driver swings there when really you had to go ahead and hit a solid drive and get yourself in position to allow yourself to kind of coast coming in.

Q. Patrick, was Saturday night a normal Saturday night for you or did you have to deal with certain things when you got home and did you have to dig in a little harder Sunday morning when you got up to get ready?

PATRICK REED: No, you know, it was a normal night for me. At the end of the day, once I sat there and after everything -- after I called the rules official and everything on the 10th and then once they confirmed up in scoring after the round that I went through the right protocols to do what I was supposed to, at that point everything was put to bed. It was what we were supposed to do and they said we did it correctly.

So for me it was kind of another night to kind of get ready and just kind of, you know, rejuvenate myself to get ready for Sunday. It's a long week, especially with how the weather's been early on in the week, and on top of that you want to make sure that you're fresh coming in on the final round and kind of really just stay focused and work on the things that we were building all week.

Q. And what was your most important shot today?

PATRICK REED: I would have to say probably the 3-wood on 6. There was actually two. I would say the 3-wood on 6 because I had to step up and gear on it, hit it hard, and normally when I try to hit something hard the body just wants to go back to the old swing, kind of get flashy and all over the place. To really stay in and make a solid strike, hit it in the middle of the green and then make the putt on top of that. But that one seemed to kind of get me going, started to get me hitting more quality golf shots coming in and feeling like it kind of settled me.

And then really it was the decision on 15. I'm setting up there and had an okay lie in the left rough where Kessler and I were actually considering hitting hybrid and try to squeeze it near the tree and try to get it up there. To sit there and go, you know what, no, I'm just going to hit 7-iron out there to about 50, 55 yards and allow my wedges to do the work. To be able to not only make a quality golf swing with the 7-iron and then to hit the wedge shot in there to basically a foot and a half, two feet was I felt like a big turning point that allowed me to feel comfortable with how the game is and really my thought process around this golf course.

Q. You mentioned the 6th there, two days in a row you made outside 40-foot eagles. Clearly those were crucial, I guess it turned the tournament on its head both times, you took a big lead at those stages.

PATRICK REED: I think the biggest thing was playing from the fairway on that hole. Both really -- really all three rounds that we played on the South this week, it's kind of been off the left. Even though tee shot sometimes was hurting one of the days, the second shot, if you're in the fairway, it's somewhat downwind. To be able to hit two really solid 3-woods the last two days and to get the putts to drop was obviously bonus. You're sitting there from 40-some feet and you're like, all right, let's try to give this a chance, but at the same time let's make sure it's good speed so you can have a stress-free birdie to move on.

To have the perfect read, perfect line and just kind of get the ball to go in on both of those, it seemed to kind of just kickstart everything. Especially today, it kickstarted everything, kind of get me going, get me off of that par stretch. That was kind of driving me nuts. It was something I felt like kind of got us going and at the same time allowed me to settle out into the new golf swing, the new feelings we were having throughout the change which allowed me to step up and make some quality swings.

Q. And you mentioned that it was business as usual for you, but most, or not most but some people would see it as something to get in the way. You seem to have those sort of scenarios fuel you and push you forward and the mental stability you have to do that. Can you talk to how you're able to keep that mental focus in these situations?

PATRICK REED: Right, yeah. I think the basic thing is you have to have resilience, especially when you're out here because golf's hard as it is and you come to a place like this where it's so demanding not just off the tees, it doesn't matter if it's a drive, an iron shot, a wedge shot, putt, you have to be all locked in 24/7.

I think that's the biggest thing is when you play a U.S. Open type golf course where you play a place that's as long as this is, you have to have resilience. You look at all the great players throughout times, all of them are really resilient. It doesn't really matter what's going on around them, what's going on on the golf course, whether they're getting good breaks or bad breaks, they seem to really figure out a way to get the job done, to really just drive in and to keep on improving each shot each day. That's golf, that's what you're supposed to do. That's why I love the game. It throws punches at you, you throw punches at it and at the end of the day hopefully you're the one standing.

Q. This is such an emphatic win, such a big one for you, but is it disappointing that these questions that we're asking today or that this is somehow hanging over this? Do you feel badly about that in any way or disappointed that that is the case?

PATRICK REED: No, not at all. At the end of the day I felt like it was -- I did everything I was supposed to do yesterday and I was confirmed by the rules officials yesterday after the round. When the rules officials call and tell you you did what you're supposed to do, you did everything correctly, that's all you can do. At that point it put it to bed for me and I was able to move on and come out today and do what I was supposed to do, and that was play golf and work with my coach, keep on trying to drive in this golf swing and get it a little more comfortable, a little more dialed in and allow us to go out there and plot ourself around this golf course and go shoot as low as possible.

Q. Six under in the three rounds on the South this week, what kind of achievement is that and how close did this thing play to as tough as anything on Tour?

PATRICK REED: Yeah, anytime you can shoot under par on the South it's always a great score, especially on the weekend because the greens just seem to get a little bit firmer, a little bit faster and the rough seems to get just a little bit thicker throughout the week.

This golf course is hard, there's no really other way to put it. I mean, it's a hard golf course. It doesn't matter if it's 75 and sunny here with no wind or if it's 50 degrees and blowing, it's a hard golf course no matter how you put it. It's very demanding, demanding physically, demanding mentally. I think that's the biggest thing about this golf course is it mentally can beat you up. You have to think about every golf shot. There's never just kind of, say, a freewheel golf shot out there. You can't get lackadaisical in anything.

I think that's why it's really satisfying is going through the changes we're going through and then at the same time being able to manage that throughout the day and throughout the whole week, and also handle the ups and downs that golf brings you throughout the rounds. You know, whether it's a poor iron shot here or a lip out putt or a bad bounce there or here, there are things that you have to figure out how to get over.

You look at all the great champions that have come from this event and the people that have won the U.S. Open when it was played here, all of them have been very resilient throughout the week. They've had good breaks, they've had bad breaks, but they seem to ride the good ones and also kind of forget the bad ones and be able to rebound.

I think that was the biggest thing is being able to do that through the whole week and basically sticking to the script of my coach and I locking in the swing and really trying to grow the swing and being more comfortable with the swing come down especially on a Sunday.

Q. Do you feel golf reveals character?

PATRICK REED: For sure. I feel like golf is a game where it's won not just by talent, but hard work and between the ears. Because, like I said, one day you're out there, you'll hit 14 fairways, 18 greens and make every putt and then the next day you get out there, you feel like you haven't swung a golf club before. It's how are you able to handle it mentally and figure out a way to get it done.

Feel like golf is about resilience and hard work and how -- because especially at this level. Everyone can swing the golf club, everyone can hit the golf shot. If they're on, they're going to hit the ball great. It's who can handle the days that aren't so great, whether it's ball-striking or whatever it is, to be able to mentally handle it to keep yourself in golf tournaments to be able to have a chance to win.

Q. And what does your golf reveal about your character?

PATRICK REED: The biggest thing is how resilient and passionate I am for the game of golf and also how passionate I am for my country. There's no other reason why I'm not [sic] wearing red, white and blue today.

Q. Patrick, apologies if you've answered this before, but just take me through one more time, why did you feel the need to pick up the ball before the rules official came out there?

PATRICK REED: It's basic protocol. Whenever you're taking relief or if you're checking to see if the ball's embedded, you put a tee down to lift it up to see if it is. When I got done with the round and the head rules officials up there played the video and said we did exactly what we were supposed to do, obviously I did the right thing.

Q. There are people who feel you cheated. What do you have to say to them?

PATRICK REED: I've already said anything I need to say about what happened yesterday. All I can really do is focus on today and just listen to what the rules officials said and they said that I didn't do anything incorrect.

MARK WILLIAMS: Thank you, Patrick, we appreciate your time and great tournament. Best for the rest of 2021.

PATRICK REED: Appreciate it, thanks.