

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**May 6, 2021**

**RICKIE FOWLER (-1)**



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**Q. What kind of momentum or confidence can you take from that?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** It was nice. Obviously coming off of a little break, which we decided was going to be kind of a nice little reset through the middle of the season being that I was only really going to play Hilton Head in that month. So just decided, hey, let's take four weeks off, get a couple weeks to relax and get back on it the last couple.

So coming off of that, felt good about a lot of things out there, felt like I left some shots out there, but to get 3 under on a morning that wasn't playing that easy necessarily. Unfortunate to give a couple away on the last two coming in. Yeah, it's good. Red numbers on Thursday are good. I've had some struggles getting off to decent starts over the last year or so. Step in a right direction, but still got some work to do. Happy about it. Go hit some balls and get ready for tomorrow.

**Q. I know we've asked you about this before, but you've kind of gone through it the last year as you put it. Is it easier to convince yourself maybe you're closer than you are, or do you feel like you're right there?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** No, I mean, I think you could ask pretty much everyone out here, it's such a fine line between playing mediocre golf and good golf. Mediocre could even be bad. It's just a fine line out here as far as what looks decent versus playing proper golf. I know it's close. I think some of it was spending a lot of time working on the swing, which needed to be done, but probably spent a little bit too long of a time focusing and worrying about certain things, and the last few months has just been going out and playing just a bit more golf instead of playing golf swing. Yeah, it's just converting some stuff the way I've been hitting and playing at home to bring it back on the road.

**Q. And this is a little off base, but given the last two or three days as far as the Super Golf League or whatever it's called right now, can you tell us if you or your manager have been approached by them?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah. I mean, I think obviously the information's good, knowing about what's going on. You don't necessarily want to just be sitting here talking about or not being able to answer certain things.

It's definitely interesting. I think there's a lot that needs to happen for it to even move forward of any sort, and at the same time I think competition can be a good thing. I think that -- I do think that the PGA TOUR is the premier place to be playing against the best players in the world.

Could it get better? I'm sure this wouldn't be coming up if someone didn't think that there were ways that certain things could be better. So we'll see. I think all of us will come out in a better place after all this is done.

**Q. What's the biggest thing that needs to happen. You said there's a number of things that need to happen. What would you consider to be the one biggest thing?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I mean, for a super golfer league of some sort to move forward, it would definitely need at least a handful of guys to be going that direction, or committed or whatever it may be. I don't know of anything like that right now.

**Q. Did you watch the Masters or did you just kind of stay away from golf?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah, I mean, that's like -- that's like the one -- I mean, between that and the British Open, those are two tournaments that I love to watch. Typically I'm in them and I'm watching either the morning or afternoon wave when I'm not playing, so it was a little different in that sort being at home.

I did go over and watch a little bit with Tiger, so it was fun to be able to do that, talk about the course. And one of the days, Thursday, we were watching and just how firm and fast and kind of such a fine line how Augusta can be. We were kind of -- we were definitely both very disappointed that we couldn't be out there to experience it because it's very few times where you do get to see Augusta that firm and fast.

**Q. Rickie, did you get the sense Tiger missed it?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I don't think I have to tell you that. Yeah, we were both in the same position. I guess not the same. Mine from not playing as well and him being laid up, but same position being that we weren't there. So yeah, both disappointed that we're not out there playing. But he's not lacking any fire in there right now. He never has.

**Q. Your thoughts on the special exemption for the PGA?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I mean, I'm obviously happy about it. I feel like I've been told a while back I was already in. I didn't know I was going to need a special exemption or anything like that, so for that to all come full circle and to still be in, definitely happy being that I played the PGA there the last time it was there. I feel like it's -- I didn't play very well the last time I was there, but I feel like it's a good golf course for me and can play a little bit more linksy and play in the wind, which is something I like to do. Obviously thanks to the PGA to get me a spot there.

**Q. How much work did you put in on your game in that four weeks off?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Like I said, it's been a lot more just focusing on just playing golf and not

worrying so much about swing and positions and things like that. So first two weeks was pretty light, minimal. Went to Troubadour up in Nashville with JT and Jordan and Smylie and our girls, so it was a fun three days just to kind of relax and have some fun together. And then the last two weeks I just spent a lot of time out playing. I would say over the course of the month, I don't think I took a video of any swings or anything like that. It was just more focused on go hit shots, go play golf, hit fairways, hit greens, make putts. A little bit more to like a little kid growing up.

**Q. (Inaudible) said yesterday there was no way he would join the Saudi league. So it sounds like you're still undecided?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** There's a lot that needs to happen for that to even move forward. I can't say that I'm in, out or whatever. I still think the Tour is the best place to be. So I think, you know, we'll see what happens, but I'm happy where we are.

**Q. Do you remember which day it was that you watched the Masters with Tiger?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah. It was Thursday.

**Q. The first round?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah. That was the day that, I mean, played firm and fast as it really played at all that week.

**Q. And you said that you noticed the fire and everything. Was he in good spirits? Can you say if he's in a good place?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I think so.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah. I mean, for what he's gone through and what he's dealing with, yeah. I think that was something that both -- because JT had been over there a handful of times before I got to go over and see him. Rory stopped by. And that was one thing JT told me. He went over, I mean, pretty much right after he got back from L.A. and JT told me, he's like, honestly, he was a lot better than I expected. So that was -- that was good to hear.

Then to get over there and see him getting around, and now you guys have seen some pictures that he's posted and he's out and about a little bit. Because early on it was more so he had to keep his leg up for inflammation, couldn't be walking around on crutches that much, although I'm sure he wanted to because he didn't want to just be laid up.

So, no, it was good to see him. Hung out and spent some time with Charlie, and Sam was there for a little bit before she had to go to soccer practice. I'm just -- I think his main focus and concern is getting back to being a dad, go play golf with Charlie, push him around, and

be able to run around with Sam. But his golf clubs are right there in the living room and he can stare at them all he wants.

**Q. Is it pretty cool to be part of that? Like you guys have been talking about this now for a couple years. After the back stuff, you guys have obviously developed a pretty good relationship with Tiger. The fact that you're invited to be part of this at this point, do you sort of pinch yourself a little bit?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah, definitely, because I remember being a kid at home watching '97 Masters and all of a sudden this guy's coming out on the scene and he's kind of a big deal and playing some good golf. Someone that we've all looked up to. Whether you're younger, older, whatever, just to see what he was able to accomplish, especially through those early 2000s, even after coming back from different injuries, winning on a broken leg to coming back after a big layoff and winning the Masters a couple years ago. Yeah, we all pull for him.

Like I said, getting to be around him, be around him on a bit more of a personal level and getting to know him, especially over the last really five, six years, you know, we try and push him as hard as we can, but at the same time it's still pretty cool to get to go hang out and spend time with Tiger.