

**WILLIE MACK III**

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**Q. We'll get started here with Willie Mack III at the Rocket Mortgage Classic. Willie, a number of starts for you to date on the PGA TOUR, but this one comes in your home state. If we can just get an opening comment from you?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, I'm really excited to be here and definitely got -- had a lot of support the last couple days. Hopefully I can keep it going and play well this weekend.

**Q. Thoughts on the golf course? Just played in the pro-am. Initial impressions ahead of the first round?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Well, actually this is like my home course, so I played here the last 10, 12 years with a couple members. It's kind of like a home course, home course advantage, but you still have to hit the ball straight and make some putts. It will be an exciting week, though.

**Q. With you having the home course advantage, knowing the course a little bit more, coming down to execution, what is the one thing that you know you can't do on this golf course to have success?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Really just have to keep it out of the rough, especially around the greens. Other than that, it's kind of soft out there, so you can kind of go at some pins you probably wouldn't go at on other days. Other than that, you just have to make some putts.

**Q. Obviously the object is winning the grand prize in this whole thing, but what other things can you just be happy about being out here, having the opportunity to showcase your game because you are from here and you know this place so well?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, without winning, just playing well and doing what I know I can do. I'm playing next week at John Deere, so hopefully I can just keep this going and play well at both starts.

**Q. Do you start feeling like having these opportunities, getting these exemptions, playing your way into these tournaments is starting to peak you where you want to go?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, I played well two weeks ago at the Korn Ferry event in South Carolina, so I was I think 11 under through three rounds. Kind of had one bad drive on the last day, but other than that, played pretty good. Making that cut and knowing you can play out there definitely gave me a good amount of confidence coming out here this week.

**Q. And understanding, you know Detroit, you know the area, what they're doing here with 313 and all the initiatives to grow the game in this area, as a guy who's from here, you can appreciate that a little bit more than some of the other guys?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, for sure. Dan Gilbert has definitely put a lot into Detroit, and the last time I came to Detroit actually was a couple years ago, so since then it's definitely gotten a lot better downtown. I'm excited what they're going to do in the next couple years.

**Q. You know this course, you've played it multiple times. How much credit do you give to the course superintendent for getting rid of all the water that was out here from the last couple days, because a couple days ago there were entire fairways under water? How was it out there?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, I came out here on I think Monday, Sunday or Monday and watched the Shippen tournament for a couple holes and it was super wet. So the superintendent and all the staff definitely have been working probably at night to just get the course playable. Kind of getting a little bit -- little mud balls out there, but other than that it's pretty good.

**Q. Does it change your approach at all? Maybe you might have to take a longer club in because it's not rolling that much or that kind of thing?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, for sure. I think No. 12 they lengthened. Usually you have 9- or 8-iron in there, I think I hit 5-iron, so it's a big difference. Other than that, it's kind of playing the same.

**Q. You've eaten a lot of snacks from gummy worms, I didn't know what the other one was, but what is your favorite snack to eat out here while you're playing?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Probably peanut butter and jelly and some Gatorade, that's probably what I usually eat, but I didn't get to pick those up last night, so I had to settle for the gummy worms.

**Q. You talk about this being your home course, so can you talk about that home course advantageous a little bit more coming into this week?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Like I said, I played well two weeks ago and hopefully I can keep that rolling. It's been nothing but great support the last couple days I've been out here. Hopefully I can put on a show this week.

**Q. And then going back to the John Shippen, Shasta won it for the women's side and now you have a chance to win the Rocket Mortgage. What would that mean for Flint to have both of you guys represent up here at the Detroit Golf Club?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, me and Shasta grew up together. She's like my big sister, so seeing her succeed on the women's side is definitely great for both of us. It's definitely great for Flint, Michigan.

**Q. You talk about her being your big sister a little bit because she is kind of tall. I met her yesterday and she told me she was 6 --**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah.

**Q. I didn't believe her. What do you say about her, her golf game and where she's at in her career right now?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, she was on the LPGA. As you know, golf is pretty hard, so she fell off a little bit, but she's getting her game back and hopefully she'll play well in the two-person tournament in a couple weeks.

**Q. What does it mean to you to just be here? Rocket Mortgage is doing so much for the Detroit community, minorities, the John Shippen, the digital divide. What's it mean?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, it's exciting. Like I said, Dan Gilbert has definitely put in a lot of money and time into the Detroit area, and it's something a lot of people don't do. They usually say they're going to do something and usually don't, but he definitely says something and definitely stands behind that. It's great just to be out here and get the support from everybody. Hopefully I can keep that going.

**Q. How many friends and family do you have coming?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** A lot of friends and family are coming. I probably won't see them all, but I know they'll be rooting for me.

**Q. Do you have a number? A dozen, two dozen, something like that?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** At least a hundred people have hit me up about coming, so probably some more will come, but hopefully it will be a good crowd.

**Q. Just the last thing is, we've talked to you before about all the difficulties that you face as a minority on the Tour, trying to make your way on the Tour. Kamaiu Johnson has been talking about how he's been mistaken as a caddie at a lot of tournaments. Does that happen to you? What are the kind of difficulties that you have to endure, I guess, trying to be a pro golfer?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, it happened. It still happens. It happened recently, but I kind of just laugh at it and keep it moving. Can't really let that get to you. That's pretty much it about this.

**Q. What do you tell them? Do you say, no, I'm actually a pro golfer, I'm here for a tournament?**

**WILLIE MACK III:** I just say I'm a player and they kind of just put me in the other direction that they put me in the first time.

**Q. On John Shippen, obviously Tim made his way into the tournament this week. Has he been a motivator for you? Could you talk a little bit about that and the way he's motivated others? He's been on the professional circuit on a number of different tours for a long time now.**

**WILLIE MACK III:** Yeah, especially when I turned pro, I didn't know him well, but we talk all the time, text. I'm excited that he won and got in here. He's a little older than most of us, but he still has the game. I'm glad we both got an opportunity this week and hopefully we both play well.