

RICKIE FOWLER (9)

Q. Rickie, (inaudible) able to make a bogey early in this third round, 4-under 68. What did you like about it?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, I would have liked to have made more of a move. It was a little bit of a slow start, played well in the middle and slow finish. I mean, this week was kind of just trying to go from last week where I struggled a little bit kind of setup and grip and just working on a few things that need to be tightened up, so more of it was just trusting it. I feel like I've done a good job of that. Just haven't been able to take advantage of the scoring conditions. All in all, I'm somewhat happy, but I definitely left a lot out there.

Q. We're seeing some positivity with your game prior to last week, some changes that you've made obviously (inaudible) with the putter. Have you decided to go back to a putter that (inaudible)?

RICKIE FOWLER: I was putting with a kind of a mallet style there for last fall and early part of the year and then went back to -- and that was something that was helping me get into a better setup position and cleaner lines. So I used that for a few months, ran its course, went back to my gamer, switched back to that. Went back in and put a little extra time in on the putting in practice, especially going into the PGA. So we're seeing some stuff that with that's kind of helping the finishes and helping the game. We'll talk about it, we'll kind of start from the start of this year and last few months really, more so focus on just playing golf and not playing golf swing. Put the work in leading up and, like I said, go play golf and hit shots.

Q. Rickie, great round today. At some point you tied for the lead. How would you describe conditions out there on the golf course?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's definitely gettable. A little different wind direction than what we've seen the last few days; last couple days it was primarily out of the north and today's a little bit more out of the west. It's been jumping around a little bit, so that's kind of the only thing that's made it a little tricky is kind of just bouncing around from an hour or two on the clock when you're talking about wind direction.

No, it's definitely gettable. I think 6, 7 under's a good score. There's lower out there. I got off to a little bit of a slow start, had some good stuff in the middle and then finished slowly. It would have been nice to get more, but happy about it. Go rest and relax for tomorrow.

Q. When we look at recent results, there's been a couple of hiccups followed by some brilliance. Is that indicative of where your game's right now or perhaps the strength of field out here on the Tour that it's really not that far away if you're missing cuts?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's a little bit of both. I mean, It's such a fine line, first two days if you're just a touch off, you're going to struggle to make the cut. You need to play well to make sure you have a tee time on the weekend. I think you see that with guys are making cuts on the number, by one. Have a chance to play well on Saturday, you can get yourself back in the tournament. It's not a big gap between just having a tee time and being in contention.

Q. Finally, where's your mindset at, especially with this time of year and everything that's coming up eventually?

RICKIE FOWLER: This week was really just coming off of last week, focusing on some setup and grip things that I needed to make sure I focused on to be back where we were in the weeks leading up. So done a good job of that, kept the scorecards fairly clean, a couple hiccups out there, but need to take advantage of some more scoring opportunities. But I like where things are at. Go get a good one tomorrow and looking forward to a few days at home before I go over to the British.

Q. I talked to you earlier before the tournament started and you hoped to be in contention this week. Just how happy are you with your play in this tournament knowing that you're one of the guys that you know Rocket Mortgage wants to see succeed?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I mean, being I guess kind of a host in a way for the event alongside Bryson and Lexi are now Rocket Mortgage ambassadors as well, this is a big week for Rocket Mortgage and the Rocket family. I would have liked to have gotten a few more out there today because I know that it's scorable. The guys are going to go -- there's going to be at least a few guys that play well and post a number, but at least I didn't move backwards, moved the right direction.

Q. Big crowds following you today, obviously that was the same way in 2019. Just how nice it is for you to have that support coming up 18 with the big gallery?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it's always nice. I mean, here in Detroit I feel like it's a proper sports fans' town. They love their sports and it's nice to have the turnout that we've had this week. Yesterday afternoon playing with Phil, probably some of the biggest crowds we've seen this year. Today wasn't as much because I wasn't playing with Phil. Once he finished playing, my crowd picked up a little bit. Nice to see that I'm maybe second to Phil in the field, maybe third, I don't know. But no, it's great to have the support. We love having the fans back and having the energy.

Q. You said you left a couple out there. Is it the putting? Is it the driver? What do you hope to do tomorrow that maybe you don't do that same thing tomorrow?

RICKIE FOWLER: I would say a little bit of everything. I've done everything well at some point this week. There's been points where maybe I've struggled in every spot off the tee or

approach shots or around the greens or putting, but all in all fairly happy with how the week's gone so far. You're always going to leave some out there. See if we can take care of that tomorrow and go shoot a low one.

Q. Can you just take us through 7 through 10 there? What was going right for you?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, 7 through 10, I mean, I think the biggest thing other than 9, drove it well and put myself in position where I could just go play aggressively and made a couple nice putts. It seems like it's fairly simple when things are going that way. It's pretty easy when you just drive it in the fairway, hit it up there and whether you hit it close or 15 feet and just rolling in. I guess that's how it's supposed to be done, it's just hard to do that every time.

Q. You mentioned playing with Phil the last two days. What kind of buzz did he bring to this thing from your perspective?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, it's great. I mean, having Phil here, I love that he came and wanted to support the tournament. He's arguably one of the biggest draws there is in our game still, so wherever he goes, whichever town he shows up in, people are going to come watch. Like I said, definitely appreciative that he chose to come to Detroit and hopefully we can get him back.

Q. Rickie, looking ahead to Royal St. George's, that's a place that you had some success last time around, what's the scouting report for that venue relative to other Open spots?

RICKIE FOWLER: I remember it decently well, but it wasn't like it was just a couple years back. It was a while ago.

I mean, just like every Open Championship, it's really just keep it moving forward. I remember that was my second Open. I actually made it through St. Andrews and then the first round and a half without hitting in a bunker. I laid up in a bunker with a 6-iron at Royal St. George's, that was the first bunker I was in in an Open Championship, so we'll see if we can stay out of those. That's a big thing in links golf, as you know.

But I think a lot of the stuff that I was kind of focusing on this week with setup and making sure my grip's in a good spot so I'm able to get through it and release properly, a lot of that will kind of be some preparation moving forward thinking of shots that I'll be hitting at the Open as well.

Q. Rickie, did you notice you were at the top of the leaderboard?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I mean, I noticed. I knew where the guys were at. I saw that, but I knew that wasn't going to be where the top was come the end of the day, so I was still trying to press and keep moving forward. I thought -- once I kind of got things going in the middle of the round, I thought I might be able to get to 13, maybe 14. Unfortunately, the slow start

and slow finish wasn't exactly what we had planned, but I think we've had little bits of that the last three days and tomorrow will be nice to kind of piece together a full 18 holes and not just a few of them.

Q. You had really good ball-striking stats today. What's been working for you?

RICKIE FOWLER: Like I was talking about just a minute ago, working on kind of focusing on the setup and grip. My tendency is to get a little weak with the grip and that causes some of the issues in the swing and how the body moves. So focusing on really getting into a bit of a stronger position, which feels awkward at times. I feel like I've done a pretty good job of trusting that this week. A lot of that is just how the club's getting delivered into the golf ball and hitting a lot of solid golf shots, so definitely happy about that, but can always be better.

Q. Do you have any concerns about traveling to the British after having played with Hideki?

RICKIE FOWLER: No. I mean, I'm vaccinated or whatever you want to call the shots. I guess they're not -- they're vaccines, but unfortunately I know going over there, it doesn't matter if you're vaccinated or not.

Yeah, there's definitely some concerns. Guys have been talking to me or have been talking to other guys, been making calls or sending texts back and forth with some of the people with the Open just with any questions or concerns that we have because there's multiple things that come up as far as if there happens to be a couple people on the plane that test positive when you get there, you know, what happens with that. Obviously we're all going into our own small bubbles, can't be around other players.

It seems like us as players, we're jumping through some hurdles and dodging bullets and they're having 32,000 fans a day at the tournament, so I don't know. I can't really answer questions clearly with all that going on.