



RICKIE FOWLER

HALEY PETERSON: We would like to welcome Rickie Fowler here to our virtual media press room at the 3M Open.

Rickie, you're going to be making your tournament debut here at the 3M Open. What are your initial thoughts here about TPC Twin Cities?

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, I got to get out and see the golf course yesterday, played all 18. Fairly straightforward. I mean, it's kind of cliché, but any course, hit the fairway, hit the green, you're going to be okay. Big thing here, keep it out of the water. There's a handful of little lakes, ponds that come into play, but drive the ball well, you're going to have plenty of opportunities to make birdies. With the weather that we have, meant to be pretty hot, especially Friday through Sunday, so with that I think it will be tough to get the golf course or the greens very firm just because it's hard to stress out the greens that much in warm temperatures. I feel like scores are going to be low. So warm weather, but good weather. Got to make some birdies this week.

HALEY PETERSON: And you're coming straight from The Open. What's that been like coming back in? Experiencing any jetlag? Take any rest?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's a lot easier traveling west than it is going east. Going over to The Open, I've always -- any international or long travel -- like being able to land in the morning; that way you can force yourself to stay up and then go to bed at the appropriate local time.

No, great charter coming back that 3M set up. We ended up getting in a little late because we had to wait for some guys that were in some later groupings, but I think we got in around 1:30. Ended up making it to the house about 3:00 in the morning. Actually did some laundry because I wasn't very tired, then took a nap from 5:00 to 7:00 and got a workout in. I used Monday as an off day, but I was up all day. No, like I said, it's easier going west than it is east.

Q. Rickie, can you by any chance carry over momentum across the pond from your final round 65?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, definitely. I got some good work in, trying to remember what it was, after the round Saturday, I believe. Got some work in both days. I drove it poorly Friday and Saturday, hit it nice, a very simple round of golf on Sunday. I missed one green and it could have been lower, but 5 under's a solid score around there.

Yeah, feeling good going into this week. Clean a few things up, but taking a lot from how I

played on Sunday and try to go out here and just try and wear out as many fairways and greens as we can.

Q. What are you happiest with right now and what's the one thing you would like to improve the most with right now?

RICKIE FOWLER: Right now I feel like iron play's been better. I feel like that's been heading the right direction. Putting as of the last few months has definitely been heading the right way. That was a big part of why I played well at Kiawah and played decent at Memorial. I think driving the ball can always get better; that sets up everything from hitting fairways and getting yourself opportunities to be aggressive versus playing from the rough, which I did a lot of that on Friday and Saturday at St. George's.

Q. Rickie, when it gets this late in the PGA TOUR season and your name is as close as it is to the playoff cutline, is this about as pressure-packed as a regular PGA TOUR event can get?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah. I mean, luckily I haven't had to necessarily be in this position before, but it's really just about sticking to the game plan and you can't change necessarily what's happened in the past. All I can go focus on is go play golf and play well here this week, and then planning to have a couple weeks off and play at Greensboro, the Wyndham.

We know what we need to do, just go play well, make birdies and that's all we can control.

Q. Did you have fun with Chuck out there today? Any side bets or anything?

RICKIE FOWLER: We had a great time. No side bets. It was good to see him. He hit a handful of good shots. I think he made, I don't know, maybe four pars on the front nine there. We had a good time. I mean, the nine-hole pro-ams are awesome. I was able to get some practice in this morning and a workout, go do that and then hand it off to Chuck to go for another nine, so he's in for the full 18.

Q. Rickie, looking back five years ago, what are your Olympic memories and where does that rank in your moments of your career?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, yeah, the Olympics were awesome. Unfortunately, the guys and the girls playing I guess following, they're not going to have anywhere close to the experience that I was able to have in '16. Being able to be there for opening ceremonies, staying in the village, going to other events, meeting other athletes, it was pretty special because you're around people that that's everything that they've worked for, that's the pinnacle of their sport. For us, it's obviously a really cool opportunity whenever you get to represent your country, but it wasn't necessarily a dream of golfers growing up to be in the Olympics, just with it not being in there and just being recently added not too long ago.

So it's a super cool experience, but like I said, they're not going to be able to have that

experience and to kind of get the full effect of what the Olympics is all about.

Q. Any particular highlights from either the opening ceremonies or life in the village?

RICKIE FOWLER: For me, opening ceremonies was awesome, just how big it is and the spectacle of all the countries walking in, how long it takes, the whole staging process. It's pretty impressive of how big of a scale everything is.

Also, yeah, just being in the village, working out alongside other athletes, eating with other athletes in the big cafeteria area that we had there in Brazil, being able to go to the other events. I think one of the highlights for me was being there front row poolside watching Phelps win his 23rd gold medal. A lot of really cool experiences. Like I said, it's super unfortunate everyone's not going to be able to enjoy that this year.

Q. Rickie, just kind of wanted to get your thoughts in general just being back in Minnesota. I'm sure you have some fond memories from the '16 Ryder Cup and being at Hazeltine. What is it about golf in the state? This is a state where we only get five, six months out of the year that we get to play so fans are hungry to see some of the best players on Tour. What's it like to be back and how much are you looking forward to seeing everybody on the course?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it's great to be back. We're going to have good weather for the week, it's going to be a bit warm Friday through Sunday. Like you said, big golf fans up here from being here for the Ryder Cup, I also played the U.S. Amateur that was hosted at Hazeltine as well, so I played up here a couple times over the years.

Yeah, I think being up this far north, people appreciate the time that they get when they do get to play golf and it's not below zero, because I know it can get a little chilly up here in the winter months. Yeah, it's pretty cool. Like I said, they're proper sports fans and some of those sports come with the different seasons of the year.

Q. When was the last time you saw Tiger and how did he seem to you?

RICKIE FOWLER: I actually haven't seen him for a while. Last time I talked to him was maybe I guess three, four weeks ago. So nothing too recent, so I don't have many updates for you.

I know he's been getting after it as far as rehab goes, that takes up most of his day. I know as kind of stubborn as he is and being as big of a kind of golf nerd as all of us are, he's putting the work in. I know JT's probably been the one that's talked to or seen him the most, so you may want to check in with him. I know it's been tough. It's a long road till now, he's got a long road ahead, but he's putting the work in.

Q. On a totally different subject, what is it about Ian Poulter and Ryder Cup play where he gets under people's skin so quickly and so effectively?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, it's obviously very impressive what he does those Ryder Cup weeks. I'm not sure how he necessarily does it, I wish there was a way to figure that out because he is a very different player in those situations or sometimes situations when it comes down to end of a tournament one on one, more match play setup. You've obviously also seen him do well in match play as well, the tournament. There's a lot of passion there and those weeks are special regardless, just being able to be there, but being on the winning side is a lot better than the other. Unfortunately, we haven't been in that position as much as we want to.

But Poulter is -- I don't know how he gets through the whole week with like as high of a level and how much energy he's going through because it's like each shot he's hitting, it's like he's living and dying like that's his last shot. So it's pretty impressive to watch. I've always been a big fan of Poults. Back when he was with Cobra and Puma we spent some time together, but he's just a bulldog, he'll grit it out and find a way.

Q. Rickie, how close are you to where you want to be?

RICKIE FOWLER: Probably a lot closer than I think or feel. I mean, it feels like it's obviously always heading the right way in where we've been going. But I know I'm close, it's just not all coming together just yet. If you talk to other players or anyone that's kind of been through -- everyone's been through some sort of ups and downs. It's how golf goes, it's how life goes. Sometimes it's one putt, one swing. It's been nice over the last few months to finally at least, you know, see some more consistency or at least heading in the right direction. So I'm happy about where we are, but we still have a little ways to go to be where we want to be.

Q. And is this week where you have to make birdies instead of make pars more beneficial for you as you're going forward?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yes and no. offense is something that you always want to have in your game. Being able to make birdies and going and playing a little bit more aggressively, that's obviously more fun. Really just take whichever tournament, whatever you have to do.

I think my preference is a little bit more the go grind it out and find a way to get around the tournaments that are the 8- to 12-under that wins just because it's a bit more of a well-rounded test to where the whole game. But a tournament like this with the weather that we have and the golf course setup, it's fun because you're going out and it's gas pedal's on the right, just go out and make birdies.

HALEY PETERSON: That's a wrap on questions for today. As always, thank you, Rickie for taking the time to join us and good luck this week.

RICKIE FOWLER: Thank you.