

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**RICKIE FOWLER**



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**ALLIE LECLAIR:** Good morning. We would like to welcome 2012 Wells Fargo Championship winner Rickie Fowler into the interview room.

Thanks for joining us, Rickie. You're making your 11th start at the Wells Fargo Championship. Can you talk about being back here at Quail Hollow?

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah, it's always nice coming back to Quail, this is a special place. I know all the players enjoy it as well as families, caddies, support staff. I feel like they do this tournament right and take care of everyone it seems like. Fans are great and usually have good weather so hopefully that continues.

Yeah, being a past champion here is always nice. So do have to give a little credit, they have great doughnuts in player dining as well, that's always a plus.

**ALLIE LECLAIR:** And you're entering this week with seven top-20s in your last eight starts. Can you talk about the state of your game a little bit?

**RICKIE FOWLER:** It's definitely been a bit more consistent. Feel like it's been weeks where I've been able to rely on maybe one or two parts of the game. Really haven't had everything yet, but I'd say the state that I feel like I'm at in the last few years, that would be a missed cut or finishing in the back of the pack and now being able to manage and keep things moving forward, build momentum, that's turning those weeks into top-20s and top-10s.

I personally get more out of that, getting some solid finishes out of not having my best, versus knowing that I'm playing well and maybe a top-5, because when you are playing well out here as being a top player with other guys, like if you're firing on all cylinders, you expect yourself to be up there. Like I said I get more out of the weeks that I might not be at my best but still being able to salvage a solid week.

**ALLIE LECLAIR:** What's your favorite kind of doughnut?

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I just go with the plain. Doughnut, they've got plain, powdered sugar or cinnamon. They're great, just a little doughnut hole.

**Q. In this stretch, what's maybe been most satisfying and what's maybe still been frustrating, if anything?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Most satisfying, kind of what I was talking about as far as just not necessarily being at my best, maybe kind of like what you would consider C game. You



know, one area, maybe iron play was good during a week and just leaning on certain parts of being able to salvage a solid week, that's probably been the most satisfying.

Most disappointing is not maybe putting well Thursday, Friday, being in a good spot and then not making anything on the weekend. Knowing that I'm in a position to contend and go win and ultimately just having something just be a little bit off.

So I would say those would kind of be the high and low.

**Q. And in the middle of the season, what does the work with Butch look like? Do you make trips to Vegas, do you send videos, are you still working on stuff from months ago or how does that work?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** It's pretty minimal. A lot of it's videos. He's been to Florida twice this year because he comes down to the Floridian usually about four times a year. He was down earlier this year right before San Antonio, he was around for the member-guest, and then a couple weeks ago he was around for the Harmon Cup. Luckily, a lot of those trips he makes, I end up being home so I get at least a solid day or a few days with him.

And then in between there, videos back and forth, get on the phone and just keep it simple. Then outside of that, every once in a while I will hit balls with his brother Craig at Medalist.

So I feel like it's a nice simple setup, not where I'm relying on someone day to day, but I have a great kind of support and coaching system between Butch being a phone call away and if I need a set of eyes, Craig's in Jupiter if I need it.

**Q. You probably have already been asked this before, but have you spoken with anybody from the USGA about the proposed modified golf ball?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I haven't, or I haven't been necessarily spoken to about it either.

**Q. What are your thoughts on it?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I don't like it. I would say you could take -- I think the only person I heard speak potentially in favor a little bit was maybe Rory I think I had heard. I don't want to quote anyone on that.

Outside of that, as far as players, tour manufacturers and stuff, I don't know of anyone that is anywhere leaning towards it. Everyone's against it.

**Q. Why would that be in your mind?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I mean, a lot of different reasons. The bifurcation I don't like. Another, obviously manufacturers to create new product between golf balls, equipment, that's going to be a lot of money in research development, engineering and obviously producing



something.

Ultimately, they're not going to be the ones that -- they're going to spend it, but they're not going to take that hit, that's ultimately going to go to the consumers. It's going to, I mean, ultimately hurt the game. You're now going to now make the cost of playing golf double if not more. Like I said, the manufacturers aren't going to eat that.

Yeah, to me I could see there being potentially some positives, but I think all the negatives completely outweigh that.

**Q. Rickie, you were at that meeting in Delaware last year. From that point and from where that all started to where we are now, how do you think it's going? Has it played out the way you would have hoped, expected? Is it better? Obviously having played some of these designated events, how do you think it's going, and even the changes into next year?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I think we're in a good spot. At least we're in a different spot than we were in pre-Delaware. I don't think anything's ever going to be perfect. You can look at the playoff system or through the FedExCup Playoffs or how the points work or how East Lake has worked, you know, nothing's ever perfect and there's always going to be things that are picked apart, but I think we're in a better spot than we were. Between the Tour and the players, I feel like there's a lot better communication and we're all working towards the same goal.

Like change has been good. I think there's going to continue to be more change and modification as we go, but we're in a better spot than we were and we're going to continue to move forward.

**Q. As it applies to you personally, have you focused in on it a lot more, because you were outside of the Top 30 in the world, which is the one way that you're assured of being exempt this next year, obviously Top 50 FedExCup, have you looked at that stuff a little bit more than you might have otherwise?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Not necessarily. A lot of those numbers or that threshold, they've been around for a lot of other things anyways and it's not that coming in with changes, OK, I need to try harder this year. I've been working my ass off and would have liked to have been in this position the last few years and not necessarily gone through any of those slumps or whatever you want to call it.

But definitely nice to be in a good position moving forward and with the changes. But no, even when those meetings were going on and talking about criteria and what was going to potentially happen, those decisions, or if I was agreeing to things or saying that it was going to be a good idea, that was me on the outside looking in. You know, looking at it as what's best for the Tour, product, for the players.



Ultimately, yeah, I wouldn't be a part of it if it happened a couple years ago, so you kind of have to take yourself out of it and hey, what's best for the overall system, not just me.

**Q. Rickie, you played yourself into these designated events now, but you played the Fall Series and we've just had the announcement of what the new series is going to be. How does that impact your schedule, especially as now you agreed to play in TGL as well? How are you going to approach next year with the fall events?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I'm not completely sure because I haven't -- I don't look over like next year's schedule until basically after this year. I haven't looked through things in depth for what that would look like, so I don't necessarily have a good answer for that.

You know, a lot of it will still be kind of the, I guess in other sports, load management and making sure that things piece together properly. There may be certain stretches where I'll have to do a little bit, but make sure that either front end or back end of that is managed well.

But no, I'm not sure what this fall will look like for me. I know I do know like I'll probably try and do -- I always like going to Vegas, love going to Japan for ZOZO, so I'm hoping some of those still fit in because as much as I like having time at home and off time, I don't want it to be too much, I still love to play and compete.

**Q. On the subject of schedule, it occurs to me watching you that this is a Rickie Fowler that's much different from the one in the winner's press conference years ago at Quail Hollow. In terms of finding -- you're married now, you're a father now. In terms of finding that good balance, striking that good balance between work and life, how long did that take you or is it still a work in progress?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I think it's always a work in progress. I mean, similar to the Tour with FedExCup and points system and how all things work, nothing's ever perfect. Always trying to work to be a better husband, a better father, better golfer and player. It's figuring out how to manage all that and do it as efficiently as possible. Yeah, you want to spend all your time doing all of them, but certain time needs to go to each spot.

It's a good problem to have and we're in a great spot.

**Q. How many weeks out is it before you hear this on the other end of the phone: [Sigh]?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** She's not speaking a whole lot yet, but she won't go to Scottish and British, so --

**Q. No, I'm speaking of your wife being exasperated with you being gone. How many weeks are you out on the road before you get --**



**RICKIE FOWLER:** No, they travel every week with me. That probably won't be until she starts real school. Yeah, trying to think. The only week my wife hasn't gone is Japan and our daughter hasn't gone to -- last year didn't go to Scottish or Japan. Other than that, yeah, we're a traveling circus.

**Q. Rickie, as you've gone through this journey and kind of transformation of your swing, I'm wondering if you have a primary swing thought right now, and if so, what is it?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Not really. I continue to kind of monitor it and send back and forth to Butch. It could be one certain area that's being focused on whether it's that day or that week, but there's -- I mean, you can kind of see what's been worked on but sometimes I need to exaggerate one feel over the other. Maybe, like I said, more that week.

Right now is making sure that, I mean for me to get the club to where it's not laid off at the top, that's kind of the focus. If I'm in a good position from there, I can go ahead and swing and let it go. But sometimes the feel to get there, there could be a few that help me to that position.

**Q. And I'm wondering, this journey through the last couple of years, what role has mental wellness, mental strength played in that and I'm wondering if there's anything you do off the course to kind of flex that muscle and help with that?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** Yeah, it's been a tough few years and I feel like I've always had a good mindset as far as continuing to look forward or current situation trying to be as positive as possible knowing that good golf's not far off. Sometimes that little gap takes a lot longer to fill or get past, but yeah, I have a great support crew around me from the team and family.

Yeah, I would say luckily for me I feel like I've been in a -- always been in a good spot mentally, but I can see where people can struggle out there pretty quickly and get into bad spots if not entering that with I guess being in a good state of mind.

So seeing a lot of these things in the last few years, sports or anywhere, but mental health is definitely a serious thing and having the right people around you is a huge help. I think the biggest thing is you think you have to be like strong by not saying anything or not showing it. It's like kind of owning it and accepting or like talking and letting it out, that's ultimately kind of being strong and showing that you're human, and sometimes that helps at least with progress in moving forward, just letting it out and not trying to fight it.

**Q. How much of a letdown was it not making the Masters this year?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I mean, honestly, it sucked, but knowing kind of what I had been doing and kind of moving back up world ranking, that at least gave me something to look forward to knowing that I would be in majors moving forward and hopefully be back at Augusta next year.



But yeah, it was a bummer. I ended up watching a decent amount as I think everyone does. I was out playing golf and I watched some of the live streaming stuff on my phone, but that was some motivation to be back. We were close, but I put myself in a little bit too big of a hole to get back there.

**Q. And do you think the Official World Golf Rankings are a good way to figure out (inaudible)?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I mean, I feel like that's kind of the main way it's always been outside of I guess winners and different things like that. I don't know, I guess I don't know of a necessarily better system of getting guys in.

I would say Augusta's kind of one of the ones that has -- they can invite people, which if someone should be there and maybe not qualified, I think they'll -- they make that happen. But yeah, I think that's basically just the Top 50 or Top 60 for U.S. Open and then there's some qualifying for The Opens. Yeah, outside of that, I don't know if there is a better way.

I mean, have you thought about it or looked at it?

**Q. The U.S. Open, I think they could just add more spots through open qualifying sectionals.**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** You're saying for like, I mean U.S. Open's full, but you have that all through qualifying and same, I mean, British as well. With the PGA it's kind of cool that they do incorporate some PGA members or pros and they have their kind of tournament to get in and it makes it a special week for those guys.

It would be nice if Augusta was a larger field because then I might have been in, but it's kind of -- it's always been the small, unique major in that way.

**Q. Would you sign up for the qualifier for the Masters?**

**RICKIE FOWLER:** I think that qualifier would fill up quite quickly.

**ALLIE LECLAIR:** Thank you so much, Rickie, for joining us. Good luck this week.

