

**BLUE CROSS & BLUE SHIELD
OF KANSAS WICHITA OPEN
BENEFITTING KU WICHITA PEDIATRICS**

**ROUND 4 INTERVIEW
June 18, 2023**



RICKY CASTILLO (-19, won first playoff hole)

Q. Ricky, congrats. I guess just what's going through your mind right now?

RICKY CASTILLO: I'm just speechless, was expecting to come out here -- I mean, a week ago I was just coming out here just to play Monday qualifiers and ended up getting a spot here and ended up winning. I mean, pretty surreal feeling.

I mean, just really grateful for the opportunity just to be able to play in this event, and to be able to win is just an awesome feeling. Just grateful, that's the only feeling I'm feeling right now.

Q. Coming down the stretch there, obviously you had the double and the score was just fluctuating back and forth between the leaders there, but you tough it out, get the par on 18, you get to the playoff. Kind of throughout the entire thing, what's the mentality for you and how are you kind of staying locked in in your first pro tournament?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, I mean, I just treat it like any other tournament, I feel like that's just the biggest thing. It is difficult just because, you know, it's professional golf, but I feel like I prepared enough for that.

This is my dream. This is a lot of our dreams, to come out here and play professional golf with, you know, a lot of these guys that have done a lot of great things in the world of professional golf. I was just excited to be here and, you know, just grateful for the opportunity.

Q. You kind of talked about it there a little bit, you know, playoff hole in your first pro tournament, what was kind of the tension like?

RICKY CASTILLO: For me, I was just kind of just trying to stay calm. I was a little bit nervous definitely, but just tried to stick to my game plan. I knew that I was there for a reason.

And I ended up hitting a really good second shot up there and only needed a two-putt, but it was a good way to finish. Can't really, can't really -- I mean, I'm still at a loss for words.



Q. From California, played your college golf in Florida, ended up in the Midwest for your first pro win. Is that kind of covering the map there, right?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, kind of going all over the place, especially since I drove here from Gainesville, too, which is crazy. Yeah, just awesome just to be out here. Just to be able to play in this event and end up winning, just not a lot I can say after that.

Q. You kind of touched on it, but how does it feel going from winning a national title with Florida and now coming back here and winning your first --

RICKY CASTILLO: It's really cool. I've wanted to play professional golf ever since I was a little kid, you know, watching Tiger Woods or any of the other big guys. Now that I can finally get to come out here and compete and end up winning, it's pretty surreal.

Like I said before, you know, just happy to be out here and just playing golf. To be getting the opportunity to play on the Korn Ferry Tour and play with these guys, that's what I'm really just happy about.

Q. So do you drive back to Gainesville now, or what's your plan for the next couple nights?

RICKY CASTILLO: I'm going to Oklahoma tomorrow. So I wasn't going to get into the event, I was just thinking if I top-25 I'll get in the next event. Now I won, so I guess I'm in the next event.

Q. How long was the drive, and what did you do on the way up?

RICKY CASTILLO: I stopped in Tennessee. It's a 17 -- I think it's like 18 hours straight from Gainesville to Wichita, but I stopped in Tennessee for a couple days. I think it was like an eight-hour drive to Tennessee and then like an 11-hour drive from Tennessee to here, so it wasn't a lot of fun.

But just being able to play here, I was so excited just to come out here and just play in the tournament. End up winning, so couldn't have wished for it any better.

Q. And 15, I mean, did you -- did you think you kind of threw the tournament away? I know it was a tough shot, but did you think in that moment that you had maybe lost the tournament?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, I think -- I think a part of me thought that that could have been a big chance and an opportunity blown, but I was just trying to think, you know, this is my first pro event, just take it one shot at a time. You never know what could happen.

I don't know what happened behind, but the scores or the leader ended up dropping, Adrien ended up dropping a couple shots so we ended up being right there, gave us a chance.



But, you know, it was awesome just to be in that position. Even if I didn't win, just to be in the position to, you know, be in competitive golf and professional golf.

Q. And the shot on 15, I mean, what were you trying to do, I guess, in the best-case scenario?

RICKY CASTILLO: Just try to get it on the green, honestly. I was just trying to get it on the green. I was kind of having a weird lie in a little hole and just try and get it out.

Honestly, didn't think I hit that bad of a shot, but just didn't carry far enough. But, you know, now, I mean, I thought at one point that could have been a shot that I would be thinking about for a long time just because, you know, I would be frustrated. Now I'm probably going to forget about that shot tomorrow morning because I ended up winning. Pretty cool, but, you know, I'm just over the moon right now.

Q. And 18 in the playoff, what did you have in?

RICKY CASTILLO: 178, 178, and I had a little bit of a flyer so I just pulled a 9-iron, just a comfortable 9-iron. Ended up being right on line. I thought it came out the perfect amount of hot where I thought it was going to come out and land on the top shelf and kind of stay there, ended up doing it. Hit a good putt but it didn't fall.

Honestly, both those guys hit really good putts and just ended up not falling. And then I ended up having a one-and-a-half-footer for the win. It was cool having a close putt, but I was still really nervous over both those putts. Yeah, it was awesome.

Q. And I know you told the story probably several times, but with it being Father's Day, figure it's a good opportunity. Could you just rehash the necklace story and how you came to wear that?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, I've just always worn this necklace just because of my grandma. My grandma made a really huge impact on my life. She would -- she started paying for my golf tournaments when my parents couldn't afford it.

I just have to thank her and my dad and my parents for, you know, for everything, just being in the position I am today. My parents couldn't be out here this week, they're both teachers, so they're both finishing finals right now.

But yeah, just super grateful for the position I'm in, the people that surround me, the group I have. It's awesome. I'm really happy with where I am in golf obviously, but just where I am, just really happy to be here.

Q. Maybe a shot in the dark, but the only non-golfing on your Twitter is a Kobe Bryant-era Lakers re-Tweet. Any Mamba Mentality down the stretch there?



RICKY CASTILLO: Maybe a little bit. I'm a big Kobe fan. I'm from the L.A. area, so big Kobe Bryant fan. Just tried to hash it out. I think that's the biggest thing is no matter what happens and what comes in your way, you've just got to stay tough and just keep fighting.

Q. Excited for the rest of the career, obviously first one you play in, you win, first pro event you play in, you win. Give you confidence going into the next couple?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, you know, obviously I just feel like I can come out here and win any other week if I play well. I mean, played really well this week and had some things happen, had some things work and ended up winning.

So really excited just to be in professional golf. I mean, this is my professional debut, so I'm just getting started. I just want to play tournaments and compete. That's all I'm looking forward to.

Q. Ricky, what was the best shot you hit this week, and why was it the second shot on 7 yesterday?

RICKY CASTILLO: The second shot on 7, the second round, yeah. When I was in that water, I think I hit the curb or something, it bounced back in the water and ended up hitting it -- I was just thinking to get it out, make a 5. Ended up hitting it to like six feet, made it for birdie. Yeah, that was probably the best shot of the week by far. Yeah, I mean, I hit a lot of good shots this week, got a few fortunate breaks, some things happened, some good things happened this week. I mean, I don't really know what to say, just really excited, just really excited to be the champion.

Q. You mentioned that resolve. Is that something that you developed just over time? Is that from a mentor? Like how did you kind of develop that over time?

RICKY CASTILLO: Just worked a lot with my dad and my coach. You know, I think that's just been the biggest thing. My dad's been a really huge role model in my life.

His biggest thing for me was, you know, he wanted me to be a good golfer but he cared more about me being a good person, and I think that was what he really cared about. That's what I've really focused on, just tried to -- golf is great and everything, but you're going to be remembered for the good things you do like the Rickie Fowlers and the Jordan Spieths.

Q. Does that kind of give you a calmness in these last nine holes where it's like you're not gone gonna -- you know, winning or losing's not going to make or break you?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, yeah. I had a couple people last night tell me that, you know, no matter what I shot today, it didn't define who I was. I kind of liked what -- I liked that just because I just felt like, you know, whether I came out here and shot, you know, 10 under or



10 over today, it wouldn't have changed who I was. That's what I really liked about that statement. But, you know, ended up winning. I'm just happy to be here.

Q. Are you going to give yourself time to celebrate, and if so, what are you going to do?

RICKY CASTILLO: I'm going to celebrate by driving to Oklahoma right now. That's probably about it.

I don't know, I don't know what I'm going to do to celebrate. I'm still letting it sink in, so I don't really know. I'll probably just hang out with my girlfriend. She came out to travel with me, so I'll probably take her to dinner or something like that. That's probably what I'll do.

Q. Phone call to dad will probably be pretty special, too?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, yeah. I have literally not even looked at my phone since I finished.

