

ROUND 3 QUICK QUOTES
November 18, 2023

MACKENZIE HUGHES (-18)



Q. (No microphone.)

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Probably that. I mean, honestly, that one I had a way better look on. Travelers I had like a 35-footer up a ridge, but the one at Travelers was kind of interesting because if you can picture the ninth hole at Hartford, the dogleg right short par 5 and the pin was back right, so I hit driver trying to be aggressive, get up there. Went through the fairway and it was like a perfect spot with a normal lie. I had like the worst patch of rough on the golf course right by my ball. I did all I could just to reach the green from about 90 yards.

And that course typically doesn't have a ton of rough, so I just happened to kind of catch a bad break there and like total guess from 90 yards. But with the pin being in the back, in the rough, it would have been a good opportunity to get up and down from there for 59.

So I don't know, I kind of think I like them both and I probably feel a little bit of disappointment on those last holes, but that's golfers being golfers, right? Disappointed with a 60.

Q. I believe you're the second player in Tour history to have two rounds of 60 or lower in the same season, so you've got that going for you.

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Where else did I --

Q. You said 60 at Travelers.

MACKENZIE HUGHES: That was in '20.

Q. Sorry. This is your low round at Sea Island. Does it feel like seven years ago when you look back to the win?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: It kind of does now. I still have the memories fresh in my mind, but I mean, been on Tour now for a while. I've been through a lot, you know, lot of tournaments, lot of years and I feel like, yeah, it feels like about seven years now. Professional golf can be a grind at times and I've certainly been through my ups and downs on Tour the last eight years. But yeah, seven years ago, it sometimes feels like, you know, it was more recent than that and sometimes I feel like yeah, that sounds about right. Yeah, it's obviously a place I love coming to.

Q. You said the putter being hot and cold this year, is that just putting being putting

or was there a period where you had to work on some things?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah. Honestly, I think yeah, putting being putting and maybe being a product of not getting the results and kind of trying to force it a little bit. I feel like in this game the harder you try, sometimes the worse it gets. Sometimes you're not making putts and you try to make them more, you try harder to make putts and I think that's a recipe for going the other way with your putting. So that was probably a bit of it.

Yeah, this week I've kind of just tried to free it up a bit on the greens and so far it's been working out.

Q. The overall round, what do you feel like the keys were? What especially stood out?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I mean, I'd say the putter. I putted nice, but I also drove the ball well. I mean, I was in just about every fairway but in good positions even if I wasn't in the fairway, so driver was definitely strong.

I probably give the nod to the putter. I gained five strokes putting, it's a pretty good day.

Q. Hate to bring up the one you missed, but on 18 there, what was the line?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: When I first got up there, it was kind of one of those putts that was kind of on the grain change and it was on the spine and it was super straight, and that's typically the putt I like the least. I'd rather it break a foot than be straight. I just -- for whatever reason, it's just hard to see straight when I putt.

Yeah, I was kind of seeing it maybe go a bit left at the end, but in the middle part of the putt it kind of went a little bit right and I didn't really see that going right. So it was a bit of a misread. Going back and doing it again, I'd probably play it like inside left versus kind of right half. Yeah, one of those that you're not going to get them all right, but that was definitely a bit of a misread.

Q. Have you ever shot in the 50s just for fun?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No. I shot 60 at home casually on a par 72, had a putt for 59, and twice out here, but never 59.

Q. Taylor Montgomery mentioned that you always play well when you're paired with him. What's your reaction to that?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, he's an easy guy to play with, pretty laid back. I don't know what the reason is, it just happened to work out. Yeah, the match play I played him this year and played quite well against him. We played in Mexico a couple weeks ago, I played well with him, and then here. Yeah, I'll welcome that pairing any time.

Q. And when you like start the round today, is there a sense that like the conditions are more scorable than the first two days, I'm going to be a little more aggressive, or like how does that work?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I thought especially on the first like couple holes, I was feeling that the wind was just down enough especially compared to the first two days. Sun was out, we're all in shirts, greens are soft, so the mindset was definitely to kind of put the foot on the gas and try and make a bunch of birdies and mission accomplished.

Q. Is this a week you feel kind of going into the week a little more relaxed, just last event of the season, or do you approach every tournament kind of the same?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: All the starts are big for me. On the outside looking in for Presidents Cup next year and I need to play my way onto that team, so I've got lots of work to do there. So I look at every start as important.

I don't come here just to play four rounds of golf and get some reps in, I want to play well, I want to contend. So I'd say I'm probably more relaxed than the guys around 125, but I still come here with hopes of having a great week.

Q. (No microphone.)

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, yeah. A win would definitely cure some of those blues. Yeah, even just finishing the year on a strong note, it's nice for momentum going into next year. I feel as though I've gotten myself into a couple of those elevated events -- signature events, sorry -- and if I continue to play like I am, I like my chances to play my way into more of them. Yeah, it's not fun being on the outside looking in right now, but try and make the most of my starts right now and just trying to kind of see some improvement in my game. Obviously I'm in a much better place than I was in Memphis earlier this year.

Q. Curious, the International Team going straight off the world ranking and six captain's picks, how do you feel about that? Do you like the clarity?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I guess there's a lot of clarity. You don't have to wonder what the points are like or how many points you get for a certain finish in a points system. Yeah, it's kind of back to the old system they had. I don't know if it necessarily gets your best six at the time, you know. You might have a guy up in the World Rankings that doesn't play well for six months leading up to it, but he stays inside the top-6. I can see both sides of it, but it's definitely pretty clear what I need to do now. I need to get myself back in the top-50 in the world to have a chance.

Yeah, so it will be a bit of an uphill climb, but I know I've been there before and I can do it again.