

ROCKET MORTGAGE CLASSIC

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE

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RICKIE FOWLER

MODERATOR: Like to welcome the defending champion of the Rocket Mortgage Classic, Rickie Fowler.

Rickie, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. A year removed from the win, if we can just get a few thoughts on last year and getting the job done.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, obviously it was a nice week and a big relief after the few years leading up to it. Looking forward to being back and picking up where we left off last year. I haven't played quite that well since then, so yeah, it would be nice to kind of get things going again this week here at Rocket.

MODERATOR: Coming off a top-20 finish last week at the Travelers Championship, just a few comments on what you're feeling good about heading into the week as far as your game goes.

RICKIE FOWLER: Started to score a little bit better last week, which is obviously kind of the name of the game, putting up good numbers. Puted well last week. Yeah, kind of the first week to kind of see some good progress and kind of build some momentum and some confidence going into this week.

MODERATOR: You had an opportunity to meet Parker yesterday, big fan of yours. Just a comment on the bigger picture of how much the tournament, the Tour and so forth does in situations like that for you to get to meet people like Parker.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it was great. I met Parker down at the U.S. Open at Pinehurst and learned that he was from here, he was going to be out for the tournament. Rocket stepped up and made sure that he was taken care of in coming out, being able to hang out yesterday in the 313 and spent some time with him. Put him to work, made him carry the bag for three holes. It's just great. He seemed like he enjoyed it. I'm looking forward to him being able to be around for a couple days this week. I think he's got a tee time tomorrow so he's going to miss our afternoon round, completely understand that.

Yeah, like you said, bigger picture and understanding that what we get to do, it's a game that we love, it's fun, but it's a privilege and there's a lot bigger things in life to just playing golf.

Q. You mentioned you haven't played up to your own standards lately, but this course is a place you know well having been here for each edition of the Rocket



Mortgage Classic. Coming off that win here last year, how much are you hoping that this course can rejuvenate you, get you back toward your winning ways?

RICKIE FOWLER: I feel like it's a fairly simple, old-school golf course and if you can just get to the green, it becomes a bit of kind of who can make more putts throughout the week.

No, it's fun, we don't get to play very many old-school golf courses like this so it's a treat for a lot of guys who can appreciate kind of old-school golf course architecture. Like I said, it's a fun course to play and especially having good memories and coming off the win last year, we'll see if we can kind of reignite some stuff from then and get past the little bit of a slow year it's been and just go have some fun this week.

Q. Since you won here last year, your ball-striking has gone through some inconsistent stretches. Is there anything in particular with your swing you're working on or that you can point to?

RICKIE FOWLER: Not necessarily. Working on basically a lot of the same things and basically still trying to do the same thing as how to control the golf ball, hit it the right distance and hit it as close as possible.

Done some golf ball testing throughout the end of last year, into this year. Not saying that's a part of it or anything. You're seeing it throughout the bag where things haven't been as good. I think a big part of freeing myself up and allowing myself to play better golf starts on the greens and helps when I'm making putts, which last week started to see that. Not that ball-striking was good by any means, but I feel like when I'm putting at least up to my standards or at least average, it kind of frees up the rest of the game.

So looking forward to hopefully leaning on the putter a little bit more going forward and allowing the others to kind of fall into place and see the ball-striking stats come back up.

Q. I'm just wondering, for you in early rounds, what is your focus in a tournament when you know scoring is going to be low?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, you'd love to get off to a good start and make some birdies and feel like you're kind of playing with house money and step on the gas and keep going.

The flip side is you bogey -- make a couple bogeys going out and you feel like you're starting from behind the eight-ball and you've got to play catch-up.

I think a big thing is not trying to push it too much, not getting ahead of yourself, sticking kind of to keeping it a simple game plan. Even like a place like this you can get out of position in the rough, in the trees, in a bad place around the greens and you can make bogeys very quickly, just as quickly as you can make birdies. A big part of it is the mental approach. Like I said, I think a big thing is just not getting ahead of yourself and letting the round kind of come to you.



MODERATOR: Any other questions? All right. Well, Rickie before we let you go, Jason and the tournament team have a little presentation for you that looks quite good actually, so I will have them up right now for that.

JASON LANGWELL: Look, it goes without saying that we say at the Rocket Mortgage Classic, you know, we can't pick our champions, our champions pick us, and to say that we're excited that you picked us last year is a massive understatement.

But last year we started a tradition of honoring our champion with a special menu concession item that's available for sale all week. We've been working behind your back a little bit with some people you know pretty well and our partners at Forte Belanger, Chef Colin here to create a special menu item for you for the week.

So I'll let Chef tell you a little bit about what we've got for you and then you'll give it a try.

CHEF COLIN JOHN: So we worked with your wife, Allison, and your team to create what we call the Rick's Rick. It's on a brioche bun with Boar's Head Cajun turkey with shredded lettuce, pickles, pepperoncinis, mayonnaise, and then it has vinegar, oil and oregano on it as well. So not crazy, we didn't want to overthink it, so I know sandwiches are one of your favorite foods. So dig in, let us know what you think.

RICKIE FOWLER: I appreciate it. This is one of my standard kind of go-to orders for lunch back home whether it's at the course or a local sandwich shop. Hopefully fans here will be able to enjoy it a little bit.

CHEF COLIN JOHN: And we're going to start passing some of these sandwiches around in smaller portions to the media for you guys to check out, and then they will also be in your cooler all week.

RICKIE FOWLER: It's a good thing he made it and not you.

JASON LANGWELL: Fair enough.

RICKIE FOWLER: Now I don't have to go get lunch.

MODERATOR: We'll get a quick picture of this and then we'll cut you loose.

Well, if that concludes that, we'll let you go. Rickie, we appreciate your time and wish you the best of luck this week.

RICKIE FOWLER: Thank you.

