

FINAL ROUND PRESS CONFERENCE
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RICKY CASTILLO (1-17)

MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome the winner of the 2026 Puerto Rico Open, Ricky Castillo. Congratulations, Ricky. How are you feeling just after this win?

RICKY CASTILLO: Feel great. I mean, I've been putting in a lot of work on and off the golf course and to see it finally pay off and stuff like that, it's always a nice feeling.

But, like I said, regardless of what happened today, we're still going to go out Tuesday morning at TPC and get ready for THE PLAYERS.

MODERATOR: You were already in THE PLAYERS Championship but this win gets you into the PGA Championship. Was that something that was on your mind as you were in contention and this week?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, a little bit. But I feel like this still doesn't get me into the Masters and stuff like that, so I still have things to look forward to and strive for. That was kind of the positive thing about this event. Regardless if I won or not, I was still going to have things to strive for after warned.

MODERATOR: You played your last 52 holes bogey free. How did you remain patient throughout all the conditions out there?

RICKY CASTILLO: I really, really just stayed focused and tried to control what I could control. I mean, there's a lot of wind out there and stuff like that and it can be challenging. I felt like I did a really good job of managing my emotions. I mean, everyone misses short putts and stuff like that. I could have easily, when I missed that putt on 11, just kind of been frustrated and let things get to me. I ended up playing really well afterwards and making birdies on 13, 14 to seal the victory, which was good.

MODERATOR: There was a lot of movement on the leaderboard throughout the round. Are you a leaderboard watcher or do you try to stay focused on your own game?

RICKY CASTILLO: I definitely try and stay focused on my own game, but every leaderboard I saw, I looked. I knew exactly where I was basically every hole. You know, I was trying to win, so just trying to finish on top of the leaderboard is all I was trying to do.

MODERATOR: Talk to us about that eagle on No. 6 and how you were feeling after that.

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, I felt like I was playing really solid golf to start the round. I feel like the first five-ish holes can be really tricky out here because most of them are into the

wind. I felt like I hit a good tee shot, hit it right up there just short of the green, hit a perfect chip and ended up going in. It was great. It was a great way to kind of jump start the round and get it going for sure.

MODERATOR: You definitely seemed calm out there, but you've won on Korn Ferry Tour back in 2023. Did that win prepare you for this moment?

RICKY CASTILLO: Absolutely. I mean, I was 10 times more nervous for that event than I was for this event. There's still nerves obviously, but being out here, I've been out here for a year and a half and been a professional golfer for almost three years now so it's a little bit easier and stuff like that. Yeah, I definitely still felt the pressure, but Wichita was definitely a lot more nerve racking for me for sure.

MODERATOR: This is only your 35th career Tour start. Are you surprised to see success so quickly in your career?

RICKY CASTILLO: Not really. I mean, it's tough to say when it's stuff like that because you feel like you're doing everything right and feel like you're will coming in 40th and you can do the same thing and end up winning like I did this week. That's the tough part is being able to just control your emotions on where you're getting better at and stuff like that. You know, sometimes you're going to put in a lot of work and it's not going to show for a while and that can be difficult, but that's golf. You've just got to stay patient and really just grind it out.

MODERATOR: You've got THE PLAYERS next week. Talk about your excitement playing TPC Sawgrass.

RICKY CASTILLO: It's one of my favorite golf courses. It's such a great track. I live in Jacksonville so it will be a nice home game, I get to stay in my apartment and stuff like that. I'll have my parents and my fiancée's parents out there this week so this will be a fun week for sure.

Q. Leaving R-S-M in the fall where was your mind at?

RICKY CASTILLO: I was happy. A lot of people said that I could have been upset or frustrated because McGreevy made that last putt to kick me out. The way I saw it was I had a chance, I had a 20-footer on the last hole to guarantee my spot and I missed it. That's kind of how I took the whole offseason is I had a chance and I didn't get it, but I did the best I could. And I was going to give myself enough chances out here this year and I ended up winning this week so it's pretty cool.

MODERATOR: You mentioned being the best mentally you've ever been this year. What do you credit that to?

RICKY CASTILLO: A lot of things. My fiancée's been really, really helpful in just having me understand that there's more important things than golf. Regardless whether I win or come

in dead last, that I've got a great team and a family around me that's going to care for me regardless.

I spent a decent amount of time with my mental coach, Dr. Gio, last year and we just talked a lot about being able to forget about the bad shots and stuff like that. That was the biggest thing for me.

I could be so (audio disconnect)

My grandma wound up bringing me back a puka shell necklace when I was probably like 5 or 6 years old and I've worn it ever since. Then when she passed about 12 years ago, I just always would wear it and just keep it on me just to remind me of her and feel like no matter where I am, she's always with me and a part of her's always watching over me.

MODERATOR: Well, she was absolutely watching over you today. We'll open it up to questions.

Q. I have a couple of questions. The first, this is your first PGA TOUR victory. What does this mean to you?

RICKY CASTILLO: It means a lot. I mean, it's something I've been wanting to do ever since I was a little kid and be a winner on the PGA TOUR and be able to call myself a PGA TOUR winner is pretty cool now, for sure.

Q. There was a time when you lost the tournament lead to Blades Brown. What was the key to getting back up on the leaderboard?

RICKY CASTILLO: I feel like the biggest thing is just kind of staying focused and taking it shot by shot. That's the hardest thing about being on the PGA TOUR is that it's real easy to get ahead of yourself and start thinking of what wins and what things can get me and stuff like that.

You've really just got to stay focused and really just focus on what you can control and stuff like that. That was the biggest thing for me. I felt like I just really just didn't even really worry about where anyone else was, I was just kind of understanding like I'm going to just play my game and if that's the best at the end, then it is.

Q. Last question, last year you were here, you placed 64 and this year you win. What made the difference?

RICKY CASTILLO: I mean, a big thing was I got a new putter this year at Sony that I started using on the island courses where it's a little bit grainier and a little bit more difficult. I putt really well at Sony and came out here and felt really good about my putting and hit a lot of good putts. I felt like that was really helpful out here for sure.

Q. Congratulations on your win. Tell me about how these four days have been here in Puerto Rico and the importance of winning here. Does it have a lasting memory and special place in your heart now?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, it's always going to be a special place being my first PGA TOUR win. This is always a fun event to come to. It's a beautiful country, a beautiful golf course.

It was a little windy this year, which it was not always that fun, but besides that it's just a great place, great property and a lot of great people. And the volunteers were super, super helpful this week and everything like that. Always going to be a special place for sure.

Q. How do you (inaudible) this year compared to last year?

RICKY CASTILLO: I mean, it felt like I played -- I felt like I didn't play bad last year, but I just didn't feel like my -- especially my mental and emotional state, I was nowhere near where I am today, as calm and at peace of whatever happens, happens.

MODERATOR: Ricky, with a win early in the season, what are some of your goals for the rest of the season?

RICKY CASTILLO: I mean, I want to be able to play in all the major championships, obviously contend in major championships. That's what I've always wanted to do. That was actually one of the goals I had this year was to win on the PGA TOUR and to be able to contend in major championships. Obviously got to get into the majors championships first, but nice to be in the PGA.

Q. After winning the tournament, how are you going to celebrate?

RICKY CASTILLO: I don't know. I might have a couple beers back at the hotel or something like that. But I've got an early flight out tomorrow. Like I said, we're going to go back on Tuesday and get ready for THE PLAYERS.

Q. No beach?

RICKY CASTILLO: Maybe, but I kind of want to sit inside. I've been outside all day, it's hot. I want to be inside.

MODERATOR: Congratulations, Ricky, PGA TOUR winner.

RICKY CASTILLO: Thank you.