

U.S. Open Championship 2023

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Los Angeles, California, USA

The Los Angeles Country Club

Rickie Fowler

Flash Interview

Q. Rickie Fowler, 8-under 62. Rickie, that's the first time that's ever been said in U.S. Open history. Talk us through your round a bit.

RICKIE FOWLER: It was a great day. Got off to a nice start making 3 on 10 and just never really thought about a score or necessarily what I was trying to do out there.

The first few days this week I wasn't feeling very comfortable swinging and wasn't making many putts or hitting very good putts, so continue to get work in on the course as well as in the practice area, and finally a couple things clicked a bit yesterday. Then it was more just go out, trust it, and let things happen.

I knew there was birdies to be made out here, but you have to drive it well and get the ball in position first. Yeah, did that, and from there just managed our way around really well.

Q. Last year you left Boston as the first alternate on the list. Is it sweeter to be here this year after coming that close?

RICKIE FOWLER: No, I wish I didn't get in. No, it's nice to be back in a good position and back inside the top 50 in the world. Obviously want to continue to move forward and up. That was a long Thursday last year. I got some good work in.

But yeah, nice to be actually out on course.

Q. Did you feel something when you were warming up, and then during the round did you have any idea where you stood in terms of score?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, I knew where I was at. During warmup I actually didn't have that great of a warmup. It was fine, but I knew that the stuff that I worked on yesterday, both swing and putting, putting was great, range was so-so, which a lot of times you don't want to go stripe it on the range. That's just a bad sign.

Like I said, a lot of it was just going out and trusting stuff



I've been working on, and then some of the feels from yesterday.

Like I said, I knew where I was at. I would say from the middle of the round up until the 9th green, our last hole, I didn't really know or see any scores.

And then I saw that Xander was at 7 at that point, and I'm not sure if he even knew where I was or anything, but it was kind of cool if he did to see he kind of latched on and we were taking off a bit.

Q. It's been a few years since obviously that year where you had all the top 5s in the majors and whatnot. How would you describe and characterize the journey as you've been trying to get back into the top 50 and higher after you had fallen out and all the work you've done to get there?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's definitely been long and tough. A lot longer being in that situation than you'd ever want to. But it makes it so worth it having gone through that and being back where we are now.

I would say we're starting to get maybe as close as we've ever been to where I was through kind of that 14, 15 area, and just with -- I've been playing fairly consistently, but a lot of it for me is what I've been able to get out of off weeks where I'm not playing very well and still able to make the cut and kind of turn those into at least top 20s or top 10s and the last few years those were missed cuts and going home.

This week off to a good start, but there's still plenty of golf to be played. It's going to be tough tomorrow afternoon. But at least got out of the gate and we're off to, like I said, a good start.

Q. I know Butch has given you a lot of technical help, but how has he helped you looking at the big picture of your life and your career?

RICKIE FOWLER: Butch is great, just his voice and having him in your corner. He's been around and seen a lot and been around so many great players. He's coached



so many guys to reach, I would say, their potential. A lot of them are very different. I feel like he's a very good golf and life coach. Kind of separate from being kind of a swing coach. He can be technical and mechanical if needed, but he understands the playing and the mental side and what it takes to -- if you may be a little off finding one thing or just telling you just something to give you a little confidence to go out there and just go play golf and keep it simple. That's been one of the big things has been me getting back to playing golf.

Over the last few years, because I still give a lot of credit to Tillery from everything I learned from him. Unfortunately it just wasn't the right fit. And he's still a great friend of mine. But from learning all that and then to being back with Butch and just getting back to playing golf is why we're here today.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about your birdie on 8 and I guess specifically what were the biggest challenges for that second shot in the barranca there?

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, I looked at the tee mark on the bottom of the club and it was dead straight and I hit it right on the middle. I think there was a couple shots today that I just kind of slightly came out of, didn't release, same thing on No. 9, our last hole. But they were out of the middle, so felt good. Unfortunately look up and it's just a little out to the right.

I knew down there that it had a chance of having a lie and being able to at least get it out and move it forward, in a way a lot better than hitting it left and being in that left rough.

The right there, yes, it is a hazard, but you can potentially have something to get it out. Had a gap, had the bridge that was kind of low left. I took a club that I wanted to make sure I got it above the bridge just in case I pulled it at all.

Really just tried to hit it fairly quickly, just react to it, don't really think about it a whole lot. It was just a pitching wedge that I was trying to catch clean and kind of caught up against the wind.

Like I said, sometimes in those situations, the quicker -- not quicker you hit it, but just step in, just react to it, hit it and not think about it too much.

So got it back, and knew with where that pin was, I could get a wedge close. Stuck in the ground a bit, but I'll take it. We ended up with a good look and walked away with 4.

Q. When Scottie was asked about his best shot, he

couldn't think of one. Was one of those days where there was just a lot of them, or do you have one?

RICKIE FOWLER: There were a lot, which is a very good thing. The 5-iron into 16, getting it to the position where I was to that front pin, that was up there.

No, there was a lot of good ones. I don't know if there's really one that stands out.

I think one of the big things for me is finally making a handful of mid-range putts, which I haven't done in the past few weeks, and that was a big thing in keeping the round moving forward and building some momentum out there.

Q. Yesterday you played with Michael Brennan, who dressed up as you as a kid. I seem to remember a story back in the day that you dressed up as Fred Couples for Halloween. Is that true?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah.

Q. What would a round like today have meant to that little guy?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, for me growing up, like you said, I dressed up as Freddy. I can't remember exactly what age I was. Maybe four or five. My dream was always just to play on the PGA TOUR. Yeah, win, but to play on the PGA TOUR, and whatever came with that came with it.

Yeah, if you were to tell me as a kid that out here and I've multiple times and -- yeah, I'd be stoked. But obviously being human and me and being out here, I want more. That's why we're still chugging along.

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