

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Thursday, March 2, 2023

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Rickie Fowler

Quick Quotes

Q. You seem like a wave that's kind of building towards shore. Do you feel the progress coming and just feel better and better?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, really from in the fall to get some good finishes from Napa to having a chance to win in Japan, that was nice to be able to -- I kind of felt like I earned some time off and it was nice to be able to shutdown and then regroup and kind of know, hey, we did this in the fall, then come out fresh and be ready to go for the West Coast Swing and Florida.

So, yeah, after the previous three years, to be in a position where actually building momentum and confidence. There was like maybe short spurts of that in the past, but now it just seems to kind of a little bit of a snowball affect.

Q. You said this week you didn't feel great coming in. So what did you kind of find in the last little bit?

RICKIE FOWLER: I really didn't find a whole lot. Struggling off the tee. Haven't felt comfortable with driver. It was finally today, the last few days it was okay. Yeah, just kind of accepted what I had, didn't try and force anything or try and hit shots that I was struggling to hit. Kind of went down to kind of a teed-down, choked-down driver and just try and get it in play. I hit a couple out to the right early in the round and, yeah, just kind of played with what we had.

Made some putts, which was, it's kind of been nice to have that back, because that was something that also held me back in those years prior. There would be days where I still hit it okay, but I wasn't putting very well. So if you're not putting well it doesn't matter how good or bad you hit it.

Q. I saw you knock down a nice par save at 17. Any other highlights on the back with the putter?

RICKIE FOWLER: Let's see, I made a nice couple on 10 and 11. And then kind of a bonus birdie on, what's that, 14, the par-3 there. It's just a tough firm green. You're just trying to hit it anywhere on the green. It's pretty subtle up



there. I mean, I had probably, I don't know, 25, 30 feet and I was basically playing it like outside right. So, yeah, not a whole lot of movement, but nice to be hitting putts on line and knowing that if I'm missing a putt it's, I either had the wrong read or I had the speed wrong.

Q. Mr. Palmer ever give you advice on how to play his place?

RICKIE FOWLER: Not really. I mean, it was more about when it gets playing tough. I mean, respecting the golf course and not trying to be too aggressive. I think that's one reason that Tiger's played so well over here. He's someone that's very disciplined and can hit to spots. Whether it's the pin being in a certain area, it doesn't really affect him. But I think that's a pretty good example and I think kind of how Arnold envisioned this place in tournament play as, yeah, it's hard. There's plenty of times where you're not even thinking about where the pin's at, you're just trying to hit a spot and hopefully hold it on the green.

Q. Does it feel special to play well here being one of the few players that actually had a relationship with Mr. Palmer?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, this one's always a highlight being here. Having been a recipient of the Arnold Palmer Award here. I have a great relationship with the family and the foundation. Puma does a lot with the clothing and being able to give back to the foundation. So, yeah, it's a fun place. Everyone here's great, from the staff, like I said, the family, foundation. The golf course is just, it's brutal. It's fun in a way. Like you know what to expect. It's hard. Yeah, you just got to try and be smart out there. You can never let up.

Q. Does your experience play into the fact that you know it's going to be brutal, you've seen it before? A lot of these guys are going to pull their hair out.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, there's quite a few that have played here a decent amount and know what to expect. And then there's handful that haven't played here a whole lot. They have heard about it and seen it, but until you're



actually playing it and, especially come Saturday, Sunday, yeah, it's just nasty.

Q. Do you have any alpaca sweaters in the closet?

RICKIE FOWLER: I don't. No. All I would say most of the stuff may look towards the, or could look towards the retro side, but definitely a whole lot more modern materials.

Q. Where is your confidence level right now?

Watching you it looks like 2015, at least from afar.

RICKIE FOWLER: No, it's good. Especially a day like today where I wasn't swinging great, I wasn't driving it well and being able to just kind of get it around and accept what I had. Didn't try and force anything. It's also nice to, on top of that, make some putts, which is something that held me back the last few years. So, yeah, just confidence continues to build. Not always going to hit it perfect, but I think you get a lot more out of days when you're not hitting it well like today and shooting 4-under. I would much rather see getting a lot out of rounds versus go stripe it and feel like you left so many out there.

Q. Give us that scene, I guess it's '13 when Tiger wins and Arnold's in the locker room. What's that scene for you as a young guy out here?

RICKIE FOWLER: That was great to be able to be in there. It was a bummer, because I wanted to go win and had a chance playing with Tiger in the final group and was trying to give him something there. Especially on 16 I had a chance to try and stuff one in there and I pulled a 7-iron a little bit. So that kind of ended my chances. But, hey, gave it a shot. Then we all had drinks in the locker room afterwards and just, that's a memory that I'll always have. Hanging with Arnie and TW there in the locker room. Be nice to be a little different, maybe this year or some year in the future, to be in there and have a drink and toast him up top.

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