

Sanderson Farms Championship

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Country Club of Jackson

Rickie Fowler

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: We'd now like to welcome Rickie Fowler into the media center. Rickie, your debut here at Sanderson. What are your initial thoughts on the course and just the conditions of everything out here?

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, I've heard a lot of good things, one, with the tournament, and with the golf course, as well.

Coming off -- I haven't played since the British, and was excited to get back to playing at some point. I'm planning to play Vegas and ZOZO coming up. I thought it would be beneficial to get a start before then.

Like I said, heard a lot of good things, golf course, good greens, and I've seen that the last two days being out here. Very kind of straightforward and old school and hit fairways and greens. I'm looking forward to it, like I said, to come here and, one, looking to play well, but at the same time just coming off of some downtime and shake some rust off and hopefully there's not much to shake off.

Q. You mentioned after taking an extended break, how does it feel to get back into the swing of things and get back out and into your routine again during tournament week?

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, it's been a while. It's nearly three months now. I've definitely enjoyed time at home, getting into much more of a routine there, which is something that we rarely get to do, not being at home for extended periods of timing, so I have enjoyed that with the new addition and just being much more of a dad and being home.

I guess the last month and a half or so I've gotten back more into working on the game and getting ready to come here. It was odd packing, back to life on the road. Typically traveling with the family, it made more sense to come solo. I'm enjoying a little bit of a less hectic week than what it's been at home running around with our soon-to-be three-year-old and eight-week-old at home. But it'll be nice, they're going to be with me for Vegas coming

up.

I'm just looking forward to it, like I said. Hopefully shake some rust off, and hopefully we're not having to shake off a whole lot.

Q. What were some of the positives of being at home and getting to play dad for a little bit?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, one, just being home, getting into a good routine there, spending time with the family, being out to help out as much as I could. I feel like the cooking game went to another level. I felt like I was decent before, but my wife and I used to cook a lot together, and having a little one that she kind of had to be on duty at all times with, that put a lot more of the cooking duties on me.

But being able to go through a couple good cycles of workouts in the gym, as well, body feeling good. Yeah, enjoyed it because it's fairly rare for us to get more than a few weeks at a time at home.

Q. You mentioned getting to be in the gym a little bit more. Where do you feel like your body is at and your game is at going into the next stretch of the FedExCup Fall series?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, as rusty as I can be with the two little ones at home, but it was definitely nice. Like I mentioned, we don't get a whole lot of downtime when you're playing through full seasons. To be there sleeping in the same bed for an extended period of time, no, it feels good to have that time off, kind of refresh, rebuild a bit. Excited to come back out. It was definitely a different feeling packing and getting ready to come here versus just going to another tournament. It kind of feels a little bit like a fresh start.

Like I said, excited to kind of get back into it, just play a few events, the remainder of the fall and December, and get ready for next year.

Q. We noticed in your bag that you were testing a few new equipment things. What led to you putting those in the bag? What are those new clubs in the bag for

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you, and why did you make those changes?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, got a few things. From irons, they're just a black version of the same Cobra King Tours that I was playing, just a different color. I thought they looked a little bit better. Put those straight in.

About the extended time at home, I had a little extra time to be able to do some more testing with a LAB putter and saw a lot of good things from it. Like I said, liked what I've seen at home, so giving that a test run this week. Hopefully we continue to see good things.

Outside of that, had a mini-driver from TaylorMade so basically a replacement for 3-wood. Feel like it's something very beneficial off the tee, especially at a golf course like this, so I've seen, again, a lot of good benefits from it.

A lot of times with new equipment, for the most part everyone out here is not trying new things or putting things into play if they don't benefit them or be better what's in there.

Yeah, ultimately we're all trying to get better, as am I, and see if there's little things we can piece together to continue to move forward.

Q. Can you expand upon having the opportunity to come out here and play and tee it up this fall and what it means for you going forward the rest of the year?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I mean, luckily for me, having won last year, I'm safe on certain things, but there's definitely things for me to play for. Obviously to win and put myself in a better situation, get myself back in a good spot World Ranking-wise, ultimately stay inside Top 125, be in THE PLAYERS. Plenty to play for, but at the same time, it's not life or death.

For me coming off that bit of downtime and refreshed and ready to go, I'm looking forward to playing well and kind of building a little bit better platform than where I was last year and put myself in a better position to have a little more excitement, build some momentum and confidence going into the '25 season.

Q. Going back to that home life, you said cooking. What were some of those dishes you were cooking or what was the tastiest that you had come to find?

RICKIE FOWLER: Luckily I can kind of do a little bit of everything. I did a few good briskets. Those are always fun because it's a bit more of a time commitment, starting them anywhere from 10:00 at night to midnight. So those

are always fun. We usually had some more people over. Nothing too big, five or six people. But that's fun because it's a bit more of a meal you can share and have fun with other people.

It wasn't just the brisket. Allison would put in and do some stuff, but we'd have sausage to corn bread to sole slaw. We had to make sure it was a proper meal. Those were probably some of the more fun or memorable outside of the, shoot, we need to throw something together, put some mac and cheese in and we'll figure out the rest.

Q. Are you a recipe follower or do you guys just experiment?

RICKIE FOWLER: A little bit of both. There's definitely some good recipes that we'll go by and staples, and they're safe, and we know what we're going to get. There was some fun experimenting in there and messing with some different stuff to -- trial and error.

Yeah, it's been fun to kind of maybe grow a little bit in the kitchen as well as out on the grill or the smoker.

Q. Speaking of growing family, family of four now. What's that adjustment been like, and what's it like to see Maya as a big sister?

RICKIE FOWLER: She's been great as a big sister. It's going to be a lot more fun once she can interact and do some more back and forth. She's been tough on us at times. She's a little lack of attention on her part. So working through that. She's a ball of energy. She's always on the go. So trying to keep up with her.

I've definitely enjoyed being able to help out as much as possible, and going from one to two, you can kind of do the one together versus -- obviously Allison is on top of all of Nelly's stuff as well as Maya, but she can't be in two places at once.

Had a lot of one-on-one bath times with Maya the last two and a half, three months. It's much more one-on-one time if Allison needs to be with Nelly. It's been fun. We've had to kind of try and be as strict as possible in ways because she's in the stage of trying to get away with as much as she can and see where those boundaries and limits are.

But it's all part of it. She's two and a half, going on three. They're supposed to be a little naughty.

Q. Has Justin Thomas reached out about any father advice, or if so, do you have any advice for him as he becomes one?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I spend a lot of time with JT and his wife Jill, and they're getting closer. They're going to be great parents, whether they ask or get advice from us or anyone else. I think a lot of the stuff I've told them is things that worked for here or worked for other people or other babies. It all ends up being trial and error. You make decisions on your own, move forward with it. If it works, great; if not, move on to the next thing.

I guess I've always told people in a way, I tell myself, too, whenever things get a little questionable or worried is there's been a lot less comps of people that have done this successfully before us as well as we've been doing this since the beginning of time.

You can do it. There's going to be plenty of tough times, but you'll make it through it.

Q. Switching over more to golf talk, making tournament debut here, I believe you were signed up for the event in 2009 and then it was canceled?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yes. I played Vegas and Fry's and then we got rained out.

Q. You mentioned you'd be playing Vegas, but what went into adding this into your schedule?

RICKIE FOWLER: Just looking at potentially if Vegas and ZOZO were maybe my only two events for the fall and the amount of time off. I thought it could be beneficial to add at least another one, especially beforehand. So this one was kind of on my radar and was wanting to make sure I felt like I was ready to go play, and also being able to use it as -- one, I want to come here and know and feel like I can go win, but at the same time put myself in a better position to go play well in the coming weeks, as well.

Yeah, hearing from other players that have been here, whether it was one time or multiple times over the years, a lot of guys like the golf course, it's always in good shape, good greens, and that's a big thing for a tournament is it makes a big difference when guys like the golf course and it's in good shape. I heard a lot of good things with that.

I feel like Steve has done a great job here with the tournament and Sanderson has been a great sponsor. It was a fun one to be able to add. Like I said, I wouldn't be coming here just to work on things or shake off rust. I came here feeling like I was in a good spot and can go play some good golf.

Q. As a veteran player, can you think of the last time you've had a tournament debut on TOUR?

RICKIE FOWLER: I feel like there has been a couple. I'm not the best on the spot. I can't think of it right now.

Q. Going back to some equipment, has your equipment changed in trusting right now as a result of the time off? How do you go about testing and changing equipment?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, time off allows for some testing or potential change. In a season you might have a week or maybe a two-week break, and it's sometimes tough to make changes in there, or I'm also not someone that I don't like to make a whole lot of changes unless I have the time to put reps in and have a bit more of an idea of how things are going to work.

Yeah, I mean, the two big changes from this week, the putter and the mini-driver. The putter I've been doing some testing with for I guess almost two months now. Testing other stuff, as well.

Yeah, like I said, I wouldn't be putting something into play if I didn't think there was a real potential benefit, and sometimes you don't know if it's going to be good or bad or maybe not as good. I shouldn't say bad, until you put it in in tournament play or tournament conditions. There's things that can work well at home, but until you're under the gun, you really don't know.

Q. That's a new LAB putter?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I believe they've had it out for a while, but I think it's the DF3, which is a bigger one, not their biggest.

Q. Just seeing a little bit on social media, today would have been Grayson Murray's 31st birthday. What has it been like to see the golf world come together over this?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's been a tough one for sure. With Grayson as well as one of our reps for a long time out here, Rusty, and those were two guys that I didn't necessarily spend a bunch of time with them. Enough time to know them fairly well. Two guys that were a staple out here on TOUR.

But yeah, with Grayson, ironically enough, last year we played a few tournament rounds together, handful of practice rounds together. We had some money games together out there. It really seemed like he was enjoying life and golf and having fun. That was just a major shock, really, to everyone.

Yeah, it sucks because I feel like there's -- you just wish

that you knew a bit more of what was really going on, although it did seem like things were going well and things were in a good place. Not knowing in full detail of where he was at and things that he was struggling with -- we knew a little bit, but just knowing at that time.

I saw him at Colonial, and it's just crazy to think that things can change that quickly.

I've thought about him obviously a lot. Really anytime on the golf course or away. It's probably been pretty rare to go more than a day or two without something reminding me of him or thinking about it.

I know his parents from what I've seen have taken a lot of -- are moving forward with it and creating a lot of positivity and hopefully some good growth with the foundation and everything moving forward on that side of things. So hopefully it can turn out to be for the better and for good.

But yeah, it sucks, and it's been something that's hit our family out here pretty hard.

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