

# WGC Dell Technologies Match Play

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

Austin, Texas, USA

Austin Country Club

## Rickie Fowler

### Quick Quotes

**Q. You got down early but clawed your way back, great win over Jon Rahm. How would you assess the match overall?**

RICKIE FOWLER: You know, very uncharacteristic from Jon. I know he didn't play very well today and struggled on the greens a bit. Other than the first hole, I just did a really good job of keeping it stress-free and making some birdies, lots of pars. It wasn't exactly easy out there today, but yeah, just got fortunate to kind of turn it around, get in control of the match there on the back nine, and just kind of kept the throttle down.

We both missed some, but Jon had some chances as well as myself. He hit a great shot into 16. I thought he was going to make 3 there. So nice to kind of keep the momentum in my favor there going into the last two.

Yeah, it's match play; anything can happen. Just did a good job of managing and getting around today. Yeah, nice to come out with a round 1 win, and we'll go have some fun the next few days.

**Q. You talked about wanting to drive the ball better. How would you assess your driving today?**

RICKIE FOWLER: It still wasn't great. I think it goes back to the management part and kind of played with what I had. I would say driving definitely helps, but you don't have to drive it perfectly around this place. Much more a second-shot golf course and being in good position on or around the greens.

I think that's where I did a good job, where I mentioned kind of stress-free. I don't think I made any bogeys other than the first -- kind of lose track when you're playing match play because you're playing one hole at a time, playing one person, and not too worried about score.

**Q. Did it take you any time to get back into the groove in this tournament? It's been a few years, but it didn't**



**look like you really missed a step.**

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I thought I hit a better shot into 1, end up in the bunker and make bogey, and hit a poor tee shot on 2, but I think after I just made -- I putted from off the green, made a nice 4 there and kind of settled in a little bit. It wasn't exactly as confident going off the first, especially making bogey there, when I thought I hit a good shot into the green, ended up in the bunker.

Yeah, from there, kind of relied on iron play. I felt like I hit a lot of decent iron shots. And yeah, both Jon and I didn't exactly putt great. He happened to miss a few more than me, and it was tough out there with it being a little windy, and that always makes it interesting on the greens.

**Q. Do you feel like you have to play a little bit better the next couple days to make it out of your group?**

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I do. Like I mentioned earlier, Jon didn't play well. He'd be the first to tell you that. So I was expecting it to be him playing a bit better or a lot better than he did today. Like I said, fortunate to come out with a win on that one.

Between Billy and Keith, both great ball strikers, both great players. I just saw they're going to the 18th as we came in. So those are both going to be tough matches.

I need to clean some things up, but if I can keep it stress-free and maybe make a few more putts, it would be nice.

**Q. You may have covered this already, but I walked the first nine with you guys. Did the irons feel as good to you as they looked? Obviously the strength of your game, but did it feel like you were really, really dialed in with at least that part?**

RICKIE FOWLER: I wouldn't say dialed, but it was definitely something I could lean on. That's probably the part that I felt the best with, and something that has been pretty strong.

After about the second hole, kind of settled in a little bit and



hit some nice shots, but yeah, that was something -- I just tried to get it in play off the tee and kind of go from there. It was tough to make putts out there with it being a little breezy, so going to need to make some more putts tomorrow and the next day to make sure that we move on.

**Q. I've read some data studies that basically say the most important part of the game that ties into winning is the approach, but it sounds like you think that might be even more true on this course than it would be ordinarily?**

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I would say you can't -- you don't have to drive it perfect, but you have to drive it decent to be able to have those approach shots available. But yeah, this is definitely a second-shot golf course with missing the greens, being in the proper spot. It can be tough to get the ball close to some pins. So having control, which ultimately you want to be playing out of the fairway, but very much a second-shot golf course to give yourself chances to make birdies.

**Q. Jon came with kind of a tropical theme on his shirt, but you totally outdid him. Was that a key momentum shift early in the match?**

RICKIE FOWLER: No, he actually came into the gym, I was finishing my warmup and he was coming in to start his, and we were both in all black. We started matching, and he was joking about if we were matching out there today. I was like, well, I've got kind of a tropical, floral shirt, and he's like, I do, too. I was like, mine is black. He's like, all right, mine is white. So the battle began early. Yeah, it was a bummer to see him struggle the way he did. I know he's going to give the guys a hard time the next couple days because that was very uncharacteristic. Like I was saying, fortunate to come out with the win there.

Yeah, Jon and I will have plenty of matches in the future. We always enjoy playing together.

**Q. Maybe Friday?**

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, so it's going to be hard the next couple days, so I've got to take care of business on my end and see how things pan out.

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