

RBC Canadian Open

Friday, May 31, 2024

Ancaster, Ontario, Canada

Hamilton Golf and Country Club

Mackenzie Hughes

Quick Quotes

Q. Really solid round. How does it feel to be near the top of the leaderboard essentially in your hometown?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, it feels very nice. I've had a few minutes to process the round and kind of the whole day, and while the finish was disappointing, I look at the whole body of work. Starting today I thought if I shot -- if you told me I was going to shoot 64, I would have taken it. So it gets me into contention for the weekend and that's all I can ask for.

Q. Did you have a sense that you were at the top of the leaderboard or that you were having a good round as it was coming together, or were you just focused hole by hole?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No, I had an idea. I was looking at the board, so I kind of knew where I stood. I knew when I made the eagle putt on 4 that I was in the lead or near the lead. Yeah, I knew I was right there. I did a great job for most of the day. The finish wasn't what I planned for, but happy with the result.

Q. Guessing that the juices were flowing after that second eagle. Can you talk about what it feels like inside to have a round like that going here and did it feel not much like a Friday morning?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, honestly, when I made the eagle on 4, and, yeah, I just kind of felt like I was rolling downhill quick, so that was a nice feeling. Just with the way the crowd was getting going, again, I'm not comparing this to Tiger at all, but you get the sense that there's just a good energy out there. I don't know, those putts just seemed to be going in the middle of the hole and it got loud and it got really exciting there. I know the weekend will be even more amped up than that and I'm excited for it.

Q. You mentioned earlier in the week about sometimes trying too hard can have detrimental results, and you're trying to maybe try a bit less. Is that going to be a big part of the weekend and is it even possible at this tournament in this city?



MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, definitely an emphasis going forward. I think I've done a pretty good job of that so far. But, yeah, I need to be even more aware of that come the weekend, because as you get more, you get closer to the end and it becomes more final and you see the finish line, it gets harder and harder to control those thoughts and to stay in the present. Yeah, a big focus on just going out there and having some fun and enjoying the whole moment.

Q. Curious, we know about you as a Leafs fan, but playing in your hometown do you follow the Tiger-Cats at all?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I can't say that I do, honestly. Honestly, it's hard enough with three kids to follow the Leafs when I'm on the road. I kind of keep tabs on it as they get a little further along on their season, and I feel like people from back home keep me updated on what's going on in the CFL, but I don't really watch it.

Q. Did you go to any Tiger-Cats games as a kid?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I went to some games. Maybe a handful of them when I was a kid. Been there cheering 'em on and I know all the chants.

Q. Things were going down hill, and then the shot on 7 just seemed to come out of nowhere. I mean, any explanation for that, or is it just golf being golf?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Kind of golf being golf. It was funny, I had 153 yards and I, in hindsight, I should have just gone ahead and hit a hard wedge, but I was trying to kind of finesse a 9-iron, but in the back of my mind I was also guarding against going long there. It's one of those things where I wasn't fully committed to what I wanted to do and hit a bad shot. Yeah, I mean, two mental mistakes on 7 and 8, really. Like I said, I'm trying to kind of put the whole day together in one package piece and be like, you know, I shot 64, I made some incredible saves and the ones at the end obviously were disappointing, but I'll kind of learn from those and be better on the weekend.

Q. A funny moment on 4 when you forgot that Shane



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actually had the tee after he made the birdie, and it looked like he was trying to break you or make you laugh. Was he just giving you the gears there?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, he basically just, he was telling me, like, you got to give me that tee at least once today. So, yeah, we had a good laugh out of that. It actually ended up working out in my favor because I saw his tee ball kind of drift left on the wind and kind of adjusted my line a little bit, and I hit a great drive and made 3. So he, you know, he kind of saved me there. Yeah, I actually did that on 18 yesterday to Adam, he told me as well. It's funny because sometimes I was just getting in that mode where I just go to the tee, peg it, go. Yeah, I got a little ahead of myself there.

Q. Do you get a little more nostalgic at this particular Canadian Open being pretty close to where you grew up or is it all pretty similar around Toronto?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No, no, this one's different. Yesterday on the first tee when they announced me and they say Dundas, Ontario, like just knowing how close that is to here it kind of hit me that it was really, really special. Doing it here does feel different. Being in Toronto is obviously still home, but I spent time here as a kid. Probably my fondest memories of the Canadian Open were here when I was younger, as a volunteer or watching, so there's just a ton of cool memories and nostalgia from coming to this place. I would say it does feel quite a bit different.

Q. The jersey you wore at The Rink the last couple days, what's the significance of that?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: So I had a really good friend of mine pass away about a month ago, and his name was Bill Bath, and that's one of his old hockey jerseys. So that was really cool. I've been thinking about him a lot the last month or so. His wife and son are have been out here watching me. It's a bit emotional even when I put that on to think about him. I know the last time I was here he actually caddied for me. So, a lot of great memories with him and his family. That was kind of the reason behind the jersey.

Q. He was a family friend from like growing up?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I met him when I was 11 years old. He's been a big part of my journey and just someone that I always trusted to talk to so, yeah.

Q. You met him where?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I met him in Cuba on a vacation, actually. We just stayed in touch and got closer and closer

and, yeah.

Q. When you talk about the challenges of filtering out the distractions and staying focused, when you sort of emerged as a bit of a spokesman for the state of the game this year, I mean, has that been difficult to sort of keep your mind on the game or has it at all been a distraction or a challenge?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I don't think so. I'm not, I guess, getting asked those questions all the time. Like, if I, you know, was Rory stature or something like that, and I sat in every press conference every week and I answered those same questions it might be a little more daunting. I don't get the questions a ton, and when I do I just speak my mind and how I feel. So I don't think it's too hard because, honestly, I don't think about what I'm going to say or how I'm going to say it, I just say what I think. Some like it, some don't. That's okay. I think the longer I've been out here the more I have just learned to kind of speak up and say what I feel. Yeah, I would say for the most part it's appreciated and, but I don't think it takes away from what I'm trying to do on the golf course.

Q. How many rounds do you think you played here in your life?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: If I had to guess I'm going to say 50.

Q. How many lower than today?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Well considering when I played them when I was a teenager, I'm going to say probably zero. I'm going to venture a guess -- I mean, when I was a kid and I played out here as a teenager, if I shot under par I was pretty happy. So, yeah, I don't think much lower than that one.

Q. Were you thinking of a real low one today?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: When I started the day --

Q. Course record or anything?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: When I started the day obviously I'm just trying to get myself in position for the weekend. Then I kind of got off to a start where I felt like I kind of had some good juices going early.

Then I made the turn, made a great 4 on 18 and I was like, all right, I think I can put a low one up there. I knew standing in 7 fairway if I birdied the last three holes it was 59 too, so I was definitely aware of it coming down the end and, but, yeah, happy with the round still.

