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King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia
Royal Greens Golf and Country Club

Phil Mickelson

Press Conference

STEVE TODD: Thank you for joining us. You've just been out there, tied third on your debut here last year at Royal Greens. Give us your thoughts on being back here this week.

PHIL MICKELSON: I think that it's really a fun golf course to play. I enjoyed it last year. Condition is a 10 out of 10. I don't think you can get it anymore approximately manicured and set up for an event.

So it's very impressive the way the golf course is conditioned, the way it plays. It's really a fun challenge and when the wind comes up, it's very playable. I just really enjoy the golf course and enjoy playing here.

Q. Compared to last year when you played over here, what are the changes that you have seen on the golf course, if there are any, and do you like those changes? That's the first question.

PHIL MICKELSON: So the 11th hole I thought was a really good par 3, and one simple little change I think makes it a great, great par 3, because the low area to the right of the green where balls could be in the center of the green roll off into the low area all the way down into the desert.

Now there's just enough grass that will catch it and be in the rough. It's a very hard shot in the rough but it's not as -- I think it's a more in-line penalty for the miss-hit shot and I think it's now a great, great par 3, as opposed to a really good par 3. I think that subtle change improved the hole quite a bit. I haven't seen many changes elsewhere other than the conditioning is impeccable.

Q. My second question is obviously you've heard about the USGA and the R&A, the rule changes, or planning to change the rules about the equipment. Your general view --

PHIL MICKELSON: I don't know what you're talking about.



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What are you referring to?

Q. They said they are going to put local rules to bring equipment under control and they say they are going to limit it to 46 inches, the length of any club, from 48, those kind of things.

PHIL MICKELSON: This is the first I've heard of it. Has it just come out the last day or two?

Q. Yes.

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, I don't know, I can't respond because I'm not familiar with the changes.

Q. The PGA TOUR and European Tour about been against changes to the equipment because they feel the product that's presented is a good product and they don't want to change that product. Do you feel the same way?

PHIL MICKELSON: So again, I don't know what the new proposed changes are, so I don't really want to comment on those.

I would say that the last changes they made, like being able to tap down spike marks has made the game enjoyable, especially the latter tee times in the afternoon where inside six, seven feet it can be very bumpy, especially on poa annua like we had last week at Torrey Pines or next week at Pebble Beach, it's made the game much more enjoyable, and the discrepancy between early rounds and late rounds not nearly as big. I like that change.

I'm not familiar with some of these recent equipment changes. This is the first I've heard of it. I want to read about it and know it is that they are proposing before I comment.

Q. Secondly, recently, just before the administration change, there were a lot of pardons, and Billy Walters was pardoned, and there was a mention you were some way involved in that some in way, shape or form. Is that true?

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PHIL MICKELSON: It's not. I wasn't.

Q. Obviously a major agenda here is to grow this area as a tourism destination, they are talking about making this a full-on reputable tourism destination by 2030. Pandemic aside, you've been here a few times. Have you been able to do some things here out and about that were especially memorable as a tourist?

PHIL MICKELSON: Last year I went down to the Beach Club, went into the Red Sea, played beach volleyball with a bunch of the locals and had a great time. I enjoyed it.

And the vision of what is becoming in KAEC and other parts of the country, it's hard for me or anybody else to really grasp what it is going to be. But I would venture it's going to be spectacular.

Q. For you to be here and not in Phoenix I think says a lot. Do you feel like you're part of a movement; you're part of something that's really special?

PHIL MICKELSON: I think that I've enjoyed my time here. I have been treated as well as in this event as any tournament I've ever played in. I enjoy the golf course. It's fun for me to see different parts of the world and I'm very flattered to be a part of this event.

Q. It's finally a Ryder Cup year again. I was just wondering what your attitude is this year. Are you viewing yourself as a contender to make the team, and if not, are you looking at being involved as a vice captain?

PHIL MICKELSON: So it would be an honor to be part of the team as a vice captain if that's what Steve Stricker, our captain, wants. I would like to obviously play but I have not played well enough to warrant consideration.

However, there's a lot of golf left, and if I play well, if I can win a couple tournaments, I think that I might warrant some consideration. But as we stand right now, I haven't done anything to warrant that. So I've got to play well.

And fortunately, the way the points system is, which is very heavy the year of Ryder Cup, it gives every player an opportunity. If they play well, they can earn their way on the team.

Q. Have you had any discussions with Steve yet about a backroom role? Have you mentioned it?

PHIL MICKELSON: So nothing I'd care to discuss publicly, but we are very good friends.

Q. Just to stay on The Ryder Cup, you were obviously part of the task force after Gleneagles and I think part of the chat then was succession planning. It probably came as a surprise to people in this side of the Atlantic that Davis Love is the Presidents Cup captain for the next match. What's your take on that? Is the succession plan still in place for Ryder Cup captains?

PHIL MICKELSON: I would not say enough good things about Davis Love as a person and a player but especially as a captain and a leader. He has helped players play their best in these events and he has helped vice captains be their best leaders when they captain these events. I just think the world of him and I think that all the players that have a chance to play for him have a unique opportunity and a life experience to spend time with him. I think he's just a terrific person, player and especially captain.

Q. Were you in the frame for that post?

PHIL MICKELSON: Am I in the frame for that post?

Q. Were you in the frame for the Presidents Cup post that Davis Love has taken on?

PHIL MICKELSON: I don't understand "post."

Q. People thought part of grooming you as a Ryder Cup Captain that that might have been a role that you might have been interested in.

PHIL MICKELSON: Oh, I don't know where to go with that. I mean, those conversations I don't feel like should be -- I don't feel they should be discussed here but amongst each other.

STEVE TODD: Thank you for joining us. All the best this week.

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