

# U.S. Open Championship 2021

Friday, June 18, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

## Phil Mickelson

### Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Phil Mickelson, 2-under 69. Phil, what was the biggest difference from yesterday?

PHIL MICKELSON: I played really well today. I hit a lot of really -- I struck the ball really well, and it made it a lot easier. I was able to play aggressively. I didn't probably take advantage of all of the opportunities that I had, but I played a good solid round of golf. I know that I didn't make a run today, but I'm playing well enough to make a run on the weekend.

**Q. What are your thoughts kind of heading into the weekend? We know anything can happen at a U.S. Open.**

PHIL MICKELSON: Yes. I know the course is going to get harder. It was set up beautifully. It's going to get tougher and tougher pins and trying to be patient and pick my spots. I'm looking forward to the weekend. Feel like I'm playing good enough to make a run at it. Hopefully, I'll put it together tomorrow and do that.

**Q. How much satisfaction do you take out of the closing round? You had to make big putts, seemed like you were fist bumping. You knew how important they were. What do you take from that?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I was trying to make a run and get it back to even. The last few holes, I tried to get a few close and kind of short-sided myself a couple times. 15, trying to cut a 7-iron over there to that pin. 16, trying to hook one in and went just long. I left myself some challenging up-and-downs, and I ended up making the putts, which felt good. The fact is I was hitting a lot of good shots, a lot of fairways, driving the ball well, and was able to drive the ball aggressively for the most part.

Like I said, I didn't make enough birdies today, but I'm hitting the ball well enough to get birdies on the weekend.

**Q. How is the course playing to what you would have thought? Is it playing tougher? Is it easier through two rounds? I know you said it's going to get harder.**

PHIL MICKELSON: I think it will step up on the weekend, but I think it's -- they've done a great job. I think Jason Gore is the greatest asset the USGA has. I think he's done a lot of really good things. I saw it last week or two at Olympic Club. I really like him, and I think he does a great job.

I'll say one other thing too. A couple years ago when the rules change came in and you could tap down spike marks and stuff on your line, it made a real difference out here because the greens can get a little bit bumpy, and with them being as fast as they are, you have to hit a lot of these putts easy, and to be able to fix some of the impressions and so forth made a world of difference, I think, in the experience as well as the score differential between the early morning guys and the afternoon.

I just think that was a really good change that made it a lot more fair for everybody, and so there's not as big a discrepancy between morning and afternoon rounds.

**Q. When you're prepping for an event like this and you're playing at home with some of these guys you're playing with today, how do you simulate the pressure and expectations of a U.S. Open?**

PHIL MICKELSON: You can't, and you also won't get the conditions in practice. So you have to kind of anticipate how it could be. I think being able to come to the course knowing like where the pins are and what shots you're going to hit into those pins and what clubs you're going to hit off the tees takes a lot of the decision-making out while you're playing, like you've already made those decisions, and it makes it easier to focus on the shot at hand and focus all your attention. So that's where I think the advantage or the opportunity lies in good preparation is allowing you to execute and focus only on execution and not all the other variables.

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