

U.S. Open Championship 2021

Sunday, June 20, 2021

San Diego, California, USA

Torrey Pines Golf Course

Phil Mickelson

Quick Quotes



Q. This is probably -- it's going to be your last U.S. Open here. I know you're disappointed in the week. I know you had high aspirations coming into it.

PHIL MICKELSON: Obviously, I'm disappointed I didn't play better. I'm very surprised that, in the 30 years that I've played the U.S. Open, this is the best I've seen. I thought they did a remarkable job, and I'm really proud and happy that it's here at Torrey. I think this afternoon is going to be awesome. The setup is the best I've ever seen, and it allows on some holes -- what they did really well is they made some of the hard holes harder pars, like 11 and 12, and they made some of the easy holes, like 2, easier so you can make birdies.

That type of setup allows the players who are playing well to make up ground or separate themselves from the field. They just did such a great job here. I'm very impressed.

Q. What did you find difficult maybe this week for you in your game?

PHIL MICKELSON: So I was kind of fighting it a little bit and struggled a little bit on Thursday. I really found something on Friday, okay, I'm just going to start playing like I did at Kiawah into the weekend, and Saturday I lost it. So it happens. I just lost the timing, the rhythm got quick, and started hitting it sideways, which you can't do out here.

Like I say, I thought they did a remarkable job to identify and get the best player, and you're seeing an exciting leaderboard. It's going to be an exciting day. I'm curious to see how everybody plays.

Q. Do you think guys will go (inaudible)?

PHIL MICKELSON: No, I don't. The greens are much firmer and faster, but they did a great job of giving you some birdie holes and some harder par holes, and again that makes it more separation.

Sometimes when a course makes the birdie holes harder, you can't really make a birdie, and then if you make the hard holes with an easy pin but you can't really get at it,

you don't really get the separation of the guys playing well, and that's not the case here. They did a remarkable job of all the way through, every single day, of having a good variety, and the setup is pristine.

With the firmer greens, yes, it's going to be more difficult, but there's still opportunities on certain holes. It's just really nice. It's going to be a good finish.

Q. Phil, I saw your interaction with your family along the course this week. I talked to your mom on Thursday. It meant so much to her and your dad to see you play in a U.S. Open at San Diego at least one more time. Did you get a sense of how special this week was for you and your family?

PHIL MICKELSON: I do because of the memories and times -- some of the best times in the game of golf have been when I played with my dad, and we would go out and play Balboa a bunch, we would go out and play here at Torrey Pines a bunch. I had to play a lot of high school matches that he would come out and be part of, and those moments we shared on the golf course are some of my favorite moments in my life, and seeing him out here and sharing this week has been a very special thing.

Q. You've obviously been pretty busy since the PGA, Colonial, and then trying to get prepared for the U.S. Open. Have you had much time to reflect on what you were able to accomplish there and kind of what it means for the history?

PHIL MICKELSON: Probably not fully, but enough. There's some opportunities coming up with the way I've been playing that I'm optimistic that I can compete and contend. There's nothing more fun for me than to be in it on the weekend. I've actually been playing well enough to have chances, and we have some good tournaments coming up the next couple of months afterwards, and I'll look back and reminisce when the season's over and I have some time in the off-season to not need to work on my game, and I'll still have that Wanamaker trophy I'll be looking at, and I'm still looking to add a friend to it along the line.



That win was very meaningful to me because I've been putting in a lot of work the last couple years and getting nothing out of it, and so to have a moment like that is something that makes it worthwhile.

Q. You've just crossed paths with Jon Rahm. Can you talk about the first time you remember encountering him, something your brother may have told you about him.

PHIL MICKELSON: He is a gentle giant. He's got the kindest heart, and yet he has a great fire and passion to the game. I really enjoy being around him and watching him play from when he was in college. The first time I saw him was at San Diego, San Diego Country Club here, USD, when Tim was coaching at Arizona State, and they ended up winning the event here. He birdied 16, 17, and made a clutch par putt on 18 for the team title.

And you knew that he was a guy that wanted it. Always wanted to know what he had to do to help the team, and he wanted to have control of that, and that type of attitude is what you're looking for in somebody to be one of the best players in the world like he is.

Q. Phil, I know you praised Torrey Pines a lot for its play this week. Looking forward at the U.S. Open, lots of talk about maybe taking it out of public courses, getting a rotation going. What's your since of what you would like to see from the U.S. Open going forward?

PHIL MICKELSON: I don't have a preference, but I think this course here has been a great site, and the length and the overall difficulty in general and the great weather allowed them to do whatever they wanted to to showcase this tournament, and they've done a great job.

Q. Is the board somewhat an indication of the setup here? You've got them all kinds of -- this has not been a one-dimensional board.

PHIL MICKELSON: I think that's a good point. You have guys who are long hitters, guys who are short hitters, a lot of different strategies, and it comes down to execution. It hasn't limited everybody, like everybody's had a chance if they play well. I just think they did a great job. I'm really impressed.

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