

The 150th Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 14 July 2022

Phil Mickelson



Q. Phil, can I ask why you weren't involved in the past champions events here at the start of the week?

PHIL MICKELSON: The R&A contacted me a couple weeks before and said, look, we don't think it's a great idea you go, but if you want to, you can. I just didn't want to make a big deal about it, so I said fine. We both kind of agreed that it would be best if I didn't.

Q. Does that take away from the week at all, Phil? Are you having a good time anyway?

PHIL MICKELSON: No. I love being here. Everybody here loves golf, and we find this place to be very spiritual. As great as this game has been to me, to be able to come here to the home and compete again -- I think this is my sixth one here.

I've had some great moments here. I don't know if you guys remember the Dunhill Cup, but I ended up being a part of the winning Dunhill Cup in '96 with Steve Stricker and Mark O'Meara. And we had all these rounds and different weather conditions. It was really special to play here in all the different conditions.

I just see the greatness in the course when you get different winds because you see bunkers you don't even know are there. Just the greatness of it kind of shines. I love playing and competing here. It's just a special place.

Q. Where are you in terms of where you're trying to find your form? Obviously (indiscernible). Where would you say you're at? Are you getting close?

PHIL MICKELSON: So I had four months off. Obviously when I came back, I wasn't really sharp. I thought I was playing a little bit better than I was. My game doesn't feel far off at all. It just doesn't.

I let a few strokes slide today, but for the most part, I actually feel pretty good with, like, the parts, but I've just got to bring them together to make the whole. I actually think I have some good rounds in me. I think I'm going to play really well the next few days.

Q. How did it go out there today?

PHIL MICKELSON: I shot even. I played okay. I let a few shots slide here and there. I three-putted 11 and 18. Granted it's from difficult spots, but those are the shots you can't throw away, right, if you're going to play well here. I just gave away a few too many shots. But I hit a lot of good ones.

Q. Going back to the dinner, you don't find it very sad that you're in this position?

PHIL MICKELSON: No. No, not at all. I think that I couldn't be more excited and ecstatic with where I'm at. I love the events. I get to have golf in my life and competitive golf in my life on a scale that is fun, exciting, different, and lets me play and compete but still do the things outside that I want to do.

I've got a nice trip lined up after this and things that I haven't been able to do in the past. So, no, I couldn't be happier.

Q. Even missing out on an occasion like the past champions dinner with The 150th --

PHIL MICKELSON: Let it go, dude. Let it go. That's three times you've asked the same question. I don't know what to tell you. I couldn't be happier.

Q. (Question about the reception he got.) Seems like it was pretty positive?

PHIL MICKELSON: No, it's been great. I came here in London and people couldn't have been better. We had a great time. Same thing in Oregon. Gosh, the energy and the excitement. No, it's been great.

Q. I was just wondering, Tom Lehman came here the week of the Brookline 1999 Ryder Cup and got silence, (indiscernible) played in the Dunhill Cup two weeks later.

PHIL MICKELSON: I didn't know that. That was 30 years ago, I guess. But, whatever, it's been good.

Q. Is the course playing easier? How is it today compared to practise rounds? Is it gettable? How would you describe these conditions?

PHIL MICKELSON: I think it's set up really well to reward



good shots and make birdies. There's a number of birdie holes out there, and there's a lot of hard pars. There's some tough pins that you can miss it in the wrong spot and really have issues.

But if you hit good shots, you're rewarded. I just thought it was a pretty awesome setup and condition and the whole thing.

There's challenges with the winds moving around and so forth, but there's always ways to play the holes, always ways to make your par. It's just one of the most fun golf courses in the world to play.

Q. Your tee shot at 16, Phil, was in a place that I've never seen anybody on that hole before. Where were you aiming off the tee? Was that what you were trying to do?

PHIL MICKELSON: So with the pin right, anything left is fine. Also on top of that mound is not very thick, so that's where I'm going to be. I'm going to be hitting driver on 16 every day, so I'm going to hit it up on that left rough.

I don't feel confident trying to hug the out of bounds, and so I'm just going to hit it in the left rough and have a little angle up that hill. There will be two pins I can't really get to. I'll just probably make par.

Q. (No microphone).

PHIL MICKELSON: The pin was right and I had a good angle up. It was fine. I missed it left, but I didn't miss it 70 yards left. I missed it probably 25 yards left. On this golf course, you can miss it left, you just can't miss it right.

On 14 I hit a really good tee shot, and it just overturned back into the wind and ended up in the right rough, like right by the out of bounds. It kind of threw me for a loop that the ball would turn back into that, for me a slice wind, and I didn't really trust releasing it hard with out of bounds right. So I just wanted to miss it left.

Q. (Indiscernible) was a little unhappy that you didn't sign his sign his autograph.

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, I gave him one today. It was 11 years late. We had a good laugh.

Q. With everything going on in the last five, six weeks with this huge row kicked off in the sport, do you have any regrets for your part in all this?

PHIL MICKELSON: I made the right decision for me. And I'm excited about, like I say, having the opportunity to play competitive golf and have it in my life in a more moderate scale to where I can do some things outside of that too. I freed up a

lot of other -- freed up a lot of time as well.

I couldn't be happier. I think it's been really good. I can't wait to get to New Jersey and play another event there.

The player experience, the experience of those events from a player standpoint is a 10. You can't get it any better.

Look, it's not my job to explain or help you understand or whatever. It's just, I couldn't be happier.

Q. I'm not ignoring what you're saying about that. How are you feeling emotionally? Because however happy you are, it's clearly been a helluva an upheaval for everybody the last few months. Do you feel fragile at all about it in any way, or do you feel bullish?

PHIL MICKELSON: It's all going to play out in time. I think it's all going to play out and end up where it should be in time.

Q. What do you think about what Tiger said about it on Tuesday?

PHIL MICKELSON: I certainly respect his opinion. I have a lot of respect for him. I respect his opinion. I think everybody's going to have strong emotions and opinions about it, and I certainly respect his.

Q. Do you think we could see a winner from LIV this week? You said it was competitive.

PHIL MICKELSON: I didn't hear the first part.

Q. Do you think we could see a LIV player winning this week? You said the series is competitive.

PHIL MICKELSON: There's a lot of good players here. I think there's a good chance. Thanks, guys.

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