

The 151st Open

Mixed Zone

Saturday, 22 July 2023

Rickie Fowler



Q. Did you enjoy today?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, parts of it. First six were definitely tough. You know, playing -- it wasn't really raining that bad, but just the wet conditions and that annoying rain, different wind direction.

So the start is a definitely a bit harder than it has been. To get out of the gate and be a couple under through the first six I was definitely pleased with that.

Q. You managed to put some number up there.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, obviously made a few good putts to save pars. Had a few birdie opportunities kind of slide by. A little give, a little take. Solid day of golf.

Yeah, it would have been nice to have a couple more, but solid round, and we'll just kind of have to wait and see where things shake out this afternoon.

Q. '11 at St. George's was a similar fate at the start, was it not?

RICKIE FOWLER: This was well, well easier than that. St. George's in '11, I think up until like 14 or 15, raining, and was blowing hard enough where we couldn't even use an umbrella. I'm thankful it wasn't like that today. This would have been a very nice day compared to that this morning.

Q. Do you feel that your difficulties over the last few years are firmly behind you now and that you're back to where you expect to be?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yes and no. You never know with this game. You definitely appreciate the times when you're playing well and in somewhat control. You just never know how long they're going to last. I'm definitely enjoying where things are and where they're heading. They're going to continue to get better.

But yeah, that's just part of the game and part of life. There's going to be ups and downs, and you hope the low times don't last very long. Unfortunately we went through a few years, but we're through that now.

Q. Surely you've been asked this before, but how low did you get kind of psychologically and emotionally during that time?

RICKIE FOWLER: It was tough. It was a grind. Luckily everything else in my life was amazing, from family life, friends, having a little one, getting married before that. Everything else was great, so it was kind of golf was the missing link to kind of bring everything together.

I always had other things to lean on. It was just unfortunate that the golf wasn't really heading the right direction for a while. It was tough.

But at the same time, kind of enjoyed the grind and the work of it to try and get back to a better place.

Q. Do you still feel the same love over here that you've traditionally gotten from British crowds?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, other than maybe a "coward" comment here or there, 99.9 percent are amazing. But you deal with that anywhere you go. Same thing in the States.

But yeah, the fans over here, it's always fun to come play links golf in front of them. I feel like they have such a great appreciation of golf, proper golf shots and playing golf in conditions and knowing even just a ball getting on the green is a great shot from wherever it may be.

I love links golf and love playing in front of the fans here.

Q. Probably the first time you've ever been heckled for not making a financial investment?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, probably. That may be one of the first that maybe became public. There might be some other ones out there, but yeah, it is what it is. I'll take it.

Q. You're not changing your mind on that, are you, on the Leeds thing?

RICKIE FOWLER: No, no, that's already all done. Hopefully it all works out with JT and Jordan being involved. My financial team just didn't necessarily advise for it, so we decided to not



go forward with it.

But I hope they play well and kind of get things turned around because I know JT and Jordan would be very happy with that.

Q. (Indiscernible.)

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I would obviously love to be a part of that team, and I see Bob -- I don't know exactly where he stands, but I would expect for him to be there, as well.

I've always liked his game. I played with him a couple years ago at the Scottish. He's a great kid --

Q. He couldn't tee the ball up he was so nervous.

RICKIE FOWLER: He was playing with me and Rory. I'd love to see him there, for the both of us. Like I said, he's a great kid, solid golfer. We both struggled a little bit here the first couple days and he didn't quite have it today. But I think you saw a lot from him last week.

Q. Can you talk about your ups and downs; how much does that make you empathize with what Justin Thomas is going through right now?

RICKIE FOWLER: Well, he's nowhere close to how long I went through. But yeah, everyone goes through it at some point. I don't expect to see him going through it for very long at all.

I have a lot of belief in him and his game.

I know he's planning to play the next two weeks, and I would expect to see him play quite well these next two weeks. He's someone that's obviously very tough on himself, works very hard.

He's got plenty of people around him that are always there to help out, guys to lean on, myself, Jordan, and plenty of others.

Like I said, at the same time, I'm not too worried about him.

Q. When you say "lean on," you've obviously been on the other end of this where people are trying to figure out what to say to you to back you up. What do you say to Justin or anybody else who's having troubles to back them up and support them? Obviously it's a fine line.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, you kind of -- it depends, since JT and I are pretty close, as well as obviously Jordan. I feel like we know a little bit more when to say something, when to not, and whether it's something mechanically or something simple or just on the mental side, and at the same time, just if things do look good, just give him that mental reassurance and trying to

help build some kind of confidence and self-belief in there.

I know it's tough going through times where you're not really scoring and not getting anything out of it. Like I said, at the same time, I have a lot of belief in him, and I don't expect this to be lasting very long at all.

Q. We're getting quite close obviously to the Ryder Cup now. What does playing with Justin in the team, what does he bring to a U.S. Ryder Cup team?

RICKIE FOWLER: A lot. He's someone that he -- I wouldn't say turns into a different person, but he kind of does in a team event. He loves that atmosphere.

When we've played together as partners, I kind of let him be in control as far as giving putts and stuff like that. I'm kind of the silent guy off to the side. He's a bit more of the bulldog and wants to go right into the middle of the fight. He loves the setting, the kind of atmosphere and everything.

Would love to see him turn some things around to have a chance to be there.

Q. You are confident that he has enough time now with 70 days to go to the Ryder Cup that he will be?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, obviously the next two weeks needs to play some golf, but I definitely -- I know he hasn't been to Minnesota before, but I feel like it's a golf course that he will play well at, and I know he really likes Greensboro.

Hopefully he can get a couple days of good work in, and yeah, I would expect to see him jump right back on the horse.

Q. Was 17 your best par today?

RICKIE FOWLER: 1 or 17. I was tough with it off the left and raining, and I made about a 10-footer or so for par. 17 was probably a similar length, maybe a little further.

Q. 18 feet.

RICKIE FOWLER: 18 feet? Yeah, that's pretty good. It felt shorter. I guess that's a good thing when an 18-footer doesn't feel too long.

Q. Hole look bigger, too?

RICKIE FOWLER: No, it still looked the same size.

No, hit a lot of good putts today, so definitely pleased. It would have been nice, like I said, to get a couple more of the birdie opportunities out there, but 4-under with the kind of conditions we had to start is a nice round.



Q. The other thing is you're on the leaderboard at least for now. There's a lot of golf to go, but it's not that far from where you are to in the top 5 because there's a big gap obviously with Brian.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I mean, obviously can't control anything, what weather does throughout the day. I think the wind is not really supposed to do anything different, kind of consistent throughout the day. Not sure if they're going to get much rain at all.

Yeah, we'll just have to wait and see. I would expect some guys to put up some decent scores, and then as far as where the lead is at, that's up to Brian. But he's playing some solid golf.

No matter kind of what happens, we'll still have a good round tomorrow and have a good chance to salvage a good finish out of this thing.

Q. Would you consider investing in another team maybe if the opportunity arose?

RICKIE FOWLER: It doesn't change my interest at all. Yeah, there may be some other opportunities out there, and I would say football, as we call soccer, isn't something that -- obviously it isn't as big in the States, but a lot of us that don't follow it as deeply as everyone over here, we appreciate sport at the highest level.

When opportunities like that come up, I would love to be a part of something. We'll see what the future holds.

Q. Do you have a team you support?

RICKIE FOWLER: I don't, but if there's some sort of financial involvement, I'm sure they'll have plenty of support from me. I can be bought. (Laughter.)

FastScripts by ASAP Sports