

PGA Championship

Thursday, May 15, 2025

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Quail Hollow Club

Ryan Fox

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Ryan Fox is with us now at the 107th PGA Championship.

Ryan, a nice 67 for you today in the opening round. How would you sum up your performance?

RYAN FOX: I played really solid today. It hasn't been the ideal prep coming in for me, obviously winning last week, being last man in. I literally played 18 holes yesterday and that was the only thing I did preparation-wise, basically, hit a few balls on Tuesday and played one hole before the storm came in.

Obviously knew I was playing well and just tried to get out of my own way and just let it happen. Today I was really happy with how I did that. Kept the momentum going from last week pretty nicely.

Q. Can you give us an idea, if you do drive it in the rough, how playable is it?

RYAN FOX: Well, I think it's very dependent on which hole you drive it in the rough on. Obviously if you're on 16, 18 or 9 and you're trying to get a 5-iron out of the rough, it's really hard to get it out. I hit a couple in the rough today and kind of got away with it. One I made birdie on 10 from the left rough for my third, and hit one on the green from the right rough on two.

So you've got chances. But yeah, if you drive it in the rough on the wrong hole, this place gets pretty brutal, pretty quickly.

Q. How did your victory the past weekend and the manner of it, the way in which you won that tournament, how did that propel you into this week in terms of positivity?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I think it wasn't necessarily the finish or anything. It was just the fact, on Sunday, that I was in contention. I hit a lot of really good shots.

I probably took more out of that than the actual chip-in.

Obviously that was incredible. But there's a fair bit of luck involved in that. But you know, the shot I hit into 17 to make birdie to give myself a chance, that almost means more; I can take more out of that going into this week than maybe the chip-in.

Yeah, I just kind of tried to take the same theory into this week; just pick my targets, hit my shots and trust that I'm playing well. It's amazing what finding a bit of confidence can do. Like all of a sudden the bad shots that were irking me a couple weeks ago didn't seem to matter quite so much today.

I think that's a good way to play in a major because you're going to hit a few bad shots. You're going to get a few bad breaks. They are hard golf courses, and being able to have some acceptance is pretty important.

Q. What's the best piece of advice your famous rugby legend of a father has ever given you?

RYAN FOX: I'm going to misquote him here somehow. But the idea of it was, if you -- like hard work beats talent. If you work hard to be the best you can be, you can live with whatever happens.

But if you don't do the work, there will always be that little thing in your head, the what if; what if I had done this differently or done this better. That's what Dad drilled into me as a kid. I'm a little different than him in terms of how I approach things. He's very analytical. I'm not really that way.

But you know, I certainly learnt a lot off him growing up, and you know, he was -- I think he's incredibly proud. He was incredibly proud last week with the win.

Yeah, very lucky to have that kind of experience growing up. He was on my bag a lot, too. Even though it's a different sport, I gained a lot early on from that.

Q. Had you played the PGA TOUR here before, and if not, what did you think of the property when you saw it?



RYAN FOX: I played the PGA here in '17. So I had good memories from '17. I played reasonably well that week for the most part. You know, I knew coming in that it's a beast of a golf course, and you know, obviously it's been redone a little bit since then and was -- the changes look really good, and obviously they have just found a few extra yards on a few holes just to make it that little bit harder.

Yeah, I love the golf course. Maybe not that much strategy off the tee. You've just got to hit it hard and hit it pretty straight.

But there's definitely a little bit of controlling your golf ball into the greens, and you know, picking the right spots where you want to hit it and where you're trying to miss it.

You know, that's what you want from a major championship.

Q. Did you have a mud ball on 9, and how many did you have during the day?

RYAN FOX: To be honest, that was the only bad one. There was definitely a few that had a little bit on it. But yeah, to be honest, the golf course, I played at 7:00 yesterday morning, and I think we may have struggled to play yesterday morning if it was a tournament round because it was that wet.

So the golf course has dried out amazingly well. There wasn't any standing water. And you know, it is what it is. It's going to be a few guys complaining about them, obviously, over the first couple of days, but I thought the golf course played really, really well considering how much rain we've had Monday, Tuesday this week.

Q. Were you surprised it wasn't preferred lies, or do you think they don't really want to do it?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I was expecting it not to be. I think probably all of us would have liked it to be. But you know, it is a major championship. You know, you do expect it, and yeah, hopefully there's not too many and obviously looks like we're going to have good weather today and tomorrow, and that should dry the course out for the weekend really nicely.

Q. Not to go too far back, but how much did not making that team in 2022 motivate you?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, a lot, obviously. In hindsight, I probably felt like I was a little hard done by, but also, I wasn't playing over here at the time. I could see Trevor's point of view of wanting to pick someone that was U.S.-based and had the experience over here.

So yeah, it's certainly motivating and I think I won the week after. So yeah, there was definitely a little bit of heat under the hood there. It's still a massive goal of mine. That's probably, you know, one of the few I haven't ticked off. Hopefully can carry on the form from last week for a little while and make the team next year.

Q. Could you talk about the chip-in today; did you use the same club that you used last week?

RYAN FOX: No. That was lob wedge today. It was sand wedge on Sunday. But they come in threes. I chipped in on Friday last week, chipped in on Sunday and chipped in today and probably won't have one for another few months, but that's all right.

Q. Can you talk about 16, the difficulty of playing that hole and what it requires in your mind?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I don't know if 16 will be the hardest hole on the golf course statistically for the week, but it feels like you just have to hit two really good shots. I hit a good drive today, had 7-iron in there, hit it to the middle of the green and ran away with a par. If I could do that for four days, I'd be very happy.

If you miss it off the tee, you pretty much can't get to the green. That's one of the holes that if you do drive it in the rough, you are dead, and even if you do drive it in the fairway, it's going to be a long iron, mid to long iron for most guys, and you've got obviously the water left, the bunker right is not great. It's one literally if you stand on the tee and said, oh, you can have a par and play 17, you'd run. You'd be happy not playing the hole.

Q. You've got such a unique golf swing. How do you go about deciding what's important to leave alone and what to decide to change and tweak?

RYAN FOX: I'm definitely not the person to ask that. The coaches are the ones that sort of decide that.

For me, it's all about if I can get the ball flight I want, then I don't really care how it looks.

Like the left ankle for me has been a product of having a dodgy left angle, and that's why it's flared out. I've had a bunch of cortisones in there, and years ago, I wouldn't -- I didn't know if I had that much left in me if my ankle didn't settle down.

That certainly helped that. For me, as long as I feel like I get the club in front and I can turn through it and hit a little fade for the most part, that's it. It's all about how the body

moves rather than where the club looks and how pretty it looks. I'm definitely not going to be one of those guys and have been lucky to have a couple of coaches over the last decade or so that have got that and have kind of just let me do my own thing and just make sure it didn't get too far outside the lines.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time, Ryan, we appreciate it.

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Q. Did you end up celebrating hard enough that you needed your wife to drive you over here?

RYAN FOX: Yeah, I drove a little bit on Monday. It was more the lack of sleep that got me. Obviously the adrenaline's going. Everything on Sunday. I got to sleep all right and then woke up at 4:30 in the morning. I'm like, there's no way I'm getting back to sleep. My brain was just spinning.

I drove for about an hour on Monday and then swapped over with my wife, let the kids scream in the back and did a bunch of radio interviews back home. It was an interesting drive up but thankfully didn't miss anything out here with the weather.

Q. What do you think you would be doing this week if you hadn't chipped that in and won the tournament?

RYAN FOX: I guarantee, I'd be going fishing at least once. Outside of that, you know, just being dad. This is five weeks in a row. Obviously last week was four. So I would put the sticks down for five or six days and just relaxed and got ready for Colonial next week.

But obviously it's been a nice change to come here instead.

Q. Heard a rumor you have a lot of course records back home. How many courses do you think you have that?

RYAN FOX: I don't know to be honest. I've definitely got Tara Iti, Te Arai Links and Royal Auckland, which are -- you know, Te Arai I'm attached to, and Royal Auckland has been my home club for the last 20 years. It's nice to have those ones, and obviously Tara Iti is probably the most recognized course overseas for us.

Yeah, I've always generally liked doing social golf. I haven't done it as much on tour. But it's always fun having a couple of them.

Q. What's the number to beat at Tara Iti?

RYAN FOX: 61. That was actually playing with Mike Weir as well when he came down a couple of years ago. That was a nice one to get.

