

Travelers Championship

Wednesday, June 23, 2021

TPC River Highlands
Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Rickie Fowler

Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome Rickie Fowler to the virtual pressroom here at the Travelers Championship. Making your fourth start here at the Travelers Championship and first in quite a while since 2013. Past two starts here tied for 13th.

Just a few opening thoughts on the decision to make a return here to the Travelers in 2021.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, definitely excited to be back. The people with Travelers and everyone involved with the tournament has always been great to me. You talk about more so early on in my career, giving me a chance to play here. It was always tough being the week after the U.S. Open for me, I feel like. I typically don't like to play the week after a major.

But with where we've been at, trying to focus on the FedExCup and working our way back up, starting to play a little bit better, so just felt like adding some events to the schedule.

Originally we were going to play the Scottish to play into the British, but I felt like focusing a little bit more here at home, so we'll play Travelers and Detroit and then also going to play 3M after the British. A little bit more U.S. focus for us.

DOUG MILNE: You mentioned stuff at home. We'll get to that in second, but you mentioned playing better. You've been coming off a couple of good finishes in your last two starts. If you could just touch on what you're feeling most confident about with your game right now, something that's really starting to come around you, or is it more of a bigger picture type of thing?

RICKIE FOWLER: Definitely a bigger picture. A lot of work was put in over the last kind of year, year and a half leading up to that, but the last few months has been a bit more of just going out and not worrying so much about the swing, not golf swing but just playing golf and hitting shots.

It's been fun to be back in a position where I can just go



TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

play golf. And like I said, we put the work in on the swing, and so time to stop worrying about that and go play golf.

Yeah, it's been a long time coming, but nice to finally start to see some results.

Q. You're on the doorstep of a major; is it nice to know you're in and not have to answer questions about sitting out another major? Got to be a good feeling for you.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, no, it's great, especially going over to the British where I've had a lot of success. I love playing links golf. Coming off of what I was talking about with Doug, it's the type of golf that you have a lot of options, and it's more just about picking out what shot you want to hit and playing golf and not worrying about how the swing looks or anything like that. It's just executing shots.

Nice to kind of have the next few weeks kind of through the kind of heavy part of the summer to know exactly what we have coming up. Obviously would have been nice to be playing at Augusta and be playing at Torrey last week, but the cards have just been falling into place properly.

I'm excited about the next few weeks ahead and knowing kind of our exact schedule for the next two months.

Q. I'm wondering, you've been such a vocal supporter of your Olympic experience. You talk so highly of it. Why do you think that there's still top men opting out of the experience whereas you see no top women opting out? They all are all in, doing everything they can to position themselves this week for a berth.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it's very interesting. I know on the men's side or just Olympics in general, it's not going to be the same experience hearing from J.T. and Rory and a couple guys that will be going over.

Even with things being a little tight in Rio as far as with Zika and the security worries, we were still able to enjoy the village and hang out, go eat with other athletes, other players, and really enjoy the Olympic experience and go to other events. It doesn't seem like they're really going to



have the opportunity to do anything of that sort.

And with it being really through the middle of the summer, not far after the British, around FedEx and Memphis and then before the Playoffs, I know guys are focusing on a lot of things in there.

The Olympics would be awesome, but I know schedule-wise it doesn't quite fit well if there's other kind of focuses throughout the summer.

I saw Louis with family obligations and wanted to make sure he's taking care of that, especially with his recent move. Other guys, Sergio talked about the Ryder Cup, making sure he's trying to secure a spot there.

A lot of stuff, but I think one of the big things is the experience of the Olympics and what I was able to do just won't be possible for the guys this year.

Q. Just your thoughts from your early memories of the championship at Travelers, what you liked about the course and how well you think you'll do this week on a course you haven't played on in a while.

RICKIE FOWLER: I'm obviously here and planning to be in position to have a chance over the weekend and on Sunday.

I think one of the cool things about here is really the back nine, and then the final stretch of holes coming in. Being so close together, a lot of stuff can happen with reachable par-5 and you've got the drivable par-4 on 15.

It's an exciting golf course, and like I mentioned, the final stretch coming in. I'm definitely excited to be coming back. I've had some good finishes here but it's been a while, so excited to go play 18 today in the pro-am and get a full look at the course.

But with the finishes I'm coming off of, I definitely expect myself to be up there and kind of continue to ride the wave that we kind of started.

Q. I wanted to ask you about the allure of the Travelers Championship, because the way that players talk about coming to Hartford certainly has a different feel to it, and the fact that they're changing or extending the partnership through 2030 so you know this is going to be an annual event that you can add to your schedule. What do you think about the Travelers and their hospitality going forward?

RICKIE FOWLER: They've always been awesome. You know, even over the years where I haven't been able to

make it, the crew still makes it a point to stop by, say hi, being that I'd played here a few years early on in my career.

It's a great crew up here, and Travelers has obviously been an incredible partner of the TOUR, and it just kind of speaks to all of that for them to be extending their partnership.

Yeah, the Travelers Championship has been a staple on TOUR. I'm glad to be back this year and excited about their continued partnership.

Q. I'm curious where and when did you find out that Ally was pregnant and what was your immediate reaction?

RICKIE FOWLER: I'm trying to see if we're sharing a whole lot or not. I can share a little bit. We found out the week of Honda, so we've known for quite a while.

I was excited. She was excited, obviously. It was more -- I was kind of waiting to be able to share with people, and then that's kind of when it starts to become real.

So we've been able to share it with friends and family a little earlier and then started to share with more people and now everyone knows.

It's at that point where it's pretty cool and pretty special.

For me, like I said, I was more excited to be able to share with people and see and hear their excitement. Yeah, I think a lot of it early on was just making sure things were going smoothly, making sure Allison was healthy, feeling good, making sure the baby was healthy. We're all good in that department.

Q. Since you left Columbus, Ohio, how much have you worked on your game, and did you watch the U.S. Open?

RICKIE FOWLER: I watched a little bit. It wasn't necessarily my primary focus last week. I was actually able to play a decent amount other than getting back late from the U.S. Open qualifier. I took a few days off there, which was nice to just kind of relax and recover.

But I played -- last week I played Tuesday through Saturday, just played in the mornings. Unfortunately Grove and Medalist and Turtle Creek are closed right now for one of their summer maintenances, so I was able to go over to a couple other places.

Played at Admiral's Village course and Waxahachie and



went over to Bear's one day. So played plenty of golf. Took Sunday and Monday off, and ready to go again.

Q. I just was curious, I had two questions, one of which was as you've been working so hard the last year and change to kind of get your swing back and your mojo and whatnot, have you -- did you talk to guys like Jordan or anybody else that's gone through similar things where they've kind of lost their momentum? Were any of your friends on TOUR helpful to you at all that maybe have gone through some of these things?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I mean, I talked to Jordan a decent amount. Him, J.T., myself, Duf, and some other guys, we stay in houses quite a bit together. I'd say J.T. and Jordan and Duf are kind of the main core. But yeah, we all talk. Whether we're in houses together or off weeks, being able to share experiences, whether it was -- Jordan was kind of going through it before me.

We're all here to help each other, and that's what's been fun through it. J.T. is always there for me. Duf the same way. Like I said, Jordan and I were kind of going through -- our times overlapped a little bit, so being able to share and experience that together.

But like I said, yeah, we all are here to help each other, and it's nice to have some guys that have your back.

Q. Were there any specific things that Jordan or Duf or any of the guys said that might have helped you along, just kind of kept your head up or kept you grinding?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I mean, there would be a handful of things. Being able to talk to guys where you can relate as far as like player thoughts or swing thoughts and how other guys think or go about things, and also just that reassurance from your peers and some of your best friends that kind of help you either keep some confidence or build some confidence.

I think those are the biggest things, so it's not always like a specific swing thought or a piece of advice but just kind of a little pick-me-up to kind of keep -- whether it was me moving forward or Jordan or whoever it may be. I think that's kind of the biggest thing.

Q. I remember speaking to Keegan Bradley a few years ago when he was going through some stuff with his game, and he had success so quickly and was on all the teams like you've been on, and then that wasn't there, and he talked about how when it wasn't there he felt like maybe he took it a little bit for granted and

didn't realize how much he would miss it. Is there any kind of feeling you have like that not having been at the U.S. Open and the Masters the last few months, where that's kind of been jarring to you and you're like, I've got to get back to that?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it's not fun sitting at home watching other guys play majors, that's for sure. It's added motivation.

I wouldn't say I ever like necessarily took them for granted. It's such a fine line out here. I think all of you understand that. Everyone out here on TOUR understands that, the difference of being on teams or being at majors and sitting at home watching is small.

Same thing with playing the weekend and missing cuts, making cuts. It's a putt or a shot here or there that can change kind of the outcome of the week.

Q. We think a lot about Father's Day this time of the year, and we all marveled at what Jon Rahm, a new dad, did last weekend. Have you given a lot of thought to what fatherhood will mean to you and how it may affect your future schedule or approach to golf in general?

RICKIE FOWLER: I've thought about it a little bit. I know it's -- everyone tells me it's life changing. There will be a little change in the dynamic of whether it's home and practice, on the road. I'm looking forward to it. I'm sure over the next few months I'll continue to think about it, but won't really know until the little one shows up and we know exactly what we're going to do from there.

But I'm looking forward to it. I know we're both excited. Yeah, it's a little bit of a change for sure. She'll be the main thing. Everything else will kind of take a backseat. But I'm looking forward to kind of trying to manage everything, keep things as efficient as possible and being able to spread my time between her and family and golf, as well.

THE MODERATOR: Rickie, we couldn't be happier for you. We appreciate your time, as always. We certainly wish you a great week this week.

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