

# Sanderson Farms Championship

Sunday, October 2, 2022

Jackson, Mississippi, USA

Country Club of Jackson

## Mackenzie Hughes

### Press Conference

DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome the winner of the 2022 Sanderson Farms Championship, MacKenzie Hughes. Congratulations on your second career PGA TOUR win. I listened to a lot of what you were saying out there in your early interviews and just the genuine heart and soul that you have for the game and obviously for winning, as well. Took a few extra holes today, but you got the job done. Congratulations. Just a few opening thoughts on the week.

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I felt pretty good coming into this week. I had a solid week in Napa, was close to kind of finishing that one off and having a high finish. Felt good coming in here, was putting in some good work. Then kind of got off to a so so start on Thursday and I didn't shoot myself out of it but 1-under par and had some work to do.

Then Friday, I really found some nice rhythm and started making some nice putts. I felt leak at that point I had put myself in the mix and I felt like I was going to stay there. I just had a belief after that round that my game was at a great spot.

Been working really hard on the mental side, too, to instill that belief in myself. I tell myself a lot of things throughout the day and try to really overdo the positive -- up the positive self-talk a lot, and I used that a lot today. I know there was times that I had some doubt, and I just kept reminding myself that I was really good.

It's hard to do sometimes because this game can beat you up, but I'm really proud of the work that I've done. But I get a lot of help, too, from a lot of people around me. My caddie, Jase, he did a phenomenal job today, and having my family here, like you said, was just the cherry on top.

Really, really fun week, and just a golf course that I really like. I'll be back for many more years.

**Q. You were a winner on the PGA TOUR before**



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**coming into the week, and Golf Channel out there asked you is there a big validation factor getting that second win. How special is the first one obviously and how special is getting a second one?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, the second one felt harder because I've had to wait a lot longer for it. The first one came in my fifth tournament as a PGA TOUR member. I felt like, oh, man, this is going to be easy, I'm going to be able to rack up a few of these, and it's been six years since I did that.

It's been unbelievable, and like you said, I didn't need the validation, but it's nice to be a two-time winner instead of a one-time winner and help to add to that tally.

**Q. Could you go through the 14th hole and how pivotal that was kind of in the cadence of your day?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I was a bit bummed coming off the 13th green. I had just missed a great opportunity. 14 is a tee shot that for many guys doesn't really look that great. It's really straight, and you just can't hit it left.

I'm trying to work on a shot that works left to right, so it doesn't really set up that well. Wind is off the left. I didn't make a great swing there, but I felt like it was going to be okay over there, and my second shot actually felt like I played it okay, and it's one yard from being okay. I'm plugged under the lip.

But that's the kind of response that I felt like I needed was I kind of just went to that ball, this is where it is, matter of fact. This is my next play, I'm going to get it out there, I'm going to knock it on and I'm going to make the putt. I never really wavered from that. I never really doubted myself that I was going to make a par there.

I think that's kind of the growth in my game a little bit is that I think maybe in years past I might have panicked a little bit, might have gotten a little bit anxious or worried. But I trusted myself and kind of believed deep down that I was going to be able to kind of claw one out there, and I did.

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**Q. The speed training that you've talked about the last couple days, could you go through the inspiration for starting that process and when you started implementing it kind of as part of your routine and how you think it's helped you?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, so I started working with a trainer out in California named Mike Carroll. He runs a company called Fit For Golf. I kind of came across his stuff a couple years ago during COVID, and that was when I decided I was going to start doing some of that.

In the last couple years I've kind of wavered in and out of it a little bit. In the last I'd say two and a half months, two months, I've really upped the ante on that and have really kind of bought in.

It's a huge focus of mine going forward. Just feeling like if you go down the top 10 in the World Rankings, all those guys are moving out there pretty good with a lot of speed, and that's just something I feel like I'm very capable of, and it just needs some hard work and dedication to get there.

That's the goal and the plan, and I'll keep working that plan until I feel like I'm at a speed that I'm pretty happy with.

**Q. You were doing some of that work on the range even yesterday, too?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, so before the round actually I try and do it every other day pretty much. The key with this training is I feel like I need to kind of do it throughout tournament weeks, as well. I can't just stop for tournament weeks and say I'll just do it next week because we're on the road so much, play so many events.

Yesterday before the round I hit 10 drivers as hard as I possibly could just to feel like what's my top speed, and then I can kind of work back to my cruising speed or kind of a stock driver swing.

But doing that, I want to basically elevate my ceiling, what my max can be, and then when I go out on the course, obviously it's not going to be quite that fast, but I just want to creep it up over time.

It's been working so far, and yeah, I'll keep working hard at it and see if I can get some more.

**Q. Is there anywhere particularly this week where you feel like it helped you or are you still in the stages of getting fully to implementation?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, today I actually hit a drive on the 5th hole and the wind was off the right a little bit so it

wasn't really helping and the bunker was 290 to carry and it was like 300 to the fairway. I actually didn't hit it my best, and carried the bunker no problem.

Just kind of one of those ones where you're like, that was awesome, because that's exactly why I do this.

Then a few par-5s this week where I hit some really great drives and gave myself some shorter clubs. Yeah, definitely a few moments where I saw it pay off.

**Q. What about the par save at 18 today was most difficult and why?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: That's a great question. I'm going to say mentally for me it was the one in regulation because I didn't want to lose the tournament that way, bogeying the last hole, when I felt like I was somewhat in control of the tournament. If I make a birdie on 17 and I'm coming down 18 with a chance for par to win. I felt like it would have been a tough way for me to handle losing or to deal with losing.

The one on 18 in the playoff, it was probably as hard if not harder, but they just had, I guess, different challenges to them. But I'm going to go with the one in regulation because I just didn't want to lose on my behalf. It would be one thing if I went in the playoff and made a birdie or whatever, but I didn't want to lose by bogeying 18 in regulation.

**Q. Can you just talk us through your winning putt and then also a lot of people were noticing before the putt actually goes in you're already celebrating and have a fist pump. Tell us about the putt and the reaction, as well.**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I'm unaware of that. I didn't realize at what point I started celebrating. But I knew about a foot out that it was going right in the middle. That was like the best feeling in the world.

But the putt itself was really straight, and I was kind of fortunate in that in regulation I had about a three-and-a-half-footer from a little left of that, and then on the first playoff hole I had a five-footer from just right of that. I felt like I was right in the middle of those two. In regulation I felt like my putt was going a little bit right, the first playoff hole was going a hair left, and then this one was really straight.

Again, felt fortunate that I had landed in that spot where I was comfortable with the read. Felt like I was confident in what it was going to do, and I played it right in the middle of the hole and it went dead straight. That was pretty sweet.



**Q. There was a lot of cute moments with your family afterwards with the win, as well. Talk about how special it is to have your family here for this victory.**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, my oldest son is old enough now to kind of understand it, and he knows when dad misses the cut and we have to go home, and when his friends' dads miss the cut and they have to go home. Then he also sees the trophies I have at home that I've won, but he's never seen dad win a trophy, so he always asks when am I going to get another trophy and when does he get to have a trophy.

So this one might sit in his room for a while because he's been talking about it for quite some time.

I had to really fight back some of those feelings even coming down the last few holes of just -- I wanted that moment really badly, to have my family there and to come on to the 18th green and to share that with them. You're trying to push those thoughts to the side, but at the same time, I knew I was playing really well, and I was focused on what I had to do.

It was, bar none, the best part of the day was them coming on the green.

**Q. A couple weeks ago you shared a pretty funny tweet. You were at a corporate event and maybe you weren't recognized. Can you just tell us about that story?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I was actually doing an event for my partner, RBC, and one of the guests came into the locker room as I was getting ready to go out there and putting my shoes on, and he was kind of rushing to the course, and I guess he had been in some traffic and was rushing and yada-yada, and he kind of comes in and we're both putting our shoes on, and he was like, man, I really hate rushing to get to the course. It's so stressful. My round is not going to be very good now I'm sure.

Then he kind of just casually was like, well, thank God we don't do this for a living, because man, this would be brutal. I was like, yeah, no, that would be insane; who would do that. I just played it off, didn't correct him, didn't say anything. But it was pretty funny.

Yeah, I kind of joke about that sometimes, too, with my caddie. I can pretty much go anywhere without being recognized so it doesn't really faze me, but hopefully I can keep doing things like this and I won't be mistaken for the corporate guy next time.

**Q. Was there any extra fuel this week after the Presidents Cup and not being picked?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I don't know if it's extra fuel, but it was disappointing -- I guess you would say it was fuel because I definitely worked a little harder after that and felt like that was a team I really, really badly wanted to be on, and I felt like I could have been a good help there. I totally respected Trevor's decision to go the direction he went, and the team -- there wasn't a weak link on that team. There was 12 great players. They had a really tough opponent in the U.S.

I still cheered like hell for them to pull it off.

But I'm definitely motivated for Montreal, and I don't want to have to let that come to a captain's pick next time when that comes around.

**Q. I remember in 2016 when you won on the Korn Ferry TOUR in Springfield, Missouri, you talked about during the round you were thinking about what it would mean for your family, and you were outside the top 75 at that point. What do you remember from that week and pulling it out that week, to go from Q-school to get your card, and how that has propelled you in your career?**

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I mean, talk about pressure. That's pressure. I didn't have my job locked up for the next year at all at that point. I think I was mid 80s on that Money List going into that week. I'm just playing for my livelihood at that point. Not really thinking about a PGA TOUR card that week.

Just had a magical week where things came together for me, and I played the kind of golf that I knew I was capable of. That really came quick and sudden.

I knew I was playing well, but to go from trying to fight for your Korn Ferry card to having a PGA TOUR card locked up, that was amazing and just such a whirlwind experience.

But when I got to the RSM that fall, I really knew I could win that tournament going into those last couple rounds because I had won on the Korn Ferry TOUR. It's amazing what that belief, winning at any level, but the Korn Ferry TOUR really proved to me that I knew how to get it done, and it was no different at the RSM that year.

That was arguably the biggest win of my career and one that I'll always remember really fondly.

DOUG MILNE: MacKenzie, congratulations, best of luck

moving forward.

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