

Sony Open in Hawaii

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Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Ricky Castillo

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, we are now joined by Ricky Castillo Yo, here to the Sony Open in Hawai'i. How great is it to be here this week.

RICKY CASTILLO: Can't get much better than this. The view out there is perfect. We're in Hawai'i. Can't get much better than this. Really excited to get started.

Q. And speaking of Hawai'i, you have some family connections here. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, so my grandpa actually moved from the Philippines to Kauai after World War II, and him and my grandma lived in Kaumakani and worked in the sugar cane field. My parents and them worked in the sugar cane plantations. I still have family that lives out there in Kauai and stuff like that.

She's always been a huge inspiration to me and huge part of my life. I always kind of try to keep that part of Kauai part of me just because she was from here, she lived here.

Q. Will you have a lot of family and friends out here supporting you?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, think I'll have a few friends coming from Kauai coming over to see me, it'll be cool.

Q. Ricky, give a little more color on your grandmother and what she meant to you, the golf, how she followed your career.

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, when I was young she always would travel with us. My parents were teachers so we didn't always have enough money to travel to places. She was always there to help with the payment and travel and stuff like that when we couldn't go to tournaments.

She was a huge part. She was always there riding in the cart, watching, and supporting. She would pick my brother and I up from school and drop us at the golf course since I was like six or seven until like 12 or 13 when she passed.

So she was super, super influential on my life. You know, sad that she is not here and can't be here to watch this. I'm happy that my first start is going to be able to be out here in Hawai'i and feel like a part of her is always with me for sure.

Q. You and the family visit Kauai much as a kid?

RICKY CASTILLO: I only went to Kauai once when I was in second grade. I haven't been back to Hawai'i. This is the next time I've been. It's been a long time.

Q. Anything you remember from that trip?

RICKY CASTILLO: I just remember being grateful just seeing the houses that my grandparents lived in. They were rundown and they worked on sugar cane plantations. It wasn't the most glorious life. It was kind of dirty and old, but they made it work and worked hard for us to get to where we are today.

That's why my dad wanted to bring us there when we were kids, to show us where we came from, just to see if we do make it out here and end up being on the PGA TOUR, we know where we came from. We're humble. We know what's important to us.

Q. When did the PGA TOUR become a dream for you?

RICKY CASTILLO: Probably when I was about five years old when I first started. Always wanted to be on the PGA TOUR. I feel like it's every little kid golfer's dream just to be out here, and being able to play is really, really special.

Q. When did it feel like you could really do this?

RICKY CASTILLO: I don't really know. I mean, I've always had that self-belief that I knew I could get out here since I was five years old. Crazy to say that, but that's just how I've always felt. I've been super dedicated and just wanted to be able to prove myself and give myself a chance to be out here and play on the PGA TOUR.

Q. How much do you think your brother pushed you to



get out here on the PGA?

RICKY CASTILLO: Tons. I mean, he was a huge -- another huge part of my life. I always had competition. We always had the thing where he doesn't want to lose to his little brother and I wanted to beat up on the older brother.

It was always competition. We still carry that competition today, even though he carries my bag. It's tons of fun for both of us.

Q. How did that conversation go to ask him to do it full time?

RICKY CASTILLO: Last year I was struggling with just having fun on the golf course middle of the season. I just really almost didn't want to be out there. I was just tired and frustrated, and I think somewhere in the middle of the season, July, I asked him, do you want to come caddie for me? I just need someone out here that can help me enjoy it and have fun out here.

He said, yeah. We weren't inside the top 30 at the time and I ended up playing really well towards the end and getting myself a TOUR Card. Was right there with me, so it was really cool that he was there the entire time.

Q. What was he doing prior to that?

RICKY CASTILLO: He was caddieing on the LPGA Tour for -- bouncing around caddieing for a few girls on the LPGA and stuff.

Q. What would you say was the turning point going from having that mindset to eventually getting your card?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, I think just having him there. Just really just staying positive and having a good mindset. You know, my brother is really good at keeping it lighthearted. I can be a little intense and too serious at times. My brother is about the exact opposite, so really good at keeping it mellow and joking around; really good at making jokes.

So, I mean, I just knew that was going to work on the really well. Ended up it did so it was really cool.

Q. What are your goals for this season?

RICKY CASTILLO: You know, it's hard not to say win and get to the TOUR Championship, stuff like that, but, I mean for me, I'm just going to focus on my process. I think when I play my best I focus on my process goals most instead of

results goals.

Just making sure I'm doing all my work before, getting everything ready, and just have fun. We're out here in Hawai'i. Can't get much better than this.

It's awesome.

Q. I was going to ask you, one of your signature pieces is the puka shell necklace. What's the story behind that?

RICKY CASTILLO: Yeah, so my grandma brought it back for me from Kauai when I was probably five or six years old. I've basically worn -- maybe not this one, but I've worn some type of puka shell necklace since I was five or six years old. I just don't take it off. Feels like she's a part of me, with me wherever I go.

I get some backlash from it at times, but I love wearing it and it's cool that I always feel like she's right here.

Q. That's really special. So because you have that connection, are there any certain local foods from Hawai'i that your friends and family are telling you you got to have here in Hawai'i?

RICKY CASTILLO: No, not really. One of my uncles is coming from Kauai and there is a bakery that is really close to his place and I'm having him bring some ensaymadas. I haven't had them in so long and they're so good. I had to ask my dad to ask him. Besides that, nothing really too crazy.

Q. Is your dad here this week?

RICKY CASTILLO: All my family is flying in tomorrow.

Q. What part of Kauai are they from?

RICKY CASTILLO: Kaunakakai.

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