

THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 11, 2021

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Phil Mickelson

Quick Quotes

Q. How brutal was it out there? There's some really high scores and you come in with a 1-under, I think.

PHIL MICKELSON: I'll tell you, I've always felt the course was very fair. It was very penalizing for bad shots, and I've seen a lot of that here. It's also rewarding on a lot of good shots and that you can make birdies on some of the holes. But I thought there were some very difficult pin placements and so I thought any round under par was a pretty good round.

Q. Do you feel like you're flying under the radar a little bit coming into this week?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, well, I haven't played well in a long time, and although I've felt like it's close, I haven't been scoring. To finally shoot a decent number, that feels good and I'll try to build off of that. But the parts have felt like they have been there, but I haven't been scoring, so to get off to a good start is nice.

Q. Can you put your finger on why the scores aren't there as you've been starting to play better?

PHIL MICKELSON: Very repellant pins. It just goes away all sides of it. I mean if you look at the pin on 13, you look at the pin on 14, you look at the pin on 12, like there's no place to really land it and get it close. So they're very repellant pins and then have you wind, and it's a hard course.

But like I say, though, if you hit really good shots it gets rewarded. The greens are soft. I thought -- I like it, I like the challenge of this course because you can be rewarded with birdie on some holes and you get really penalized. And I've seen the other side of it quite a bit.

Q. I meant more in general when you say that you feel it coming around a little bit but you haven't had the scores, the numbers haven't been there, can you talk about that?

PHIL MICKELSON: Little things. Short game hasn't been



as sharp, haven't putted as well. My iron play hasn't been quite as good. But it hasn't felt far off, but I just haven't like put it together. So my whole thing is to just try to shoot a number, just try to score and not really worry about the technical side right now.

Q. Wondered what you thought about dropping out of the top 100 for the first time in forever. Any motivation there or do you appreciate the long run at all?

PHIL MICKELSON: I really haven't thought about it, to be honest. It was a cool run. I was there in the top 50 for a long time, top 100. I haven't played well lately, and I just want to play well. It just feels good to play good golf, and there's nothing physically inhibiting me from playing good golf. I've been mentally making the game harder than it is. I just need to fix that, just think a little bit better.

Q. You're playing next week. What are your pre-Augusta plans?

PHIL MICKELSON: I'll play Honda. I'm not in the Match Play. Most likely I'll play Valero and then the Masters.

Q. When will you head up to Augusta, just on your own?

PHIL MICKELSON: I probably won't. I usually like to go the week before but there's a tournament that week, so I probably won't.

Q. I was curious about some of the newcomers last November, what do you think, is it going to be a learning a course all over again when they get there in April?

PHIL MICKELSON: Hard to say. Possibly. But it's hard to say. I don't anticipate it ever playing like as soft as it did last time. I was surprised the winning score wasn't even lower as the receptive as the greens are. If you can hit a 5-iron, have the ball just stick, the guys out here are so good that they're not going to make a lot of bogeys. I was surprised it wasn't even lower. I don't anticipate that being the case, but you just never know.

Q. What's the process been like for you switching from physical side of the game to more the mental side



of the game as you look to turn things around?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, that's a challenge. It's certainly a challenge. It's always come kind of pretty easily for me to visualize and play fearless and see the shot clearly, and when that's not happening easily and you actually have to sit down and work on it, it is a challenge.

But what I have found over the years is when I struggle in a certain area of my game and I talk about it or I just discuss it with other people or teach what I've learned, I end up being more conscious of what I need to do and it actually helps me fix it.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports