

Myrtle Beach Classic

Thursday, May 8, 2025

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, USA

Dunes Golf and Beach Club

Mackenzie Hughes

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Open round, 8-under. How would you assess your round?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, it was great. I felt like I didn't quite have my best stuff tee to green, but kind of managed it well. Put the ball in the right spots. I kind of changed up my putting routine a little bit and putted nicely today.

Then at the end there I kind of caught fire. I can't remember the last time I birdied the last four holes, but it's definitely a nice finish.

THE MODERATOR: When and what did you change with your putting routine?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Last couple of weeks I've been using the line and trying to get that pretty dialed in. I haven't been lying it up great. I feel like I've had to ask my caddie for some assistance.

Just trying to kind of free myself up a little bit and also kind of get more into my reactionary putting, like trust my instincts a little bit more. Like no line, trying to be a little more reactive, a little more faster tempo on the greens as far as my routine goes.

Yeah, just more like look-shoot type thing versus trying to be perfect. I just know that putting to me has always been more of an art, and I feel like I've been trying to make it a little too perfect lately. Probably having one of my worst putting years I've had in a long time. It was nice to see today that it's still in there and maybe just need a bit of a kind of reset.

THE MODERATOR: What's it like when something you're working on and you're seeing results come into tournament play like that?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, it's great. Honestly I kind of just made the decision coming here driving down from Charlotte on Monday. My caddie and my mental game guy, we just kind of said, Hey, look, we're going to free it



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up. It's kind of mentally freed me up too. Yeah, it was nice to see it pay off right away.

THE MODERATOR: Prior to this week, had you seen the Dunes course before?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No, this is my first time here. I had heard really good things. Then when I got here on Monday, I was impressed with the property and the golf course, it's a great test of golf. I'm really enjoying it so far.

Q. Just expand on that. Can you talk about the condition of the greens? Everyone has been saying they're pretty quick. What was that like?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: They're quick and quite firm. Playing out of the rough, you really need to be thinking about where you might want to leave the golf ball. Playing from the fairway there, you can hold shots in there and be fairly aggressive, but playing from the rough or getting out of position, they're really tough.

I was saying Monday, Tuesday that I just feel like there's a lot of stuff going on around the greens, like a lot of little swales and run-offs and waves in the greens. It makes it fun. You really have to kind of use your imagination on some of these putts. That's kind of what I was working on. I thought it worked out pretty nice.

Q. I thought I overheard you say you just decided to play this on Monday. Is that correct?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No. I had been committed to come here for a little while. After Hilton Head I was kind of on the fence for Truist, and I ended up being a few out for that one. I wanted to play the week before the PGA. It was just whether I was going to be playing in Philly or playing here. Yeah, here we are.

Didn't get in there and trying to work my way into some of other ones later in the summer.

THE MODERATOR: Not to jump ahead, but already in the field for next week. What are you looking for and using for this week tournament play as it will be in Charlotte where you live?

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MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, some of the stuff I'm working on this week is actually, yeah, in preparation for next week. Actually this golf course the way it's presented to us, isn't a whole lot different than Quail. It's a shorter version of it obviously.

The way the rough plays, the way it plays into the greens is actually quite similar. I thought as soon as I got here, this is a great prep for Quail Hollow. Obviously next week is a home game for me. I'm a member there. I live somewhat close-by.

Obviously I have that one on my mind a little bit, but my job here this week is to kind of get some feels and some thoughts organized for next week. Off to a good start.

Q. I'm trying to understand because RBC you finished T3, and I think in Texas you had a good tournament. Even the first round down at CJ you had a good round. Just a bad second round. You came in here saying you needed to do some things differently. I'm trying to...

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah. I think as a player, you have these intuitions that something is not quite right. At Harbour Town on Sunday I think I lost two strokes putting to the field. I had a chance to win there.

If I was putting like I did today, I probably would win that tournament or have a great chance to win there on the last hole.

Then I went to Dallas, and again, just felt like -- because I guess for me my putting over the last three, four years has been at a pretty high level. This year it's not been where I would like it to be.

I just felt like in those tournaments I was kind of handcuffing myself a little bit by trying to be a little bit too perfect, trying to get the line just right, trying to read it just perfectly. Today I had the blank side of the ball up. No practice stroke. Just kind of went in there and hit it. You know, it's a bit like putting like a kid, I guess.

I've done that in the past to kind of free myself up and I think in a lot of sports you look at -- well, any ball/hand sport you look at the ball and you react to the target where you want to hit it. So for me I was on the greens today just kind of looking at where I wanted to strike my ball and get comfortable over the ball and then hit it.

I know what you are saying. It doesn't really make a lot of sense, but I just felt like in those few weeks even though I had been playing pretty nice, my putting wasn't really there to the level I would like. So that was kind of the reason for

the adjustments coming in here.

Q. When we can is you if you are leaving anything on the table, you would say, Yes?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

Q. One last thing, do you think it's something that you'll stick with, or is it something that will free up for a little while, and you may revert back?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I think that this is something that I should probably be doing a little more often and probably should stick with. One of the last times I can think of that I went to this was in the fall of '23.

I hadn't been putting great, and then I went to RSM and did this exact same thing. I finished second. Had 25 under par that week. Shot 60 the third round. I really played nice and putted unbelievable that week. So I've had a lot of really good tournaments where I've gotten evidence that this system is pretty good for me.

I mean, we're a strange bunch, so obviously things can only be so good, and then you've got to change things after a while. Yeah, talking to my mental game guy, this is probably where I should be more often is just -- I'm a really good putter, and sometimes I think I take some of that away by trying to be too perfect.

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