

# U.S. Open Championship 2017

Thursday, June 15, 2017

## Rickie Fowler

### Flash Interview



#### Q. (Inaudible)?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it was nice. You don't get many rounds at the U.S. Open that are stress-free. Just did a good job, knew I needed to drive it well, and from there just able to manage hitting and continuing to swing well and hitting good shots and rolling a couple in.

So, simple day when you look back on it, and how we kind of pieced our way around the golf course. Kind of, yeah, a lot easier said than done.

#### Q. You had three birdies in the first five holes, is that kind of what got you going? Did you just feel it?

RICKIE FOWLER: I've been swinging well all through the start of the week. It was nice getting off to a quick start, birdieing 11, and kind of getting a bonus on 12 after hitting it in the first cut off the tee.

Then from there, I was just taking advantage of the par 5s. So really just had to add a couple more, and that was the round.

So, yeah, like I said, it's a lot easier said than done. Still missed some putts that I had opportunities out there, but it's just nice to go out and actually execute the game plan and not have to think about what if that one went in or anything like that. Yeah, you're going to miss putts. You're not going to make everything. So definitely happy with the start.

#### Q. Did it feel as easy as it looked at times, particularly being that it is a U.S. Open and so forth?

RICKIE FOWLER: It did, just because I've been swinging really well. I feel like I have great control of the ball right now and distance control, which is big on a lot of little sections out here going into greens, especially with the wind picking up.

I feel like a big hole today just kind of with execution and distance control on 4 for me. Hitting 2-iron off the tee. Not necessarily pushing it or challenging the bunkers too much, but stepping up and hitting a cut 5-iron and staying disciplined to the middle of the green and hitting my number. So it was just nice to stick to the game plan and see it get executed the right way.

#### Q. When you were on No. 1 tee, it looked like the

#### blimp crashed in the distance. Did you see it go down?

RICKIE FOWLER: I didn't, nope.

#### Q. You've obviously contended in majors in the past. Do you feel like you're ready to take that next step and finally win one of these?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, no. The first thing is getting off to a good start Thursday, keeping that rolling and getting ourselves in contention Sunday. There's a lot of golf to be played. But, yeah, I'm ready to be out there.

Having a win this year at Honda, being in contention at majors in the past, and having THE PLAYERS win has definitely done a lot for me. So, yeah, it's going to be a fun week. I like the way this course suits my game.

#### Q. Rickie, how does it feel to have a first round low at a U.S. Open?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, it's cool, but it's just the first round. So yeah, it is always cool to be part of some sort of history in golf. But I'd rather be remembered for something that's done on Sunday.

#### Q. Have you been in touch with Phil at all?

RICKIE FOWLER: No, I haven't.

#### Q. What would you tell him about what it was like out here it day?

RICKIE FOWLER: I guess I'll have to figure it out. I may not see him for a little while, depending on when he plays. But he would have fun around here and be able to use his imagination.

#### Q. Anything surprise you about the set-up today, Rickie?

RICKIE FOWLER: No, I think they did a good job with the set-up. The USGA, Mike Davis, I think they were aware that depending on what the wind is going to do and what the wind could change to certain tee boxes could make them look bad if it was set up improperly. But they did a great job, and I think they're going to do a good job the rest of the week.

#### Q. You looked calmer than maybe years previous. Do you feel like a calmer golfer these days?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I mean, especially with the way I started this year. I feel like I'm better throughout my whole game. I've been able to tighten things up. I

used to not be a very good bunker player, and now I feel like I have a lot of confidence, and stats show I'm one of the best. That's definitely been something that's been nice to have on days where you're not exactly on and just understanding and freeing yourself up because you know if you might miss something, okay, I'll just get it up-and-down.

I've been driving it well. Driving stats have gone up. Just hitting the fairways has made it a little easier and that's definitely something that makes a difference out here.

**Q. While you're out there, you're focused on what you're doing. But now that it's over, how long do you get to wait before you snap into this is what I've got to do tomorrow? I've got to hit balls on the range and tighten up this or whatever?**

RICKIE FOWLER: Hopefully I don't have to tighten up a whole lot, which will be good. I won't start thinking about stuff until I get on the table tomorrow which will be roughly an hour to 45 minutes before my round. I'll start working on some stuff. I'll go through normal warm-up which is typically an hour before.

So go hang out, relax. There is probably a movie in the afternoon, maybe two, if not one later tonight. Just relax, hang out and have breakfast at the house in the morning and kickback.

**Q. (Inaudible) the golf bag and fans know it's yours?**

RICKIE FOWLER: It definitely hasn't hurt. As many times as you can get as many local fans on your side, it helps.

**Q. With the green and gold bag, you threw up a touchdown under par today. Do you think you can keep that going?**

RICKIE FOWLER: I'll just take the cumulative of that for three days and I'll wait and go over there and see what that does. I don't need a whole lot more after putting 7 up today.

**Q. What was your best shot?**

RICKIE FOWLER: Best shot, I think -- it's hard to go back and think about all of them. But one of the better ones was when I talked about on 4, kind of sticking with what we game planned, 2-iron off the tee, which there was a little bit more hurt today, so I knew it was going to put us further back.

So we had 195 hole with the wind in off the left, and just hit a nice choke-down cut 5-iron. Like I said, just hit our number. I think we missed our number by two yards, which from that distance with 5-iron back in off the left and trying to cut it, pretty spot on.

**Q. You used a little shorter driver than you have in the past. Why have you gone to the shorter length driver?**

RICKIE FOWLER: The shorter driver? I've played a shorter driver leading up to this year. I've always played 44.5, and went to 43.5 this March. I feel like it's just tightened up the dispersion, tightened up where the ball hits on the face, which makes it a little bit more efficient.

For the most part, it doesn't really ever draw, so that would really be some of the reasons why you may see me hit 3-wood on holes that potentially have left-to-right wind or some other guys might be hitting driver. But for the most part out here, get the ball on the fairway. That's the main key.

**Q. Is this as controlled of a round as you've been through the rest of the year?**

RICKIE FOWLER: I had a couple at Memorial. I think it was Friday at Memorial where we did kind of something similar, then a couple of them at Honda earlier this year. But definitely like I was talking about, I had the game plan to just sticking to executing the shots and staying committed to what we've already planned out.

**Q. Now that Sergio's won a major, a lot of people think you're the best player that hasn't won. Do you see that as a compliment or a burden or why?**

RICKIE FOWLER: I take it as a compliment. There are a lot of really good players out here that haven't won a major. So it would be nice to get rid of that at some point. I'm not saying that this is the week or isn't the week. But I like the way this golf course suits me, and we're off to a good start. There's definitely a lot of golf to be played.