

U.S. Open Championship 2017

Friday, June 16, 2017

Rickie Fowler

Flash Interview



Q. Jon Rahm got pretty heated out there today. Was that distracting to you at all?

RICKIE FOWLER: No, I was just focusing on what I was trying to do, and dealing with my own issues at times out there on the course. So I understand it. It's tough out there. You can get some breaks there that are close to go one way or the other. And he was trying to make a push today to get in. Unfortunately, the last two times we've played together he hasn't been at his best. So I told him that won't last long.

Q. You obviously had a bad patch out there, but you're right there at the top of the leaderboard or thereabouts?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I got off to a nice start. Just kind of cruising around how I wanted to. Hit fairways, greens, and you don't have to be off by a whole lot.

I just hit a 3-wood just a touch left of the line on 11, and I had to try to hit something out of the rough, and ended up on a tough spot behind the green. Then three-putt the next two holes afterwards. So I really could have been through there easily with just one bogey, and had some good looks after that. So all in all, not bad.

It's like I said, kind of a fine line. The putts that I had for par, on 12, I didn't hit my best, but I still thought it had a good chance.

13, I thought I made the putt. It was kind of a double breaker, which you don't really get too much, from about six feet. And I hit some good putts after that as well. But we're in a good spot. Looking forward to the next two days.

Q. What is your experience contending in majors? How does it help you now in situations like today?

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I hate just being in the situation where I've been in a good spot and maybe let it get away from me a little bit and let some mistakes compound and turn a round that you kind of fight through it and end up being in a decent spot after the day. I've been in positions where there's been a couple that have kind of gone the wrong way and you miss the cut. You look back, and I just grinded it out.

I'm playing the weekend. I have a tee time on Saturday, so it just kind of you learn along the way to never really give up. You never know what one shot's

going to count for.

Q. Along those lines, how big are the saves coming in late?

RICKIE FOWLER: It was nice to get the saves, for sure. Really 16 to 17, just to keep myself in a good position. As of right now, I'm one shot back. Kind of jam packed and within a few shots of the lead there. But just more so for the confidence going into tomorrow. Making some good swings coming in and some not so great. But kind of know what we were doing wrong out there, if anything.

So it will be just fine, but it would be nice to make a couple of putts. The one at 17 was good, but we're in a good spot.

Q. On 11, did you have any other options?

RICKIE FOWLER: If I would have played it straight at the pin or basically played the break, it would have ended up in the same spot I chipped it to. So I thought I could have cut -- after looking at it, I could have got a little cuter with the chip and cut it more. But I didn't expect it to kick as much left as it did when it hit the green.

The only chance I had of getting it close was kind of the cut chip shot. It started to die and fed down to the hole. I thought I could get it to three, four feet and hit a good shot. But if I putted it just on the green and let it take the slope, I would have been in the same spot I was where I chipped.

Q. I'm looking at the greens, and I remember in Rio how proud you were to play for your country. Now playing in the United States Open weekend and you're there at the top of the leaderboard, how special is this particular major championship?

RICKIE FOWLER: After missing a couple cuts in the Open, I haven't had the best showing in majors the last couple years. It's nice to get back up there, I guess. So this year to be back here in an Open, this is definitely one of the hardest tests we get on a yearly basis. This year with the softer conditions, we start off the first two days, and you would say probably lower scores than what you're used to seeing, but it's been fun. Had a 65 yesterday, got to watch Hideki with a 65 today. I thought he was going to sneak one more in at the last. But it's fun to be up here in our U.S. Open.



So, like I said, it's going to be a fun weekend.

Q. You mentioned the conditions, did they feel different today versus yesterday?

RICKIE FOWLER: They were quite a bit different. The greens were still receptive to good shots, but they were firmer and faster. Mistakes got exaggerated a little bit more. The greens were a little bit quicker. There were a couple of dicey pin placements out there that you had to be careful about. But it was still scorable.

Q. Can you tell us the meaning of the U.S. Open to you?

RICKIE FOWLER: The meaning of the U.S. Open, I mean, we talked about it earlier, it's one of the hardest tests of golf that we get through the year. It's our National Championship, so to be in a good position to go play well this weekend and have a chance to win it, it's special. It's a special weekend.