

Fort Worth Invitational

Thursday, May 24, 2018

Rickie Fowler

Quick Quotes



Q. Solid opening round today. Much has been made of this course and how many different ways there are to play it. Talk to us about your strategy.
RICKIE FOWLER: For me, try and keep it in the short grass. You have to drive the ball well here, whether it's laying back a little bit or trying to push it. You definitely don't want to be playing out of the rough.

It's a little spotty this year, I would say, but you can end up with some pretty bad lies. Even if you end up with a good one you can't control the ball as well as you can out of the fairway.

So put a 2-iron in the bag this week that I played last summer in both Opens, Scottish Open. I feel like it's a club that I can utilize around here a bit more than normal compared to other courses. There's, I don't know, between four and six tee shots where I can hit it.

Trying to get it in the fairway as much as possible. That's kind of our game plan, whether that's getting to a spot that's kind of the max. If not, there are some holes where that's maybe laying back.

Name of the game on this golf course: Get it in the short grass.

Q. To this point in the season it maybe has been a slightly below average year with the putter. You rolled the ball beautifully today on the greens. How does that free you up?

RICKIE FOWLER: Definitely frees you up as far as you don't have to hit it that close to think you can make a putt, whether it's for birdie, par, whatever it may be.

These greens are definitely -- when they're in the shape they are right, they're now some of the best we play all year. They're a little soft this morning, which made them receptive. If you did hit it in the fairway the course was gettable.

No, it was nice to roll in some longer ones, make some good par saves. Made a great par putt on No. 8, my 17th hole; 10-footer that broke two feet.

So it was nice to match up line and speed there; definitely have a good feel for the speed on these greens.

Q. Go back to Augusta on the back nine on Sunday.

You played so well. You played exactly the way I would imagine you hoped to play. How closes are you do you think to getting over the edge there?
RICKIE FOWLER: It's about time. Obviously been close in a handful of them, that being probably the closest. Like I said, that back nine hit all the shots that we needed to; hit some great putts. Some went in, some didn't.

It was fun to be in the mix and truly have a chance there. I put myself in a couple positions there to be around and not quite had the Sunday or back nine that I needed.

So to step up, drive the ball the way I did, approach shots, and give myself looks, it was a lot of fun. It was definitely the most confidence I've felt in a major and knowing I could go out there and get the job done.

One more hole, one more shot it would've been fun. Nice to get that finish and make the swings and shots that we did.

Q. A round that included five birdies on the card; you had a couple bogeys. I know you had to take your lumps there on the finishing hole. Overall thought on how you played today.

RICKIE FOWLER: It was a nice start to the week. Settling into the round I made a bogey after short-siding myself. Actually had a fairly easy bunker shot. That's typically one of the best parts of my game, and didn't quite hit it how I wanted to.

Came back after that and was able to make a few birdies towards the end of my front nine; birdied my 10th, the 1st hole. So it was nice. Made some good up and downs, made some good par putts, some good birdie putts; felt look I drove is it halfway decent.

I think we can continue to get better as the week goes on. Definitely happy with getting the -- I wouldn't say the most out of the round, but at least having a solid start and getting some good par saves to kind of keep the momentum going.

I feel like we're in a good spot. We've had some good weeks here at Colonial. It's nice to be back. Looking forward to, like I said, getting better as we go on.

Q. Talk about the flat stick. At 14 you rolled in a 10-footer for par and that opened the floodgates. You putted really well.

RICKIE FOWLER: I did. I felt like I had a good feel of speed. I feel like I always have, but I knew that 14, after making bogey, that putt got away from me just a little bit. I misjudged it. It wasn't like I hit it too hard as far as on my side of feeling.

Just a little bit more downhill there at the end. I knew that was a big putt. If you're to go 2-over early, obviously there are plenty of holes to make birdie if you get in the fairway, but I knew that was just a big one to kind of bounce back after making the bogey.

Kind of trying to get things going the right direction. That one happened to just catch the left side, and we went on from there to start heading the right direction.

Q. Nice start. Get some comments on your round.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, solid start to the week. Not my best, but nice to get out there, get back into tournament golf, and get off to a solid start.

I'm looking forward to tomorrow. Try and clean up a few things. It's nice to drive it halfway decent. Felt like I hit, not many drivers out here, but hit a couple really good ones. Happy about that.

Got it in the short grass plenty. Good up and downs, made some nice putts. Yeah, solid start. Looking to clean it up a little bit.

Q. Haven't been here in a few years. How nice is it to come back?

RICKIE FOWLER: It's great to be back. It wasn't that I didn't want to be here by any means. I love Colonial and love the tournament, and the people here take great care of us.

Finally having the schedule get back to where we want it a little bit fitting into playing this week, so I'm happy to be back. It's a place I've played well. I enjoy being here, from everyone around taking care of us at the tournament to the fans. Nice for it to cool down a little bit, but other than that, it's a good place.

Q. Four birdies in a five-hole stretch. Any one thing go right at that time?

RICKIE FOWLER: I made a good par putt on 14 after making bogey, so that kind of got things going a little bit.

Made some decent swings, but I think for the most part I was able to capitalize with the putter. The greens are great out here. Feel like I have a good eye on them. I'm very comfortable putting them.

So just need to keep giving myself looks and get the ball in the fairway. Yeah, the big thing in the round was making the par putt on 14 to get some momentum going and start trying to head in the right direction.

Q. A lot the people talk about No. 5 being the hardest hole. How hard is No.4? Obviously long par-3.

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah, I mean, 4 is a tough par-3. Really all you're trying to do is kind of -- today you could get it fairly close if you hit a good shot, but there you're really trying to get to the middle of the green, two-putt, and walk away.

5, I think 5 by far is the hardest hole on the course.

Q. What do you work on today for tomorrow?

RICKIE FOWLER: Swing got a little loose in a couple spots. I felt like I did a good job of managing my way around. I mean, would've been nice to drive it in the fairway on the last, but I had a couple shots maybe just leak a touch right for me.

Other than that, I felt like it was a pretty solid day. Just need to tighten it up a little bit. But there was a lot more good than bad.

Q. Stillwater after this week?

RICKIE FOWLER: No. Memorial. Yeah, I wish we were able to make it up for NCAAs. They're starting tomorrow.

Q. This is a shotmakers' course. How indicative to performing here to, say the rest of your goals?

RICKIE FOWLER: I mean, you have to drive it well to give yourself a chance to show off any kind of shotmaking or approach shots or making putts that are for birdie.

So it puts a lot of the stress on getting the ball in the fairway off the tee, which is going to be a big factor at Shinnecock in a few weeks. It's a golf course that tests you all around. First and foremost, you got to get it in the fairways. We'll do our best job of that this week.

Q. (Regarding family and friends coming down.)

RICKIE FOWLER: Yeah. I mean, as far as family, family is in California, so it's a little ways. Yeah, there are quite a few people. I'm sure there are a few that come down from Oklahoma; there are a lot of Oklahoma State ties in Dallas/Fort Worth area.

It's nice to be back to see the fans here after a few years. There are some people we know that we haven't seen in a few years partly because we haven't played in the area in a bit, so definitely feel the support

being back.