
HP CLASSIC OF NEW ORLEANS
English Turn Golf and Country Club
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Final-round leader quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH PHIL MICKELSON

TODD BUDNICK: We thank, Phil Mickelson for joining us in the interview room. A valiant run today. At first it looked like Joe Ogilvie was walking away with it and Vijay Singh makes a charge can you talk about that today.

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, I birdied 3 of the last 4 to lose by a shot, so I played pretty well today.

I look in the middle part of my round. Not birdieing 11, the par-5, and missing short putts on 13 and 14 took some momentum away.

And although I was able to make a run near the last four holes, I really needed something there in the middle to get me up to the top of the leaderboard.

But I thought I played very well today. I shot 66 in some difficult conditions, some good wind, and lost to a 63, a 29 on the backside, there is not much you can do about that.

Q. You predicted it yesterday, you said Vijay Singh would be the one to watch for?

PHIL MICKELSON: Well, as well as he's been playing this year, you always have to look at him. You always have to be aware of what he is doing. He didn't play his greatest front nine, but he always has that ability to turn it on when he needed it. Shot 29 on the back and won by a shot, very impressive play.

Q. Tee to green, you could have shot, without stretching it too much, 63?

PHIL MICKELSON: I could have picked up a shot here or there. We all could have. But I also made some good putts, like on 18, and had a good score. So you can always look back. I'm sure I will look back of where I could have had a shot or two here or there.

But for the most part, I think the middle part, 11, 13 and 14 were the three holes that I really needed to do something and didn't.

Q. What did you hit on your second shot on 11 which put you behind the 8-ball?

PHIL MICKELSON: I hit a 3-wood, and I wanted to be left of the hole because I just didn't feel like it was a very easy up and down from the right. I was aiming well left and then just pushed it.

Q. Misreads on 13 and 14?

PHIL MICKELSON: Misreads on 13 and 14, I hit two good putts where I wanted.

Q. The putt really fooled you on 13?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yes, I played way too much break. It was rolling right on the line that I wanted. It wasn't enough.

On 14, we both thought it was going to move a little left, and it actually moved a little right early and confused us.

But I have always had difficulty reading Bermuda greens so I have to rely heavily on my caddy, Bones, who did a great job of reading these greens and remembered at times where I thought it could have gone the other way, and he read it well. Sometimes when I get over the putt, I will change it just because I can't quite see the read he's talking about. They are just tough greens for me to putt well on. Everybody is making putts, and putts are true, but you have to read them right.

I thought I did a pretty good job for the week but a couple of those critical ones didn't quite go.

Q. The putt on 15 was a good putt?

PHIL MICKELSON: It was. It was -- it looked like I had a very good chance with a few feet to go. It looked like it was going to hang in there, but it just fell off. I gave it a little more speed there to try to hold its line because I was a little too dependent on the six footers for a perfect read on 13 and 14. I tried to give that one a little more speed so it would hold its line better but it just missed low.

Q. I have a couple of off-topic questions, Arnold Palmer made his final Masters your first victory there. Did that make it any special more special you coming in as Arnold was departing?

PHIL MICKELSON: I didn't think of it like that. I do think that Arnold leaving, and having 50 years at Augusta, is very meaningful for the game, and I hope that he comes back every year and is a part of the tournament. For 50 years he has been such an integral part of the tournament, that his absence would really be felt, and hopefully he will still be there, play practice rounds play the Par-3 tournament, hang out with the guys.

Our favorite thing when we are amateurs is to call Arnold and ask for a practice round.

Q. It's a year of resurgence, last year was not one of your best. John Daly is going through a resurgent area also, can you tell me about his importance as far as the TOUR is concerned, having him back as a draw and a top player?

PHIL MICKELSON: I think the best thing about John Daly's resurgence isn't even his play. It's just his health, being in better condition, and having his demons in check, I guess, because he's had a tough time there for a few years. It's nice to see him

happy even though he still has some conflicts that are going on. It's just nice to see him happy. And even though he still has some conflicts that are going on, it's nice to see him happy and doing well because he is an asset to the TOUR.

Q. The putts on 13, 14, 11, if you had one that you thought you should have made there --

PHIL MICKELSON: It wasn't a putt on the 11, it was the placement, not making birdie, the hole that everybody is birdieing. You know, the nice thing about the way I have been putting is that they have all been starting on the line that I have been choosing, it's just a matter of getting the right read with the right speed. Once it gets outside of three or four feet, the read becomes critical because you can't really take out the speed. From three or four feet I, have done very well. I don't think I missed any this week.

But as we get to five and six feet, that's when the read becomes more critical and those were about 6, 7 footers that I just didn't quite read right. But that stuff happens.

TODD BUDNICK: How about your birdies, Phil?

PHIL MICKELSON: Did I have any bogeys today?

TODD BUDNICK: No.

PHIL MICKELSON: Six birdies today. I birdied No. 2, driver, 6-iron just right of the green, chipped it up to five feet and made it.

I birdied No. 4. I hit a 3-iron, L-wedge to ten feet.

Birdied 9 with a 3-wood and a pitching wedge to four feet.

Birdie 15 with a driver and a 7-iron to 40 feet, two putted.

Birdied 16 with a driver and a sand wedge, kind of a strong sand wedge. It's a gap wedge that I hit to, I guess, about two feet.

And I birdied 18. I hit a 3-wood off the tee, a 9-iron to about 20 feet and made it for birdie.

Q. Did you like those long putts on 18?

PHIL MICKELSON: Yes, unfortunately this one was not quite long enough.