

# Desert Classic

Saturday, January 19, 2019

## Phil Mickelson

### Quick Quotes



**Q. Never a dull moment watching you navigate the Stadium Course here, especially on that back side. You turned in a 6-under 66. What were the keys for you to end the day where you started with a two-shot lead?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I don't know what to say, I played okay and my goal or game plan of playing the Stadium Course is to actually hit drivers and to try to bomb it down there as close to the greens as you can. Even though the -- because the fairways are tight in a lot of areas and if I miss fairways, try to have wedges or short irons in -- and it seemed to play out okay today and I gave myself a lot of good chances. I missed a few short putts that I've been making historically now for awhile and I let a few slide, but I also made a couple of long ones that were nice little bonuses.

**Q. On 13 and 17. On the front side you had missed your first four fairways, you start out with five straight pars and then you chip in on 6. What did that do to energize your round?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Yeah, every once in awhile you just need that little putt, chip, something to fall and give you a little momentum. I followed that with two more birdies, so that was kind of the shot that ignited that little run and got the round going.

**Q. That drought from Muirfield up until you won last year at the WGC Mexico Championship. In your career you've been a closer, what are you going to draw on going into the final round?**

PHIL MICKELSON: That it's a course you don't have to be perfect on, you have to hit a lot of good shots in certain spots, but you, if you miss it, miss it properly, you can still play this course. I feel like I don't have to be perfect, I can come out, play aggressive, which is how I like to play, try to crush drivers and get it down as close as I can to the greens and see if I can make some more birdies.

**Q. Not the best but managed your golf around this place, that's what it's all about, just management.**

PHIL MICKELSON: I think it is. I think that there's some holes -- I think it's a course that you can play aggressive. I think it's a course you can hit drivers. Even though the fairways can be tight up where driver is, if you hit it long enough and you have short irons into some of these holes it's an advantage. And that's kind of the way I've been trying to play this week is rip

at the driver and get some short irons in and I've been able to make a lot of birdie doing that.

**Q. I made a joke on 18, I said, oh, Phil played 25 feet away from the hole, he hasn't hit anything close, he's liking this 25 foot range.**

PHIL MICKELSON: It was crazy because I took the water on more with the driver than I did the 9-iron second shot. So that's going to have to change tomorrow. But it was not the greatest drive, actually, I obviously blocked that a little bit, but I have been getting away with some misses in that they haven't been too bad or that they have been in the right spots. And I made a few putts. I missed a couple short ones today, I haven't been doing that lately, but unfortunately I let a few slide, but I also made up for it with some long ones.

**Q. What's it mean to play in the final group?**

PHIL MICKELSON: It's so fun, I just love being in contention, having a chance to win, being in the final group, feeling the nerves, feeling that excitement, the opportunity, it's just, it's really fun. But right now I'm pretty tired and wiped out so I'm going to go get some rest and then gear up for tomorrow's fun final round.

**Q. What do you take away most from this 66?**

PHIL MICKELSON: I thought it was kind of the target score. I thought if I could shoot a 66 it would be a good round. I got a little bit behind after five holes of only making par with a couple of good birdie opportunities, but was able to ignite the round with a chip in on 6, made three birdies there and three on the back and it was a good round. I think that the way I like to play, which is to swing hard, try to rip driver, get it down there by the greens and see if I can get some short irons and make birdies is how it's going to play tomorrow in tomorrow's final round. And I'm looking forward to the opportunity to compete against these guys and see if I can get another win.

**Q. 16th hole was pretty eventful. Take me through that. Especially that bunker shot.**

PHIL MICKELSON: I tried to hammer a drive down there and I pulled it. I didn't want to miss it left and I just yanked it. Really I hit a terrible second shot. I just had an easy hooking -- I was trying to hit a hook 4-iron up there right and I just blocked it and it was awful. But I hit a good bunker shot and had a nice eight, nine foot

look for birdie and it, I actually hit that one on line, that was actually a pretty good putt and it actually died off. I had a few that I didn't start on line, but that one I did and unfortunately it didn't go in.

**Q. You say you're looking most forward to the competition tomorrow. What is it about that competition on a Sunday that you relish?**

PHIL MICKELSON: Having that chance to win, having that butterflies and the nervousness and the excitement and the opportunity to compete and feel that pressure. That's why we all play, it's what I miss and have strived to gain and I really enjoy that. So it's fun to be in the final group and have that opportunity, to have that feeling.

**Q. Did you have any feeling coming into this week that you had this type of game ready to go?**

PHIL MICKELSON: You never know in this game how things are going to click. I'm certainly surprised that it has clicked. I didn't really have the number of days in preparation that I would have liked heading in. But again I was mentally sharp and fresh and ready to go and it seems to be paying off.

**Q. How special is it to be in this position as the ambassador of the tournament?**

PHIL MICKELSON: It's a nice bonus, it's a nice plus, it's just fun to be able to be in the final group, compete, try to win a tournament and feel the nerves and the butterflies that comes with it, it's fun.