

RBC Canadian Open

Friday, July 28, 2017

Mackenzie Hughes

Quick Quotes

Q. Wonderful round of golf out there today. I know you were frustrated at times during the round, but can you sum it up?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: All in all, it's okay. It's not great. I would have liked to have gotten a couple more there. I just, I don't know, I was on, but I was also off at times. You're going to have those kind of rounds. I did well to manage it. It was kind of tricky out there. The wind were kind of swirling and a little bit gusty at times.

So 3-under was a good score. If you gave me that at the start of the day, I probably would have taken it. But if I played well enough to shoot five or six -- I think I made seven or so birdies, something like that. Missed a few shorties that I don't normally miss, but good chance for the weekend.

Q. Is this a round that maybe a year ago, two years ago, might have been able to slip away from you? Are you proud of the management that you were able to hold it together?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, early on, it was playing pretty tricky. I bogeyed the first hole and made quite a mess of it. But held my composure there to make a 5-footer for bogey. Nice little bounce back on 2 with a birdie, and that really kind of started to settle in.

But it was just playing tough. There was some tucked pins. The wind was all around the golf course, kind of all different directions. But yeah, I'm proud of the way I managed it and hung in there.

Q. After 36, still within striking distance of the top of the leaderboard. What do you have to do Saturday to try to move even closer?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Go really low. Seems like the guys aren't slowing down, and the wind today, it was pretty steady for the most part. It's probably the best it's been all day. The scores are going to keep getting better and I'm going to need to go shoot a round kind of like I did the first day and if it could be one or two better, even better.

I'm playing well. I've just got to cut out some of the silly mistakes I made today. But game's good.

Q. If you get yourself in contention for Sunday, do you think there will be any left in Dundas, Ontario, or will they be all up here?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: It will be probably 90 percent



of them up here. It's been a lot of fun having the crowd support. Not just from Dundas, but the Canadians here in general. I have to say what the RBC Canadian Open has done with the rink on 7 is pretty cool, and I know a lot of players will find that pretty neat.

Overall, yeah, it's been a great experience, and the fans have been fantastic.

Q. I guess probably about the most consistent round you've ever had, but just four shots off the lead. How are you feeling after round two?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, feeling pretty good. It was a lot trickier than it was the first day. I felt like I played pretty similar. A few uncharacteristic mistakes. I missed a few putts inside of four feet which I don't normally do but all in all it was a good day. I think I made seven birdies, so any time you do that, there's something going on that's pretty good there. So if I can just keep the good and just cut out some of that slop, then I'll have a chance on the weekend.

Q. Did you notice the galleries getting bigger for you and giving you that encouragement?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: The crowds were huge today. I was impressed, walking on to a lot of these greens and getting ovations on a lot of these greens was really cool. Yeah, I've been blown away by the support and hopefully it gets even greater for the weekend.

Q. At the Waste Management -- what you did Thursday on 16, any thoughts of doing anything similar out here?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: That would be fun. I don't know what's in store for the weekend, but you know, trying to win your National Championship is a lot in itself. So trying to worry what I'm going to wear on the seventh hole is probably the last of my priorities. So hopefully I can just hit a shot in there close and make birdie and that will be good enough.

Q. How scary was that bunker shot on 18, 1 to 10?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: I'll be honest, shades of last year's incident popped into my mind. I won't say any names -- and it happened to a lot of guys. It wasn't just that incident. The bunkers were pretty firm and crusty last year, and the bunkers are way better this year.

So I knew I had a chance from there. And if that ball

lands like a foot shorter or just in the rough, it was perfect. All in all it was a great shot to get to where I did. Had a bit of a miss-read but I was right in between numbers in the fairway, too, so it wasn't really -- it wasn't ideal. I had to like take some off of a 5-wood and hit a pretty good shot but it's tough to kind of take that on. I wanted to make four, not be a hero and try and make three.

Q. There was no decision, though? You were always going to go for it?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: No laying up. No laying up. I've started to don the No Laying Up gear, so you really can't lay up at that point. I had 235 and a little into the wind, but no hesitation.

Q. So four back heading into the weekend. If you had known that on Thursday, would you have taken that?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Oh, for sure. Yeah, no question. Four back is not very many shots over the course of two days. Obviously I'm going to need to be that much better because of the guys in front of me are going to keep going low.

But yeah, it's nice to have a chance and hopefully I can get the crowd into it early.

Q. Do you think it helps that Graham is also at 8-under, so there's two cane aid Januarys within striking distance and the Seoul focus won't be on you, it will be kind of split?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I wish there were 17 Canadians 8-under or better. It would have been really fun to get a bunch of guys in the mix, but yeah, it's nice to have GG in there and not to be the Lone Ranger going out there on the weekend. Yeah, I'm excited about the challenge ahead and hopefully it can get exciting.

Q. Take me through the holes in the valley.

MACKENZIE HUGHES: 12 was a ten-out-of-ten swing with a 5-iron, and the wind down there is just all over the place. I couldn't quite figure it out and apparently it was helping. Hit 5-iron right over the stick. I had no chance. I was way back in the bunker on a downslope and I was just trying to get myself a 20-footer at it and some sort of damage control there.

14, I hit a really great bunker shot there out of the fairway bunker. Unfortunately didn't capitalize but to make four on that hole was a bonus.

Q. And then an up-and-down on the par 3, that was pretty good, too. Was that a scary one as well?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Not so much scary but certainly at this point, I missed the green with a wedge.

Yeah, kind of an awkward little pin there.

Q. You get your birdie at 16 and you get your birdie at 18 -- do you say, there's a lot more out there for me?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, there's definitely more out there but at the same time, I birdied some holes that guys aren't birdieing. I birdied 17, and 14 I had a really great look there. I know guys were having trouble there all day.

It's just part of golf. You're going to get some where you shouldn't and miss somewhere you should. Overall I'm pretty pleased.

Q. What do you have to do tomorrow to ensure you're in the mix on Sunday, not just on the course, but in terms of your focus?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: That's more than anything the biggest focus for me. I've just got to control what's going on up here. If I can just focus on what I'm doing and my process within my own game, that usually serves me pretty well.

When I won back in the fall, I just was so in the zone, and I had to get really focused to block out all the other distractions. That will be somewhat similar to what I'll have to do on the weekend here. I want to use the crowd but I also need to kind of manage it and not get too up-and-down.

Q. Is that something you had to sort of work through on the front nine today?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, there was -- because I think I made three birdies and three bogeys, and so I was up with the birdies and then you make bogeys and then you hear the oohs and aahs, so hopefully can kind of play a little steadier tomorrow and cut out some of those little dropped shots.

But all in all, it was a good day from start to finish. When it happens on a day like today when it's windy, you're going to make some mistakes. Pretty pleased.

Q. You had some friends cheering pretty loud. How did it feel to hear familiar voices while you're playing?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: It was awesome. You love hearing that. I hope that over the weekend, I can't even hear them because it's so loud out here.

Yeah, it's going to be a lot of fun and I'm pumped that GG is going to be out there with me and close to where I'm at. Hopefully I'll hear some roars of his and he'll hear some roars of mine and we'll get this crowd going.

Q. Did you have many memories from Mike in 2004

or even David a couple years ago in terms of how crazy people can get?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, it can get pretty wild. Even today, there was some pretty unusual comment s. Lots of support but a lot of people telling me that I'm the hero and that this is mine; the gold jacket is yours; you're just going to choke, which is pretty funny.

Yeah, it was really great having that support, and by no means is it a distraction. When David and Mike were in contention there, it was a lot of fun to see the what crowds did for them and even last year with Jared.

Yeah, these crowds are really knowledgeable and fun to play for.

Q. Do you remember 2004?

MACKENZIE HUGHES: Yeah, I remember the playoff. I don't remember all the details but I remember that was kind of Mike's to win there and Vijay kind of snagged it, along with every other tournament that year. I don't remember how -- I might have been 13 years old. I remember it a little bit but I remember David's a little more.