



MindTRAK Golf

Better Mindset. Better Golf.

Rub of the Mind

Date: February 8, 2016
Event: 2016 Waste Management Phoenix Open
Course: TPC Scottsdale, Scottsdale, AZ
Quotes: ASAP Sports Transcripts (*Post Round Media Interview*)
RE: How Rickie Fowler's 'Mental Mistake' Cost Him an Important Victory

The game of golf offers no place to hide; it x-rays every person's golfing soul, it does not discriminate in whom it exposes. Playing golf uncovers one's mental wiring and emotional stability and it'll scrutinize all golfers' dispositions each time we play this entrancing game.

Studying PGA Tour player's performance in pressure situations with a particular eye on their two Key Performance Markers ("KPMs"), of their golf-shots offers valuable insight. It proves, often to the amazement of onlookers that even the world's best professional players—either knowingly or unknowingly—make costly mental mistakes. When performance is measured objectively and rigorously we can all benefit by learning from these players when they perform well, and perhaps more so, when they make *Big Mistakes* relating to the mental components of their performance.

At the PGA Tour's 2016 *Waste Management Phoenix Open* the golf world witnessed a side to Rickie Fowler they never expected to see in the situation he faced. We observed an adored rising American star with remarkable talent making a *Big Mistake*, in a critical moment, in an important situation. With the benefit of hindsight it appeared Rickie wasn't aware of the situations well enough and his one "Unsatisfactory Assessment" with his tee-shot on the 71st hole caused Fowler to lose this PGA Tour event to Hideki Matsuyama. When Rickie was asked about what happened, in the post round press conference, emotion simply overwhelmed him when he concluded that he "got a bit of a bad break."

The Situation:

In the final round of the 2016 *Waste Management Phoenix Open* standing on the 17th Tee at *TPC Scottsdale*—a drivable par-4—in the final round the hole played 304-yds to the front of the green and 317-yds to the hole. In that moment Rickie Fowler held a 2-stroke lead over Matsuyama. Fowler's previous tee-shot (*on the 15th hole*) cover a distance of 344-yds. NBC's Gary Koch remarked how Fowler has the ability to hit these "*monster drives*." The wind direction on 15th hole is the same as the 17th hole. NBC commentator, Peter Jacobsen stated, "*He's (Fowler) got to know these greens are firming up.*" NBC's on course reporter, Roger Maltbie analyzed the situation very simply said, "*Just hit it in front of the green and make an easy birdie and close the door.*"

Unfortunately, Fowler made a *Big Mistake*—with his **Assessment** on the 17th tee-shot (during regulation play) by choosing to hit driver. Keeping in mind Fowler made an **Excellent Execution** with that driver. But, given the



distance Fowler was hitting his driver—based on his last tee-shot on the 15th hole—driver brought the water hazard behind the green into play. Fowler and his caddie didn't pick up on this but should have known this was a possible outcome (based on how far Fowler drove his 15th tee-shot). In their situation, Fowler and his caddie should have eliminated any possibility of hitting his tee-shot left and over the green into the hazard by hitting something less than driver off the tee. Fowler's **Unsatisfactory Assessment** with his tee-shot triggered a **2-Shot Lost Event** on the 71st hole. It was Fowler's *Big Mistake*, a mental error, which consequently cost him the tournament.

Then, once again on the 17th hole, in the 4th hole of sudden death, Fowler made another *Big Mistake*. But this time Fowler corrected his *Assessment* by choosing a 3-wood, but unfortunately he made an **Unsatisfactory Execution** when he pull-hooked his 3-wood into the hazard. Based on his post-round interview, it also appeared Fowler wasn't aware of his KPM *Big Mistakes*—dismissing his shot in the hazard over the green as, “*kind of got a bit of a bad break*” when his ball landed on a downslope in the fairway.

ASAP Sport Transcripts

Q. Tell us about regulation and this one?

RICKIE FOWLER: “*Actually coming into the last two, I had a two-shot lead and thought if I make 3 here I feel like I go to the last with a two-shot lead. Great.*”

“Both my caddie and I thought that driver would be perfect, just hit a little cut driver. I hit a perfect shot. Kind of got a little bit of a bad break, landed on the downslope and it goes I think an extra 60 yards from where it landed in the water. We ended up making bogey.”

“That was a little unfortunate. Kind of ruined the game plan coming in. I felt like I made a lot of good swings that back 9, so this one hurts a little.”

Q. What do you take from this? It's got to hurt. You played awfully, awfully well this week.

RICKIE FOWLER: “*Yeah, I didn't putt as well as I'd like to the last three days, but I feel like I handled myself well out there and controlled things well today. Made some really good swings.*”

Q. How much will this sting? Walk us through the thought process, 17.

RICKIE FOWLER: “*I mean, it's gonna hurt because I felt like I had it, especially with the way I was swinging. 17, it was 304 front and then we had an extra, it's like 26 or, I don't know, there's 30-some yards until the back bunker. It's 330-plus.*”

“Figured -- I'm hitting a chip-cut driver. Usually don't expect it to hit on the downslope and then go 360.”

“So that was a bit unfortunate. I hit it right online, hit it exactly where I was looking. That's kind of the unfortunate part to hit the shots that I did and to pull them off and then it kind of backfired there. Hit a perfect shot.”

Q. What about the second time you played 17? 3-wood or 5-wood?

RICKIE FOWLER: “*I went the 3-wood. It's a good number with 3-wood obviously with everything going on. Hit it solid. Just hit it a little high on the face and it just got up and left a little quicker than I was expecting and wanted to. So that's all that happened there.*”

Q. You haven't usually been this down in a long time. What will you do to get over it and how long will it take to get over it?

RICKIE FOWLER: “*I mean, the hard part is having, you know, all my friends and family and grandpa and my dad who haven't seen me win. But I will be able to kinda hang with them tonight.*”

“I'll be all right. With how good I'm playing, I know I can win. That's the hard part.”



The Rub of the Mind:

Fowler's genuine and innocent sparkle, his youthfulness and honest disposition make him cherished by everyone. His tremendous golf skill makes him such a promising player. Depending on his perceptiveness, this devastating loss should make him a better player by helping him learn to make better decisions in similar situations in the future, which will help to allow him to win more on the PGA Tour and major championships.

Rickie did "make a lot of good swing that back 9" as he said. Nevertheless, it is fundamentally important to realize the ingredients of any successful golf shot are based on one's **Assessment** of the shot in addition to the **Execution** of that shot. The sum of these two KPMs equals one's **Golf-Execution Quotient ("Golf-EQ")**. If either one of these two KPMs are **Unsatisfactory** the likelihood of a **Lost Shot Event** will occur.

MindTRAK Golf is about conditioning golfer's perceptual awareness on their two KPMs – tracking, measuring and reporting this critical information identifies all golfers' ability to perform on the golf course.

One's golf performance is mindset sensitive and dependent. Our mind is the most vital piece of golf equipment the golfer will ever own—it's an extraordinary life-gift—yet most golfers bomb at fostering a healthy mindset when it matters most. In situations when performance anxiety escalates, most golfers performance ability diminishes rapidly. Astonishingly, there's nothing in the market that offers a solution to the pervasive and dysfunctional mental feedback loop—**Golf Insanity**—which is firmly embedded in the minds of most golfers.

Incidentally, many of the world's best players suffer from this same thought-affliction as well.