

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS OPEN

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW

June 24, 2023



ERNIE ELS (-12)

Q. Ernie, 36 holes bogey-free, top of the leaderboard right now, tied with two others, but got to like where you stand going into tomorrow.

ERNIE ELS: Yeah, I knew today was going to be kind of a moving day, it was perfect conditions after the rain, ball in hand. I did most of my part, I was going well, I was 7 under through 13 holes, I guess. But I didn't pick up any birdies coming in, but I can't complain. I'm 12 under with two other guys I see and all to play for tomorrow. I wasn't quite on it this morning with my swing, but I found it later on and I'm hitting the ball better.

Q. With the weather that's coming in tomorrow, patience the keyword?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah. What's coming in? Is bad weather coming?

Q. It will be stop-start all day.

ERNIE ELS: OK, yeah. Hopefully, touch wood, we get lucky with the weather, but if not, it is what it is. If we get called off, you've got to regroup and do that whole thing. Everybody has done it a hundred times or more, so it's just one of those deals. Hopefully we get lucky. If not, just do what you have to do.

Q. The golf course can handle more rain?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah, the course played excellent today. I mean, you could see there was rain, but the ball's not plugging, it's not soggy, the greens are running beautifully. Hopefully things are OK. The golf course has been -- it's my third time, it's the best I've ever seen it, so the course is in great shape.

Q. What would a win mean for you? Last time you won was Hoag, coming back and --

ERNIE ELS: Yeah, I've been close here. I think it's my third time in the final group here and I haven't walked away with a win. In the final group tomorrow again, I've got to play. The last couple of times I didn't play very well on Sunday. And you've got to shoot in the 60s at least to have a chance. If the weather's like this tomorrow, then you've got to go low. You've just got to go accordingly.

Q. Yesterday you talked about kind of getting the putter warmed up. With a 7-under day, is it safe to say the putter's warmed up?



ERNIE ELS: Yeah. I mean, yes. Obviously professional golfers, we want everything out of the round. As I said, I was 7 under through 13 and I didn't pick up anything coming in with quite a few birdie opportunities, so I'm a little bit disappointed with that. But I made enough putts today, especially when my swing wasn't quite in sync, made a lot of up-and-downs and made some good putts, so I'm in good stead.

Q. You got three birds in the first five holes to really set the stage for your day today. How much of an adjustment was it on the back nine when the greens began to dry out a little bit?

ERNIE ELS: Just the back nine plays a bit tougher. There's some really good par 4s on the back nine, so I gave that a lot of respect. I birdied 10, 11 and 12, which gave me a good start to the back. Then I just kind of hung in there. As I said, I'm a little disappointed with maybe 18 and 16, those are really birdiable holes with the clubs I had in, but it is what it is, I'm fine.

Q. Tied for the lead heading into Sunday, how's it affect the mindset?

ERNIE ELS: Well, I'm tied with two other guys and there's a whole bunch of people behind us. Although the leader right now, after the first hole tomorrow you're just one of the numbers out there. You've just got to try and shoot as low as you can. It's nice to be where you're at, but you've got to be leading by Sunday.

