

ROUND 3 PRESS CONFERENCE
June 9, 2024



ERNIE ELS (-12, won playoff)

Q. Ernie, two in a row, how are you feeling right now?

ERNIE ELS: I feel obviously delighted, elated. It was a very tough day today, and on Friday our first round was very tough, some of the conditions. These greens are very quick, as I said, so it's kind of uncomfortable on the greens when it's that windy.

Playing with Steve and Nicki on Friday and then again on Sunday, them being the hosts of the event, what a way to win the final event at University Ridge, you know? I really feel for Steve missing that short putt, but I've done that, a lot of people have done that. He had a great week, he's a great guy and runs a great tournament.

Q. Just to follow up on that, as thrilled as you are to win and you've had a great month now, just what did you say to Steve there after you embraced?

ERNIE ELS: I just said, you know, how much I appreciate him, he's given so much to the game. I just gave him a hug really and I just said I'm sorry.

But what I'm trying to say about him now, he does so much for us for the game on the Champions Tour. He's done just about everything in this game. He's one of your stand-up citizens here in Wisconsin and you should be very proud to have a man like Steve Stricker as your local man.

As I said, I've known them for many, many years. We're going to a different venue next year, but hopefully we'll have as much fun.

Q. Steve yesterday recalled your match at Wentworth in '96, mentioned some of the Presidents Cup matches. Did it feel a little like match play, especially maybe some of those head-to-heads?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah, I wanted to stay close to him because I knew Steve was going to be the guy. He's such a classy player.

But I got so angry with myself bogeying 6, the par 5, and then bogeying 7, which is such a soft bogey, and then not birdieing 9, then my putts started slipping by the hole. I was a little frustrated, but somehow I kept hitting good shots and then started making putts.

Then it became a two-horse race from back nine on 12, 13. Then we kind of, you know, hung in there, made birdies on the same holes and had a first playoff hole. It was basically the guy that made the first big mistake was going to lose.

Q. A number of Sundays out here since you joined the Champions Tour where you haven't been able to close, but now the last two weeks you have. What's changed and how have you developed the confidence to do this again?

ERNIE ELS: Well, you've got to keep going, you've got to believe that things are going to come around. I've had a great career. Never thought I'd be in the Hall of Fame, all that stuff, but all that stuff came my way, but I still when I compete I want to compete at the highest level. And I'm quite hard on myself, so I just thought of making putts, just a couple more putts and driving it better. That's really the difference between me finishing first here or finishing fifth or 10th.

Q. When you saw his putt lip out, what was your first thought?

ERNIE ELS: I was like you guys, I was in shock. He's the best putter we have probably in the world and as I said, conditions were tough. The short putts when that gust comes, it throws you off a little bit, so it can happen to the best of us.

Q. You kind of mentioned out there that there might be a different format next year. If there is, who would you like to partner with in a situation like that?

ERNIE ELS: I don't know if I should make it public now, but I'm going to. My partner, I proudly announce, Tim Herron. Me and Timmy are going to play next year. I've known Tim maybe longer than I've known Steve, so he's my man.