

ERNIE ELS (-9)

Q. Ernie, great round today, better conditions. Just kind of take me through your day and being able to put yourself in contention again for tomorrow.

ERNIE ELS: I played nice. I mean, it's a golf course where you can't just kind of open the shoulders too much. I feel like I have to play very controlled golf, which I'm trying to do. I made a couple of errors early on on the second hole with a sand wedge, made bogey. Then I didn't birdie the two par 5s on the back nine. But hey, that's the negative. I'm playing nicely, I feel like I'm swinging nicely and I'm putting quite nice. I'm kind of there, so just need a good one tomorrow.

Q. Absolutely. Word's kind of going around, tournament host Jerry Kelly having to withdraw due to shoulder injury. Just any words of encouragement for him?

ERNIE ELS: I mean, sorry to hear that. We all are getting on now. He's the host of a wonderful event like always. Cologuard, the sponsor, is amazing so we're having a great time. We'll miss him tomorrow. Hopefully he'll be around tomorrow for a beer, so hopefully we'll see him tomorrow at some point.

Q. Ernie, is this kind of a course where you can make up a few shots on that back nine?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah, I think the whole course, you can get going. As I say, those two par 5s cost me a little bit on the back, very reachable. Then there's a lot of par 3s.

Yeah, if you get going you can get on a roll. I haven't really got on a roll, but hopefully tomorrow. But you've got to play controlled golf. Those first five, six holes, there's a lot that can happen so you want to hit good shots and keep yourself in it.

Q. Do you feel a little extra motivation at No. 15 knowing that that's the Birdies for Survivors; if you make one it's \$1,500 so someone can come to the tournament next year?

ERNIE ELS: I was fortunate enough to make one today, that was great. I looked over and I didn't know that, but I saw the board and I saw the dollar signs there. There's been quite a few birdies made. It's always great, I've got my man Brad this week and he's walking with me. He's surviving, you know. He's at stage 4. It's just wonderful to see the fight they have and all that. It's a great event.

Q. What's your strategy off the tee on 18?

ERNIE ELS: You know, with the wind today, just want to put something in play. I took iron. The fairways are running out a bit so I've got a strong 2-iron, I hit a 2-iron and I had 137, didn't make birdie. I should have, I'm still hot about that. Depends on the conditions. I've played it into the wind and it's a driver.