

## MEXICO OPEN AT VIDANTA

### ROUND 1 INTERVIEW

April 27, 2023



### ERIK VAN ROOYEN (-7)

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**Q. Erik, we're going to have a little talk here. You had plenty of birdies, you also had some bees. Let's talk about the bees first. Ever been in a situation like that and just what happened?**

**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** One time. I can't recall where exactly, but it was on a golf course in South Africa and something like I'm over the ball and then you hear like a "zzzzz," which is the sound that bees make. I look up and they're there and the same thing happened. I was over the ball with a 4-iron, look back and I just saw them here and I just told my caddie, I'm like, "Bees, bees, bees," and he looks at me like I'm crazy. So I dropped down, then he sees them, he dropped down. Frankie and Chez, they look at me like I'm nuts and then they realized, like 30 seconds later the bees just went right at them. It's funny, but certainly don't want to get stung by those bad boys.

**Q. Yeah, especially if you're allergic or just --**

**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** Yeah, I'm not allergic thankfully, but it still hurts.

**Q. Now after something like that when they fly over, you know they're gone, but you still have them in the back of your head, and 10's a difficult hole anyway. What's the concentration like on your next shot?**

**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** You've got to -- I had a 4-iron in my hand to a pin that's tucked on the right. You've just got to reset and refocus so it's simple. You just do the same thing. I asked my caddie like where are we going, where's the miss, what kind of shot are we hitting and you just get back into it.

**Q. So overall great round, 7 under. What was working so well out there for you?**

**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** Everything. It's funny, I'm friends with Smotherman and I'm walking up to the first tee and I'm messing with my caddie and I'm like, I wonder what he did well today. Probably hit it well, chipped it well, putted well.

I kind of did the same thing today, so everything clicked nicely. I feel like I've been trending the last couple months and things came together nicely today.

**Q. Is there something about this golf course that just fits your eye and the game clicks in a certain way?**



**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** Yeah, I think I'm a good sort of mid to long iron player and there's a lot of that out here. That suits me. A lot of drivers, which I like. So yeah, I guess it fits my eye, and 7 under's a good score out there.

**Q. Now, you mentioned again the wildlife with the bees in South Africa. Playing rounds in Africa, I would imagine you've maybe had a few other wildlife encounters there?**

**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** Yeah, depends where you go. Like we play the Dunhill at Leopard Creek every year, which is right next to the Kruger National Park. The 13th hole is a par 5, the green's next to the water, you see buffalo, hippo, if you're lucky you get elephants, so it's pretty spectacular.

**Q. You probably don't want to see the other one, the crocodiles?**

**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** You see them, but the green's built up so they can't get to you, which is crazy because like in Florida the gators are everywhere. You don't see that back home.

**Q. Anything you want to improve on for tomorrow or was today pretty perfect?**

**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** Yeah, it's as good as it gets, I think. I was telling Feely, my caddie, like that stretch from like I think it was 15 I think it was where I holed out, 16 was great, 17 was so good, 18 was -- it was just an all-around great day. So I'm just going to go get some rest and come back tomorrow.

**Q. Can you just describe your second shot at 15 that you made?**

**ERIK VAN ROOYEN:** So funny enough, we took the gap wedge out, which a full gap wedge is like 130 for me. We took it out because there's so many long irons. I get there, it's 137 to the pin down off the left, perfect gap wedge. So I've got a little uphill lie so OK, I can hook a sand wedge, maybe get it there, or I've got to hit a little fiddly pitching wedge. In the end I thought I had to do too much with the sand wedge with upslope, wind off the left and I hit a little pitching wedge and just went straight at it. You don't really plan holing out from 137, so when it happens it's pretty sweet.

