

ROUND 1 QUICK QUOTES
November 9, 2023

ERNIE ELS (-8)



Q. Ernie, great playing today. You drove the ball particularly well. Is there a reason for that?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah, I thought the last week of the year I'm going to try something new, so I put a little lighter shaft in my driver and I actually went with a different driver head from XXIO this week. I've used it before like in March, but I put a little lighter shaft and I'm thinking I'm getting a little tired at the end of the season.

Q. Speaking of last, it's a long year, it's the last tournament of the year. Is there just a little bit of sense of relaxation that it's finally over after this week, you can have a little fun?

ERNIE ELS: Yes and no. I mean, obviously we want to finish off on a positive note. Obviously Steve did his thing winning the Charles Schwab Cup this year. There's a lot to play for, a lot of -- take some real confidence out of this last event. The golf course is fantastic so it kind of forces you to bring your game. If you put it in play, you can get a score going, so I was concentrating on that. Let's see what happens at the end of the week.

Q. You've played very solidly all year, the one victory earlier in the year. What would it mean to you to get a victory here in the last week?

ERNIE ELS: Well, I mean, if you look at that cup, there's some serious names on there, everything from Tom Watson, Tom Lehman, Bernhard, all of these great players. Love to get a trophy at the end of the year obviously. We've got a long way to go, I don't think I'm going to think about it maybe until Sunday afternoon if I'm in contention, but just to play good this week and try to finish off a pretty steady year would be great.

Q. Ernie, take us through what went well today en route to your 8-under 64.

ERNIE ELS: Just overall I felt good, my body felt good and I got off to a nice start birdieing three out of the first four. I just kept it going. Conditions were perfect and I felt comfortable. It was one of those days when each shot felt comfortable kind of, off the tees and the iron shots and made some putts. I felt I needed to get off to a good start. The golf course is there for the taking if the weather's like this. I knew golf scores were going to be good today, so yeah, good day.

Q. You just mentioned on TV a minute ago that the golf course is in exceptional shape.



ERNIE ELS: Yes.

Q. Does that give you a chance to free yourself up a little bit to do what you did?

ERNIE ELS: Well, yeah. As I say, I felt comfortable. Hopefully I have this feeling again tomorrow and days to come. I've been playing half decent the last three, four weeks so I know I'm coming in with a little bit of game. Hey, we've all got to tick away until Sunday and hopefully I'm in contention Sunday and hopefully we can have something good happen.

Q. You have been playing well the last month and a half. Do you wish it was April and not November?

ERNIE ELS: No, I've -- we still learn. I learnt a lot the last couple of months out of my game. I think I've got to pace myself a little bit schedule-wise next year a little bit. But I'm working with a physio now who's helped me a lot the last month, Tyson. That's really been very, very beneficial for me.

So I just want to play well this week. We'll look back at the year and then start planning for next year.

Q. Does that mean a cutback in the schedule?

ERNIE ELS: We'll see. I mean, I love playing. I'm saying I'm going to cut back, but I probably won't. I'll play, what is this, 23 this week. I'm not sure. Let's see when we get there. I'll speak to you in Hawaii.

Q. Ernie, how about the Springboks?

ERNIE ELS: How about that.

Q. Are you pretty happy about that?

ERNIE ELS: One point quarterfinals, one point semifinals, one point final, the world champion. So the world champs for the next four years. So if there's a greater tournament, then I'm really happy for them.

