

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
March 6, 2020



KEN DUKE (-8)

KEN DUKE: First time here obviously and what a great setting there is here. I've had a great preparation, I played with some members in the pro-am that kind of helped me out, you know, where the ball may break, pull this way and that way. Hit a lot of shots close. I holed one there from the fairway over there on No. 5 and that always gets the round going pretty good.

Q. Ken, can you tell us, I was talking to your pro-am guy on 18, he said on 5 you weren't in great position.

KEN DUKE: No. I'm usually never out of the fairway, but I missed a few today and I was up under a tree and between two roots and it was a perfect number, 190 yards. I was just trying to hit a low 5-iron up there to run up there to that back pin and it came out perfectly, hit on the front and just kept going, kept going. I see everybody's hands going up in the air and it went in. It's, I guess, a payback because on the first hole I hit it right down the middle and I was in a divot, so I guess that's a payback, but I'll take anything like that, for sure.

Q. Do you remember going as low as you did, 8 under through 11 at the start?

KEN DUKE: I don't think I've ever done that. I've got it to 8 under before and better, but this golf course can do that. You hit it in the right spots, you have uphill putts. The tricky part is the bumpy greens and you've got to be patient with that. You're going to miss some three-footers, you're going to make some 20-footers. I played enough at Riviera and Pebble and San Diego at Torrey Pines, that's what you're going to get here and you just have to be patient with it and take what you get.

Q. Any numbers going through your mind when you got to 8 under?

KEN DUKE: I have to be honest, when I birdied No. 11 I was thinking 50s, I'm not joking. I have to. I just knew some holes coming up where I was hitting the drives in the practice rounds. I knew I had two par 5s; I didn't know if I could get there, but if I could get a couple before those par 5s, I thought I had a shot. Hit a couple bad drives, just did not give myself a chance to attack some of the pins and that's the way it goes.

But I'm very happy where I am today. Been struggling for the first rounds and finally we kind of made a little different game plan. And talked with Toski this week and said -- gave me a little chewing and that's the way it goes. It's a good start, we're looking forward to the weekend.

Q. How's the weather, the crowd, the environment, how did that all play out?

KEN DUKE: Oh, it's special here. If no one's ever been here, you've got to come. It's pretty amazing, the setting with the ocean behind us. I'm not a big-name guy, everybody's following California guys and Daly and everybody else, but it's just fun to play well on a good golf course, that's the main thing.

Q. Your first time out here, to play so well on the front nine, that had to boost your confidence that much more?

KEN DUKE: It is. I'm a ball-striker and if I get it in the right spots on uphill putts, you make a few and I did that. Obviously getting a good frame of mind, that's the main thing going into the back nine. A little harder on the back nine, but the way I was thinking, I thought it was pretty good.

Q. You probably had no idea the course record was 60, or did you?

KEN DUKE: No, I don't think about course records. They're made to be broken and I was just trying to get off to a good start. I've been really struggling getting off to good starts and finally did that today.

Q. T-9 last week, that's pretty good.

KEN DUKE: Yeah, it was. I shot even par last week on the first day and then I shot 11 under on the weekend, so that's kind of what I was talking about. We're just trying to get better out here. It's new golf courses for my caddie and I, this is my second year, obviously first time here. Just trying to learn the percentages, where to hit it, where not to hit it, and just keep it from front of you is the main thing on this golf course.