

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**March 6, 2020**



**ERNIE ELS (-5)**

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**Q. What did you pick up on the course so quickly and how good do you feel with 5 under?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Well, I had a nice look on Tuesday and then obviously I had a pro-am on Thursday, so I had a nice look at it. You know, it suits my eye, I like it. My body feels good, swing feels pretty good, too, so I had a nice day. It's tough putting, the greens are quite tricky this afternoon, but I feel like I'm hitting it nice. Just a pity on 18 and that other par 5, No. 3, I didn't quite get the whole of them, but for the rest it was a good day, no bogeys.

**Q. Front nine you hit every green in regulation, had a birdie putt on every hole and just the first two went in, right, the close ones?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Exactly. It's just that kind of a day. On 3 was actually fortunate that my second shot stayed, you saw that.

**Q. Yeah.**

**ERNIE ELS:** Played a nice pitch and I can't believe that putt didn't go in. It went right around the hole.

**Q. Which one?**

**ERNIE ELS:** On 3 for birdie. That kind of summed up my front nine. A lot of putts just skimmed past the hole. But I feel good, I'm hitting it nice, so there's a low one out there hopefully this week.

**Q. You read that putt on 15 pretty well.**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, how about that?

**Q. 80 feet?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, at least 80 feet. The flag was 27 on, I was maybe four yards on, so at least 70, 80 feet. Those make you feel much better.

**Q. When you're starting over again on a new tour like this and you're getting to know courses, you've done this all your life, but is there a certain thing you look for to get comfortable like you are here?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, I mean, in Hawaii it was great, I played two great rounds to get into a playoff. Last week I started slowly and I really didn't want to do the same thing this week. It was a wild day, you saw it, I just couldn't get the putts going in. I've just got to stay patient. You have to be ready to go. When the bell goes, you've got to go low. And these guys have done it for a long time, so it's kind of a learning curve, but I'm getting there.

**Q. When you were looking forward to this year, what were your expectations and so far how do they compare to what you thought it would be?**

**ERNIE ELS:** No, I knew the guys were competitive, but I'm surprised really how on their games they are. These guys really score well in all conditions, so they know their games very well. So you've got to be on top of your game to win tournaments out here, that's for sure.

**Q. As you're going forward on this schedule, outside of the majors, what tournaments are you looking forward to and how much of this tour will you play through the rest of the year?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, I'll play quite a bit. This will be my main place where I'm going to play. I'll play in Asia and Europe a little bit, but I've just got to see how the things go. I've got to watch guys play, I've got to see golf courses and see what suits my eye.

**Q. Can you tell me just a little bit about the fans out there and the environment down here at the Hoag?**

**ERNIE ELS:** It's been good. Obviously Friday afternoon and you get a nice couple of last couple of holes where the fans can really get into it. The par-3 17th, it's nice to see them having a good time, so it's nice playing here.