



**ERNIE ELS (-12)**

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**Q. Fast start today, five of the first seven got you going?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, good. A couple of mistakes on the greens, but I made a lot. I think I got the pace wrong altogether on 5, felt like the ball was really going to take off on me the first putt and left it six, seven feet short. Then I birdied the next and 7, made a really good save on 8. So yeah, I made quite a few birdies.

And then again, you know, I short-sided myself on the back nine a little bit on 13 and -- excuse me, on 12 and 14 and missed a makeable par putt, but other than that it was really solid. I felt like I hit the ball well and gave myself a lot of chances.

**Q. If it weren't for those two short putts, it would have been a really low round, right?**

**ERNIE ELS:** It could have been. Ifs and buts, you know what that's like, but I've got to be satisfied with what's going on. Probably going to be in the lead, maybe one shot in the lead, but there's a bunch of guys tomorrow, so you're going to have to bring your game and do exactly what I did today.

**Q. How did you feel about 15, you eagled that for the second day in a row?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, just by chance it just happened again. Obviously yesterday was a fluke, today I had a better chance. I hit a nice drive and a 5-iron to about, what was it, 12, 14 feet and it was a really nice putt to go in because I bogeyed the previous hole, so it was really a nice momentum swinger and it got me going down 17 and 18, you know. Made a good one on 17 and a good one on 18. A lot to play tomorrow, but I'm in nice position.

**Q. Would winning your first on this tour mean something to you?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, I mean, I'm not going to think about that, I'm just going to think about the job at hand, putting one foot in front of the other. I've won some tournaments before, but I can't be thinking of that tomorrow, I've got to really keep the foot on the pedal. These guys are coming with birdies tomorrow. Just play a solid round and see what happens. I'm still very much a rookie out here, but just want to try and play a really solid round and see what happens.

**Q. Can you talk about how tricky or difficult the short putts can be on poa annua?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, in the afternoon, I mean really on the back nine, I was watching the guys around me. Everybody struggles with a four- or five-footer; at the best of times it's a tough putt to make under pressure, but when the ball's moving around a little bit, it makes it

a little bit more tough. But it is what it is. The golf course is in great shape. I'm not so used to poa annua.

**Q. You had a feeling that maybe it was pretty special to make that putt?**

**ERNIE ELS:** It was. Even on 17, to birdie 17. Didn't hit a really good drive on 18, it actually worked out well. And then the pitch was very heavy handed. But Scotty putted before me, showed me a nice line and this time I hit it right on line with quite a little speed. So I think it was big, getting myself to 12 under. There's a bunch of guys bunched at 8, 9, 10, so it's going to be quite a shootout tomorrow.

**Q. You haven't been on this tour for very long. Have you learned anything so far in your short tenure?**

**ERNIE ELS:** You have to be on your game, you know? That's kind of what I've been preaching to my guys last year in the Presidents Cup, I said get on your game and play at an elite level. That's what the guys do. Played with Jay Haas today, Jay was very comfortable, made eight birdies, unfortunately bogeyed 18. So these guys can make a lot of birdies and that's what's going to happen tomorrow.

**Q. Well, speaking of the Presidents Cup and your captaincy, you being part of that experience, will that aid you in your play tomorrow?**

**ERNIE ELS:** I hope so. I told the guys to really get their games in shape and my game's getting in good shape and tomorrow I'll have to play at a high level, which I'm going to have to do. The greens are going to be a little tricky, they got a little tricky this afternoon. It's going to be the same for everybody, but my game's feeling good.