

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**April 29, 2022**



**ERNIE ELS (-5)**

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**Q. Great to have you here, Ernie. Can you talk a little bit about your round today?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Thank you. Yeah, it was good. I struck it quite well for most of the day and had a nice start. I was 2 under through two holes and then 4 under through nine. I bogeyed 18, but I can't complain. It was a pretty tough day, a lot of wind. So to get it under 70, 67, good start.

**Q. You hit some great putts.**

**ERNIE ELS:** I did, yeah. I made some putts and, you know, that's been the difference. Get the ball in the hole, you get momentum, you can get a score on the board, so got to keep it up.

**Q. Have you been working on anything on the putting green differently?**

**ERNIE ELS:** At home, yeah, I've been tinkering a bit, but the Bloodline, I've got it set now. We've finally got the right setting on it and so forth. It's just up to me now to do the work, just get a roll on the ball. I feel I'm getting a good roll on the greens here and get the right read and off you go.

**Q. Was there a distance of the longest putt you made? Do you know how far it was?**

**ERNIE ELS:** I didn't make exceptionally long putts, I think the longest one I made was on the par 5, the sixth, it was like 12, 14 feet.

**Q. So you were putting the ball close to the pin then?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, yeah. I mean, I got it close on 1 and quite close on 2, then I birdied 6 from there, 7 from about five, six feet. Then I missed a couple, but made some good saves here and there.

**Q. The Ben Hogan way, get it close to the hole so you don't have a long putt.**

**ERNIE ELS:** Exactly. The wind's been a factor today so that's why the scores aren't low-low. I think 67 was a really good score. Obviously it's leading, but it's tough to go really low because there's a lot of wind.

**Q. Is there a certain target number you think somebody's going to have to shoot over three days to win this thing?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Depends. If it stays like this, do very, very, very well to get to 15 under. I don't know if you can keep, you know, 67s out there when it's this tough. We'll see what happens. I see there might be rain, we might play early tomorrow. Who knows.

**Q. Do you look at the leaderboard much on the first day or are you just playing your own game?**

**ERNIE ELS:** No, you don't really watch the leaderboard. You kind of -- you might glance at it, but it's not like a final day watch the leaderboard. You've got to just get your foot on the pedal.

**Q. How important is it to take care of the par 5s out here like you did today?**

**ERNIE ELS:** Yeah, that was good. I hit good drives on most of them. Six was unreachable I think for everybody, but the rest I could reach and I did and, you know, four birdies on the four par 5s, that's what you need to do.