

Q. How much fun was that?

ERNIE ELS: How much fun was that? Well, I had fun on two holes, on 13 and 15. It was tough out there. A lot of really good flag positions. In these windy conditions, tough to get your yardage right. In a lot of cases we had to play away from the flag. I'm really, really pleased with shooting under par. It looked like it was going to be over, but we've got a half a chance tomorrow.

Q. Half a chance?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah. Well, Steven is playing great. He's going to be very tough, playing for his caddie and for the family and what's happened, so he's going to be tough to beat tomorrow, but I've got four shots now, so we've got to play really well tomorrow.

Q. Just talk about the par-5s, you had back-to-back eagles. Talk about those.

ERNIE ELS: I mean, that doesn't happen much. I mean, I think I've had maybe one eagle this whole year, now I made two in three holes. But that's golf. You've just got to stick at it. There were some really difficult holes from the north, playing into the wind, and then downwind I took my chances. Those eagles brought me back. Nice to see.

Q. On 18, pretty good up-and-down. Did the wind play a role in your second shot?

ERNIE ELS: I had so much mud on my ball in the fairway, and I tried to play this little shot that didn't quite come off. I was scared, obviously, the ball would veer off into the water. I played kind of a shot that didn't come on, and then it was a nice up-and-down. I made quite a few of those putts today, so it was nice.

Q. The wind was really bad today, right? It really played a big role?

ERNIE ELS: Well, you come to Texas, and this time of the year you're going to have some wind, but normally it's out of the south. What made it nice today was that we played 17 and 18 downwind. Normally we play those things into the wind, and that's not a lot of pleasure. But hopefully tomorrow it's a little bit different so we can have a bit of a scoring day.

Q. Maybe talk a little bit again about how tough Alker is going to be and what he's playing for this week.



ERNIE ELS: Yeah, Steve is playing for his caddie who passed, and what a wonderful man he was. We had so much fun with him. I see a lot of his family out here this week. I've met his sister, I've seen his parents. Just a very sad, sad story. They had such an unbelievable time winning that Charles Schwab and all that, and now he's not here in his hometown. I'm a Yankee fan, and he's an Astros fan, obviously, so I lost a lot of money to him the last couple of years. We used to have such a good time with him. He was a great guy.

Not to have him here is a pity, but Steven is playing for him, so he'll be tough.

Q. What will it be to be in the final group with him on a special day?

ERNIE ELS: Well, I would love to, just to have that opportunity. I didn't think I was going to be anywhere near the leaderboard, but conditions kept me in it. If I play with him, that would be great. We'll be thinking of Steve.

