

Chrysler Championship
The Westin Innisbrook Golf Resort
Copperhead Course
Tampa Bay, Fl

October 28, 2006

Third-round tournament quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH ERNIE ELS

TODD BUDNICK: We thank Ernie Els for stopping by, a 1-under 70 in Round 3 of the Chrysler Championship.

Ernie, a chance tomorrow for your first victory on TOUR since late 2004. Just talk about the opportunity.

ERNIE ELS: Well, I mean I'm in a pretty good situation one behind K.J. Quite a few other players in the mix, but at least I got myself, I got a chance tomorrow. You know, I haven't won for quite a while. It would be great. It's 18 holes of golf tomorrow. I'd love to shoot something really good. I've been playing pretty good the last couple of days, a couple of loose holes here and there. But most of all I've played okay. I played solidly. I need a good one tomorrow, somewhere 67, maybe better than that. So I think I can do it.

TODD BUDNICK: A bit more difficult out there with the wind?

ERNIE ELS: Yes, today was a tough day. Thank goodness there was a bit of rain last night to soften things a bit. But the wind, the last 3 today, must have been blowing at 20 or something. You had to be careful today. You know, most of the day I kept it in play, hit some good iron shots, but around the turn again I had really bad tee shots and it cost me two bogeys. But other than that it was a pretty good day.

TODD BUDNICK: Questions?

Q. You say that you like the golf course because it is a difficult golf course, you have to earn it. Then you come in and say, man, it was tough out there today? Did it get too tough for this golf course?

ERNIE ELS: No, you know, with wind like that, you know, it's tough to really judge the wind and judge your club that you are going to use. You can't really free wheel it and be totally aggressive. You know, there is a bit of doubt that the wind brings into play. You had to be careful today. It's such a fine edge that we're on. If you hit a couple of bad shots, you're definitely going to make a bogey. That's where the toughness of the course comes in. Other courses you get away with it. But here it punishes you. You are always kind of edge on this course. That's why I like it.

Q. Talk about the importance of your bunker shot on 11 coming off the two previous holes. You were in pretty good shape from the fairway?

ERNIE ELS: Yes, I was trying to really hit a 4-iron probably too hard there. I had 230 front. It was probably a 3-iron. Most clubs, it wasn't a good swing in any case. But we got on the clock, things were kind of unraveling at that point quickly. So I hit a good bunker shot, it was a good -- what was it, a 35 yard bunker shot. That was a big shot to make birdie there. It got me back to even for the day. I like playing fast, you know, so I don't mind us getting on the clock, but it's still a little uncomfortable.

When were you put on it?

ERNIE ELS: On 11. We were always a little behind. Then Steve came out on 11 and said that you are officially being timed now. I wasn't surprised. We were a little bit behind.

Q. Ernie, it's all about winning out here. Everyone says it's all about winning, you have won so much; how difficult has it been for you to go through this stretch of time of not being able to win and how much would it mean to get it done tomorrow?

ERNIE ELS: Well, I mean, huge. It can really change my year around, you know. As you say, I play out here to win.

You know, I would say the last three months I've really been thinking about winning because I feel like I'm over my injury finally, and I could go ahead and start working on my swing instead of trying to avoid injury basically. So the last two months, three months, I've been thinking about that. It hasn't happened. Basically, you know, maybe I'm a step or two behind than I was 2004 but I'm working towards getting better. But, you know, as I said before, I'd love to get into Hawaii. I want to play in Hawaii in January. I got two chances. I got the chance tomorrow and hopefully next week to win, so that's what I'm aiming at. So it will be huge for me. It will change my year around.

Q. What's most impressive about K.J.'s game?

ERNIE ELS: He is a very consistent striker, strikes it well, doesn't hit too many loose shots. He has won here before, so he knows how to play the course. His strength is striking. He is not to loose. He is consistent. He will be a tough guy tomorrow basically.

Q. Is that the first time you heard him hit the driver?

ERNIE ELS: Yes. It sounds like an tuna fish can with a shaft in it but he hits it beautiful. He hits it nice. It sounds a bit awkward though.

TODD BUDNICK: Let's go through the birdies and bogeys.

ERNIE ELS: I birdied the 5th. I hit a drive left and hit a tree, came back into the fairway. Hit a 5-wood from that point into the green-side bunker and hit it out to about five feet and made it.

9, I pulled it left off the tee, just a terrible lie, and I kind of hacked it out there. Hit a poor third from about 60 yards. I still had a chip for my fourth, which I blew it by six feet and eventually made it for bogey.

10, I hit a 3-wood, a bit left. It kind of hit a tree, it went left into the woods, wedged it out just short of the green. Just a bad pitch, 20 feet, 2-putted for bogey.

11, I hit a driver, 4-iron, short bunker out to just a foot or so.

14, I hit a driver off the deck for my second, just short of the green. I pitched it up there from about 50, 60 yards and made it from four feet.

15, I just hit it probably the worse shot of my day. I hit an 8-iron way right, short right, chipped it up to about 12, 15 feet and missed it.

16, I hit a 3-wood, 8-iron, 12, 15 feet for birdie.

TODD BUDNICK: Anything else?

Q. As much as you have been in contention throughout your career, what's it like on days like tomorrow where you've got four guys separated by a shot and another one behind you, just so many possibilities?

ERNIE ELS: Tomorrow is patience, you know. You hope for a good start. If you have a good start, that's very, very important. If you don't have a good start, you got to be patient. You got to wait for your chance, and your chance will come. It will be tough, you know.

I think it has a good chance of going into a playoff tomorrow. But you got to be patient tomorrow. You got to play each and every shot for what it's worth. That's what you have to do tomorrow.

Q. What part of your game are you most pleased with through three days here?

ERNIE ELS: I've been striking it well. My iron play has been really nice for most part. I haven't really made those 15, 20-footers yet. So I'm hoping for that tomorrow so I can get a stretch where I can make a couple of putts. I've been managing my game reasonably well this week. I haven't been overly aggressive. I've been a little bit more tranquil this week.

Q. Granted you don't feel like you're at the top of your game because of your injury and coming back, but look at the scoreboard tomorrow. Of all of the players that are bunched that closely I see Ernie Els, whose Ernie Els and the other guys.

ERNIE ELS: Thanks.

Q. You have an advantage, is that wrong?

ERNIE ELS: Thanks.

Q. Is that wrong?

ERNIE ELS: Just keep telling him that. Scare them off a little bit.

(Laughter). You know, thanks for saying that. It means that you've done some things well in your career, and I've won some tournaments, so hopefully they think like you do. But, you know, everybody has a pretty fair chance tomorrow.

Q. I'm looking for the experience of being there and doing it as many times as you've had, and if you feel like you can get in their head a little bit?

ERNIE ELS: You know, surely, I mean, other guys have played well all year. But, I mean, I want this as bad as they do obviously. It just depends on who gets out there and plays the best on the day basically. Hopefully me tomorrow. I will be giving it 100%, you know. I can't say I'm going to walk over them. It's not that easy.

Q. You have one guy 160th on the Money List and trying to keep his card much less winning, those guys seem to be dangerous I guess?

ERNIE ELS: Yes, exactly, how many times has that happened. It's happened so many times. It's happened to me many times, you know. I lost The Open championship at Troon like that and some other tournaments. You can't count anybody out in this game. It's golf. Everybody has a fair chance.
