

# Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 30, 2025

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

## Ray Allen

### Quick Quotes

**Q. Pleased to welcome Ray Allen to the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions media center. Ray, pretty solid round today. There was some potential issues with the scoreboard. Might have you sitting pretty in second place here. Talk about your round a little bit and let us know how you played.**

RAY ALLEN: Normally when I play over the years in this event, like you're fighting to correct your mistakes the whole time.

My round today, I didn't really have too many mistakes where it got out of control. Felt like I was holding on early, trying to just get my rhythm. I didn't do anything too bad and didn't do in I go great. I think I made one birdie today. I just was -- just kept it together.

Hopefully I start to take that into tomorrow and throw a couple more good shots out there.

**Q. You're no stranger to this event. What was different today compared to prior years you played?**

RAY ALLEN: The weather for starters. I felt like coming to the course over the last couple years I was dressed like an Eskimo, not only on the driving range but the first three four holes and then you're shedding layers of clothing.

Some years it was like the whole way through where you were just dressed and sloshing through the round.

As far as the tournament, the play, it got a little windy out there. For the most part the ball was traveling well because the weather was nice. The greens surprised me because the last two days they didn't have as good of a rollout. Today everything was -- I think I three-putted twice. One where I was downhill and it stopped and another uphill and just kind of blew by.

So I was trying to figure that out. Trying to figure out the tempo. I was a little timid putting. Hopefully I got the hang



of it.

**Q. Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions has been doing this for a long time. You've been playing for a long time. What's something that sticks out to you about this tournament away from the golf really kind of allows you to enjoy yourself and your time here?**

RAY ALLEN: When you walk the ropes during the tournament you see a lot of the fans. You see a lot of different people. There is always so many people out here, so many young people out here, but when you're a part of the tournament, the places and the hotel, just around the golf course, you get a real chance to get to know everybody from the tournament staff to the players and their families.

So there is as really kinsmanship out here when you play. Every time you come here it's like a going home week where you see the same people over and over and check in with them and their families. I've created some long lasting bonds with a lot of players, celebrity players, and also the ladies on Tour.

You know, Celine I played with today. I know her brother really well in Miami. I played some rounds with her. Just to be able to watch her, she's had a great year last year. So watch her. Last time I played with her she was trying to put it together and she certainly did that. She had a great round today. Didn't start off great but pulled it together ask it was great to watch.

She helped me just watching her tempo. It's not like -- it's not the long stuff. It's just the consistency and the preciseness of striking the ball. She did a great job of that.

**Q. In those celebrity tournaments, is the consistency what starts to creep in your mind that you want to continue for three more days?**

RAY ALLEN: Well, yes, because you can never get too over confident and think this is going to be the way it is and I'm going to play great every day. You have to work it. Get to the driving range, get comfortable. You have to get your



rest.

It's four days. I love four days because you can kind of settle in on the round and kind of yourself and get really familiar with your swing and the golf course and where you want to hit the ball.

You know, there will be adversity on the course, so to be able to sit with that and get comfortable for me is -- I love that, because being patient is a sign of greatness long-term.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about the work you put in to get better at the game of golf?**

RAY ALLEN: Well, this might have been -- the last three to five months might have been the most work that I put in just from really learning my wedges and getting comfortable.

Like I go to the sand trap every round I play in. Sand trap and chipping is like a microcosm of my irons. Being able to be comfortable over them, swing them, and then just getting into that sweet spot where you're comfortable around the greens.

And it just kind of -- it spills over to the rest of your irons, long irons, mid-irons, so you have to really work on that. That was me every time I go to the range. I feel like I hit my wedges 75% more than the rest of my clubs, which helped me with the rest of my clubs.

But just going to the range and hitting balls and working on your body and stretching, all that, this is a full commitment. You can't just come out here. I was telling Celine on the fairway, as amateurs, when we play golf, we want to play well and have a good number score-wise. But we're out there having a good time, playing music, sharing stories, taking pictures. That's not a recipe for a low score. You have to really build into it and really focus. That's what you learn when you're out here with the girls on Tour.

**Q. Also in your threesome you had JR Smith.**

RAY ALLEN: Yep.

**Q. It's his first time in this tournament. What do you think about his golf game?**

RAY ALLEN: He was solid today. I feel like he's learning the rhythm of understanding this format and playing. He's a college golfer so he's played in a lot of tournaments up to this point just getting his feet wet.

Any time you do anything for the first time it's hard to know

until you do it. I don't know what he finished today, but he's right there. I think he's in top 20. He had a good round.

**Q. Halfway through the NBA season. Any comments on this season for basketball?**

RAY ALLEN: I don't believe there is a clear-cut favorite. Everybody asks me who do I think is going to win. I think when there is not a clear-cut favorite.

I believe that the game, there is a lot of parity that keeps it exciting. For the teams and the players and organizations, anybody can step up and take the mantel and run with it.

As they're going into the All-Star break, organizations are trying to position themselves and make a couple trades to close out the end of the season on a high note.

At this point the way the game is played there is no dominance where you can say, well, we can't win if we get hot towards the end of the season.

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