

# Arnold Palmer Invitational

Tuesday, March 5, 2024

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

## Eric Cole

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome 2023 Arnold Palmer Award winner Eric Cole into the interview room. Eric, coming to a place that I know is special to you, especially with the man's name who is on the tournament, if we could just get an opening comment from you on being back here at Bay Hill.

ERIC COLE: Yeah, it's an incredible spot to be for me. Growing up nearby and having so many friends and family still in this area. I played this course a lot and have a lot of memories here, so I'm really excited to get the week started, and really happy to be here.

THE MODERATOR: How different is it coming here compared to last year? Last year coming off the runner-up at Cognizant Classic in the Palm Beaches, and then this year you've had so much success on the PGA TOUR. As I mentioned, Rookie of the Year last year. How different is the mindset coming in this week?

ERIC COLE: Yeah, I feel good. I probably have, missing the cut last week, I probably have a little more rest and not as tired after a runner-up finish, playoff loss at the Cognizant last year. So, feel good, and it's been -- a lot's happened in the last year, and it's been almost all good stuff. So, coming in feeling good and ready to get the week started.

THE MODERATOR: All right. We'll take some questions out here.

**Q. I know you talked about this before, but can you just, you have spent time here, obviously you were close, you knew Mr. Palmer. Is there any stories that stand out from your time here?**

ERIC COLE: Yeah, I'm not sure about one specifically. I remember watching him hit balls a lot, and playing a decent amount of golf with him. Just really special to be around him. He didn't give me like a ton of advice, really, just kind of told us stories about what it was like when he was on TOUR and kind of the differences of the TOUR then versus now, which was kind of cool to hear.

Then one of my favorite things is there's a club room downstairs at Bay Hill, and watching him regrip clubs and work on his clubs was really cool to see like firsthand in person.

**Q. Specifically to these signature events, you've now had a chance to play in a couple of 'em. I know they're new, but do they feel different to you than a normal event?**

ERIC COLE: Yeah, probably a little bit. Just smaller fields. It's got a different feel to it. I'm not sure if we'll play in twosomes or threesomes Thursday, Friday, so that's always a little bit different, too. Yeah, I think it's great. All the best players in the world are here, and they're all competing at the same tournament, which is awesome. It does seem like the rough, I played yesterday in the pro-am, the rough is up, so it's always high here, but seems maybe even a little higher. I almost feel like the courses are almost seem a little bit tweaked a little tougher. Like, Pebble was a little harder than it was in the past and stuff, so that's kind of cool to see, as these signature events, seems like a little bit of a trend, the courses are almost set up, not like a U.S. Open, but they're set up more towards that trying to identify the best player, which I think is a really good thing too.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Eric, we appreciate your time. Best of luck this week.

ERIC COLE: Yeah, thank you.

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