

Cognizant Classic

Thursday, February 29, 2024

Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, USA

PGA National Champion Course

Erik Van Rooyen

Quick Quotes

Q. Nice round today, 5-under. Take us through how it went.

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Bit of an up-and-down front nine. Obviously started on the back and quite frustrated, I think, coming off 18, making bogey on 15, 17, and then making par on 18. Just had a chat with my caddie, and I was like, dude, I'm feeling so frustrated. I feel like my game is in great shape and not the greatest of nines, and he said, dude, relax, it's nine holes, and just come play nine holes with me like we normally do.

I think we got off to a nice little hot start there on the back, and happy with 5-under.

Q. How would you assess conditions? Guys in the early wave said they didn't hit wind until the 15th hole. You had it a little bit more sustained. How was it out there?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: I've definitely seen this course play harder before. Greens are still a bit receptive. Obviously that normally changes as the week goes on.

Look, for me, I think it's one of the hardest courses we play all year, and I think it's going to show its teeth the rest of the weekend.

Q. What did that result in Mexico, obviously the win, do for you? At that point kind of right on the Top 125 bubble, you've obviously got your card locked up for a full year, played a lot better since then, as well. What did that week do for you as a whole and your game? Or did it do anything?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Maybe not so much in my game. I started working with Foley in July of last year, and since then, things have started ticking over nicely.

I think the win was sort of the cherry on top, but I think personally, it maybe freed me up just slightly. I was in a different mental space going into that weekend. You're trying to hang on to your card here on TOUR. Now I've got



a two-year exemption. That changes things a bit.

But honestly, putting that aside, it's just hard work and working on the right stuff and let the results come sort of by themselves.

Q. I know the Bear Trap is a tough stretch of holes, but 5, 6 and 7 also seems to play pretty tough. Can you speak to how that played today?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Yeah, it's funny you mention that because I said the exact same thing to Feeley. Both nines have sort of pockets where -- I don't want to say the course lets up because it really doesn't but you can make one or two birdies, and then there's a few that are just brutal. 5, 6 and 7 definitely. 7 is just an absolute brute. 6, like you hit the green and you're happy. 5, I know I made birdie there today, made like a 22-footer, but anywhere on the green and you walk off with 4, you're smiling. If you can get through those couple holes, like you said, sort of six of them, if you can get through those hopefully level par, you're in good shape.

Q. If the wind picks up tomorrow, how is that going to affect that stretch of holes?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Yeah, it'll be hard. I haven't seen the forecast. It kind of turned today, almost went northeast, which is weird for here. Usually comes out of the southeast. So I don't know what it'll do tomorrow. I know the boys this morning there was almost no wind. Looks like there might be a bit more for us tomorrow morning. But this course is just hard.

Kind of plunk along and make a bunch of pars and hopefully roll a few in.

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