

Chubb Classic presented by SERVPRO

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Naples, Florida, USA

Tiburón Golf Club

Ernie Els

Quick Quotes

Q. Family is good?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah, Liezl is having a tea today at the house. 200 ladies in the backyard.

Q. Is the senior center open, the adult center?

ERNIE ELS: No, not yet. They're going to open June 8th.

Q. How is that coming along?

ERNIE ELS: Well, it's very important because at 21 (indiscernible) health, so adult services for the severe ones, they can't get back to society. It's vital. They have to move either back to the families or go to -- I don't know where they go. In our case, again, we go according to Ben.

Like the other kids, he's severe enough where he's going to need to have something to do, so whatever interests that they have, we are in on that, and we'll keep going. From there, the community in Jupiter have been wonderful. The golf clubs, they work in golf clubs. They work in restaurants. They go to Publix. All kinds of different little businesses help out, but this adult services building is going to help out a lot.

Q. So you've got a new season on tap. What are you feeling going into a new season. You've done it a lot. Is there a new excitement? Is it a clean slate?

ERNIE ELS: Exactly. I think it's excitement. You're going into the unknown, but with good expectations. Looking forward to playing, trying to compete. I've been competing well, but I just haven't put it over the finish line.

A lot of the courses, some of them don't really suit me that much. I've got to kind of force my game into a certain way to play on a lot of these courses out here, which have been a little different for me. But I'm getting used to that now. I've played two full seasons now, and looking forward to it.



I'm really enjoying it out here.

Q. When you say -- do they limit you a little bit? Just dial it back off the tee?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah, you've got to play -- on any course you've got to keep it in play, but it's a little -- the wrong word is "quirky," but a lot of courses are a little bit -- old country club courses. Again, if you're hitting it straight and long, you're going to be fine, which I haven't been doing too much. But if you're not doing that, you've got to play percentage golf and get the ball on the green and putt.

It's three rounds, and you've got to be on. I've found that you don't have to shoot the lights out Thursday, just don't shoot yourself out of it. Just kind of stay in there. But I'm enjoying it, and just got to ramp it up to another level.

Q. What would put you across the line? You've been on a nice roll out here.

ERNIE ELS: I remember my first season, I had quite a few opportunities to win, and I didn't -- if you have like a three, four, five-win season, that's a totally different confidence level. I just haven't been putting myself in that position. I missed a very short putt at Pebble that one year, and there's a couple of wins that were right there and I didn't quite take it, but I did have two wins, and then the COVID thing and all that.

But anyway, then I tried a 47-inch driver one year. I think it was the year before. Bombing the hell out of it but it was going all over the place. Just having fun.

But put it together, and if I can get on some kind of a roll, it would be wonderful. You've got to play good.

But I know from the past, if you can get that kind of confidence level, then you're going to a different place. I haven't really been there on this Tour yet.

Q. Is part of you being out here being able to bring awareness to your causes? You're able to talk to people and go all over and play all over the place while also bringing awareness to autism; is that part of



staying out here?

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ERNIE ELS: It's not my goal. My goal is to come out here and play golf. I've got other things on another plate. You go accordingly. But golf and autism with me in my life, we're one now. Wherever I go, that's part and parcel of what the whole package is. Every single day we talk autism, meet different people, so it's just part of what the whole deal is all about.

Q. This is where you first met Carter a year ago, correct?

ERNIE ELS: Yeah.

Q. Have you talked to him today?

ERNIE ELS: We were just in a meeting now. It's been a little bit busy. Yeah, we've become good buddies. They've gone to Dubai. They went to -- we did a golf course there, and they were out there, and I saw him at the show, the PGA show. He was there. He was there with his paddle. We were doing some different product that are coming out so I saw him there. We stay in contact, his mom and his dad.

Q. How inspiring can a 10-, 11-year-old kid be for something like that, that cause?

ERNIE ELS: It just shows you, kids, they're so special. They hone in on something, they use a different type of concentration, much more than we have, and that's special now.

I just hope he keeps going on and people buy into him because he's for real. He's a great kid, Carter. He's a really great kid.

Q. We know what you're capable of doing out here. How driven are you to have that run? Inside you're a competitor.

ERNIE ELS: But I'm still having fun. Even though I'm not winning, shooting a good score, hitting good shots, that's what I'm out here for. We've done what we've done on the other side. This is great. Still is. I still look at it every day when I play out here, I feel I'm fortunate enough to be healthy and playing here.

At the end of the day I just want to compete and play at a high level. If that next level comes, then it does, and if it doesn't, then it doesn't. I've had my run. I've accomplished just about everything I could, World No. 1, winning majors, winning tournaments, that was great. This is just a different cycle.

