

# The LPGA Drive On Championship presented by Volvik

Thursday, March 4, 2021

Ocala, Florida, USA

Golden Ocala

## Austin Ernst

### Quick Quotes

**Q. Austin, what a great first round here at Golden Ocala. How do you feel now that you've got round one under your belt?**

AUSTIN ERNST: Game feels really good. Made some good putts today, hit some good shots. Kind of had a mix of some quality iron shots and then some good putting. I think with how the course is playing it's a little firm with the greens being newer, so you kind of have some shots that are a little tougher to get it close to.

I felt like I managed it very well.

**Q. Do you feel like it was slow and then you picked up, because you had 5-under by the back nine?**

AUSTIN ERNST: Yeah, the front nine I struggled early. Bogeysed No. 3 and bogeyed No.4, I three-putted No.4. Then after that I made birdie on 5 and kind of made birdie on 9, so really from 9 on I guess I was 6-under on last ten holes.

Yeah, I think I hit it a little bit better coming in. Missed a couple of the greens, but overall it was really good. Then I had a really good chip-in on No. 17.

**Q. How long that was chip-in on 17?**

AUSTIN ERNST: 20 feet.

**Q. When you have a slow start, how do you change the mindset?**

AUSTIN ERNST: Kind of all day I've just told myself, All right -- even last week, All right, I'm just going to go play golf. So if I go play golf at home, I make a couple birdies early, keep the pedal down and make a lot of birdies.

Drew did a really god job today too. On 5 he was like, All right, there are a lot of birdie opportunities coming in. It



AT GOLDEN OCALA

was kind of seeing one putt go in and then started being a little bit more aggressive with the putter. I left a couple putts short. Left a birdie putt short on 6, and after that I told myself, All right, I'm going to be really aggressive coming in, and then I made a lot of birdies coming in.

**Q. That's great. There are a lot of tribute holes out there. How has that been playing? One of the players said she feels like she's in different countries at different times. How did you feel with the tribute holes?**

AUSTIN ERNST: Yeah, they did a really good job with a few of them. This is my third time coming here, but think 11 and 12 out here, which are 12 and 13 at Augusta, I've never played Augusta, but they look at least like it. I've asked a couple girls that played the Augusta National Women's Am. They said the only difference is 13 in Augusta the green's a little bit more severe than 12 here.

Yeah, it's cool. You can tell walking on them what the holes are supposed to be. I think the only one I didn't know would've been 5 here. I didn't know that was a tribute hole. I just remember from last time that No. 15 here is a tribute hole. Yeah, they're fun.

**Q. How about just talking about the No. 3. You played all three events in 2021, not had a break for yourself. How has it been to ease into 2021 with playing all three?**

AUSTIN ERNST: It's been different. I would say typically I would have seven weeks off and I would be able to take three weeks off and then kind of start practicing.

I think I didn't really get an off-season, which was good and bad. But I think kind of starting at Diamond, slow start with that one, just taking a couple weeks after and easing back into the season.

I thought it was really good to see how my game was kind of where it was to kind of gear up for these next two. Obviously we kind of get going after that pretty full steam, but it was nice to kind of ease into the season instead of being thrown head first in like we typically are.



I definitely didn't take as much time off as I normally would've.

**Q. What does it mean for this event to be happening right now? It's still a crazy time in the world, but with the Drive On championships that we've had, how do you feel about them?**

AUSTIN ERNST: Yeah, it's awesome. It's really cool that the tour has backed a few of them. We've had Volvik obviously this week helping to put it on. But to be able to play whenever we're still in the middle of a pandemic and a lot of places are in lockdown, it's really cool that we get to play, and I know we're all very happy that we're getting to play even though we are still in the middle of a pandemic.

**Q. Last question: What is your goal for the next three rounds having played such a great first?**

AUSTIN ERNST: I think just keep doing the same things. I play well when I'm aggressive, so I'll kind of keep staying aggressive and kind of keep attacking pins when I can. With how my putter worked today, I know when I don't I can still make some 25, 30-footers. Keep doing the same thing I did today.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports