

Sentry Tournament of Champions

Thursday, January 6, 2022

Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA

Plantation Course at Kapalua

Erik van Rooyen

Quick Quotes

Q. Take me through that hot start on the front nine, your really first competitive round here?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Yeah, a lot of fun. I'm seeing some putts go in. You know, it's taken me a long time to kind of get used to the Bermuda kind of greens. We don't have that back home in South Africa. So seems like I'm kind of getting a handle on it.

Q. Speaking of South Africa, did you have troubles or worries about getting here?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Worries, yeah, but luckily no trouble. The tricky part was getting a COVID test within 24 hours. My wife and I raced to Cape Town the morning of the 27th of December and just made our appointment because we forgot that it was a public holiday. So that was the tricky part. But the flight was all good.

Q. Speaking of South Africa, two of you up towards the lead, you and Garrick. Something about this course that's kind of fitting your eyes and all that, do you think?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: I don't know. We play a bunch of different courses back home, whether it's wind or parklands or whatever it is, so maybe we're just accustomed to a bit of it all.

Obviously played college golf in the U.S. I think he did a short stint of that as well. It's wide fairways. It's soft. Everyone is going to score well.

Q. The Green-reading books, has that affected you at all and seen any challenges?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: No. I used to use them somewhat, but I'll figure it out. No matter what they do I'll figure it out.

Q. Short stint for Garrick. I don't think he ever found the library in Las Vegas, did he?



ERIK VAN ROOYEN: (Laughing) right. It's just been a Flash, hasn't it?

Q. Do you know him very well? You're a little older than him.

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Not very well. Yeah, I'm a little older, so not very well. But sort of me playing college and his name always popped up somewhere. So I got to know him now the last sort of six, seven months, and he's a great kid.

Q. I was talking to Gary Player when I was at the PNC, and we were just talking about I guess things kind of come in cycles everywhere around the world, but South Africa just seems like it's got a lot going on with your success and Garrick and Wilco over in Europe and it just seems like there's a lot of younger guys coming up.

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Yeah. Gary is obviously, call it sort of the godfather of golf in South Africa for us. I used to watch Ernie and Retief growing up, and I think their success kind of keeps the game alive back home and got guys like myself and Garrick into the game.

And then I think the junior sort of setup back home and the Sunshine Tour just keeps feeding in good players into, whether it's the DP World Tour or the PGA TOUR.

Q. Did you ever play the Big Easy Tour?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: A couple events, but pretty much just straight Sunshine Tour.

Q. Was there any quarantining? I remember Charl said he was going back home after Vegas and they were going to be there for a very long time.

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Yeah. We were there for a month. No quarantine. We were kind of nervous that they might lock the country down when the Omicron kind of came out, but they never did. I think it was a good thing because our economy's really struggling. This is a great sort of time of



year for tourism in South Africa. The weather is beautiful and it's just not happening, so I'm glad that didn't happen.

Q. When did you get home?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: I went home on the 24th of November and got back into U.S. the 28th of December.

Q. Where are you living?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: In Jupiter Florida.

Q. No, no.

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: In South Africa? We have an apartment in Johannesburg still. I've got some family there and then my parents have had a beach house along the coast, about a four-hour drive from Cape Town, for about 20 years.

Q. (No microphone.)

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Yeah. So it's about an hour and a half west of George, just along the garden route there.

Q. I was trying to piece together having to go to Cape Town for the COVID test.

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Well, we didn't want to fly with our baby another flight, so we drove the morning to Cape Town, and then we realized on the way there it's a public holiday and everything closes at noon and we were going to get there 10 past 12:00 that afternoon, so I had to put the pedal down.

Q. Don't they have speed cameras there?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: The thing is, you know, I kind of know where they are, so I try and dodge them and hopefully there's no cops on the road. So we made it. We made it.

Q. So barely got your COVID test --

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Exactly. It was a long day.

Q. What was the flight pattern from Cape Town?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Straight to Newark and then down to Palm Beach.

Q. Oh, then so you were home and came here?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Correct.

Q. How can I not ask you about the Inspector Clouseau look. Where are we going with this?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Going nowhere. But it's, I've kind of done it through Christmas the last bunch of years, just, I don't know, to keep up the spirit, I guess, so on. It's kind of stayed through the new year we'll see how long it keeps going for.

Q. Do you have to work on it or do you wake up that way?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: I brush it, shampoo, condition. You got to treat it well, otherwise it kind of bites back. So, yeah, I've got a little wax that I throw in in the morning.

Q. And how long it stays we don't know?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: We'll see. Until I get tired of it.

Q. What did you find the easiest and the most difficult about the course?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Honestly, I hit it really well today, I didn't find it all too difficult. I think the course needs a bit of breeze to really protect it. The fairways are quite wide and it's playing so soft, so if that doesn't happen then the scores will be really low.

Q. I don't want to look back at the entire year, but it was big to win in Barracuda.

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Absolutely.

Q. That got the exemption and made you a PGA TOUR winner and we can go on and on, but I wanted to ask you about your post-season performance to get into the TOUR Championship, which sets up the Masters going forward. Which was more, I won't say more important, but which was almost more meaningful in the grand scheme of things?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: The win I think definitely more meaningful. I've got the self belief that I'll play in every major regardless. But I was at a point where I wasn't playing well, I was a bit down in the dumps, I was going to lose my card. That meant that going back to European, whatnot, which is fine, but I want to play here.

So getting the win right after giving birth to our baby daughter that was definitely a pinnacle.

And the TOUR Championship was sort of the cherry on the cake. You're going into the Playoffs with the attitude of we had nothing two weeks ago, might as well just cruise and I

did.

Q. Was it -- I'm trying to think -- was it a big week at Liberty National?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Yeah, BMW, sorry, Liberty I played well, I was in the final group there, I had one slip up on a par-3. Then BMW I played well, I think I finished 5th as well. So 7th and 5th.

Q. Has your wife ever been to Hawaii?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Well we played Sony last year. But, yeah, her dad actually grew up on that island, so it's his first time back as well, so we've got them here.

Q. Was he a Navy guy?

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: No, his father used to travel a lot with telecommunications stuff that he did. So they lived here for a stint and then they moved back to Minnesota and that's where they stayed.

Q. There's a lot of people that move from Hawaii to Minnesota just for the weather.

ERIK VAN ROOYEN: Right, right. (Laughing).

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