

The American Express

Thursday, January 18, 2024

La Quinta, California, USA

PGA WEST Pete Dye Stadium Course

Rico Hoey

Quick Quotes

Q. Heck of a way to start. 9-under 63 with a hometown crowd watching. Just a few comments about today.

RICO HOEY: It was a great start. Yeah, I kept the ball in front of me. It was kind of cool having everyone out here, my family, my dad, girlfriend, coaches, everyone out here. Feels like a home event for me, I only live an hour away. I grew up out here, playing junior tournaments out here, so, it was fun.

Q. 63, Nicklaus Tournament Course. Yet you're only tied for first. Obviously, part of the story line at this tournament is you got to keep going low. This is as good a start as you could ask for, right, except for maybe that putt on 18?

RICO HOEY: Oh, it's all good.

Q. Is that a daunting thing, to come in here and say, well, I got to keep shooting 63s?

RICO HOEY: Kind of yes and no. But the conditions out here are so great, the greens are fast, they're rolling great, grass is awesome. Coming out here there's three different, whatever, courses, and, yeah, I'm just going to keep doing what I need to do. I'm sure everyone has their own game plan, but today was a great start, and I'm just happy to end the way it is and just going to keep rolling.

Q. Golf is a crazy sport, today you got off on the right foot. Walk me through the process of like since the fall getting your card and being back here in southern California?

RICO HOEY: It's great. I'm so happy to be out here, so stoked. It's always been a dream to play out here. I watched this tournament growing up and even next week as well, so it's just, every week, it's just so awesome. I'm so used to playing on the Korn Ferry Tour, and it's a great tour, but being out here is truly a blessing. So, I want to take every opportunity that I can and I'm just going to keep rolling.



Q. Part of the grind, right?

RICO HOEY: Exactly. No grind, I'm having a good time.

Q. You said you played junior golf out here. How many rounds had you played on this layout?

RICO HOEY: Handful of times. I think I played more than half the courses out here. There used to be a junior tour called -- southern California has a PGA Junior Tour and they had a desert series out here. And another TOUR, CV tour, too. These courses were very fortunate enough to have us out here as junior golfers coming out here and beating it. So, yeah, I played out here a handful of times, and all the other tracks as well.

Q. Is it any different now, the way it's laid out for this tournament, than it was when you played juniors?

RICO HOEY: I think it's a little bit nicer, I would say. It's a lot firmer. Conditions are just awesome. They keep it well kept throughout the year, but it was just really fun being out here and playing how fast and firm it was today. We really had a great time.

Q. A lot of those junior tournaments would have been summer tournaments, right?

RICO HOEY: Oh, yeah, it was so hot. They would tee us off, like, first off, so a kid who is, like, 10 years old, trying to push his cart out here at, whatever, 100-degree weather, that would have been pretty bad. We would tee off first, and pace of play was awesome this is awesome, this is so good.

Q. Did you ever come to this tournament as a spectator?

RICO HOEY: No, I didn't. I wish I did. I always watched it on TV. Being an hour away I would watch it and it was really cool. Then they would try to host the tournament like a month after, so we would be fortunate enough to play a meant after.

Q. I won't ask you if you know who Bob Hope is.

RICO HOEY: (Laughing). Yes, I do, yes. I played his



course a bunch over there at Classic Club.

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