

Oak Hill Country Club ~ Rochester, NY

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Out	Total		Yardage
452	401	214	570	428	170	461	428	418	3,542	429	188
372	598	323	181	439	460	469	3,459	7,001		Par	4
4	3	5	4	3	4	4	4	35	4	3	4
5	4	3	4	4	4	35	70		Score		

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

JAY HAAS

KELLY ELBIN: 2006 Senior PGA Champion, Jay Haas, joining us. The leader halfway through the first round with a 69 at the Senior PGA Championship here at Oak Hill Country Club. Jay, congratulations on around of 69. Looked like a little bit of a roller coaster ride on a pretty difficult day.

JAY HAAS: It was. I played extremely well. Would have taken 1-under par before I teed off. Would have stayed in the hotel room. Wouldn't even have come out here.

(Laughter.)

But a little disappointed in 16 and 18. I was playing, just hitting a lot of great shots, a lot of solid shots, putting the ball in the fairway, on the green. Just pulled a drive at 16 and pushed it a little bit at 18.

But overall I'm extremely happy. It was pretty miserable this morning, cool, everybody's got long johns on and ski caps, wind breakers and such.

So I got off to a good start, birdied the first hole and being a couple under on the front nine. Just kind of built on that.

But the key for me was just hitting a lot of solid shots, again, just kept the ball in the fairway most of the time. Most of my, I guess of my, what did I make, three bogeys? I drove it in the rough those three times. And just -- or missed the fairway those three times. I hit it in the short rough a couple times and the first cut there. But on some tough holes, tough driving holes I hit a lot of good drives. And obviously really pleased.

KELLY ELBIN: Go through the birdies and bogeys, please.

JAY HAAS: 1, a good drive and a 9-iron. To about maybe 20 feet behind the hole. Didn't want that putt starting out, but somehow wiggled that one down in the hole.

2, I laid up off the tee to the right in the rough. Couldn't reach the green, ended up with about a 15-footer for par. Missed that.

6, I hit a 7-iron to about six feet. Made it.

9, a 6-iron to about 30 feet. Made that.

13, hit a sand wedge for my third shot to about 15 feet behind the hole. Very quick putt. And made that.

16, I drove in the left rough and hit a pretty good shot out of there, just to the right a little bit and hung up just short of the bunker and kind of got fooled on my pitch shot there. It didn't come out very good, came out about 15 feet short and I missed that.

18, I hit a pretty good drive there and pushed it just enough that it hit the lip of the bunker and plugged in the lip. Hacked it out to the left, hit a 7-iron 15 feet and 2-putted that one.

KELLY ELBIN: For the record, Jay hit 14 of 18 greens in regulation. Questions?

Q. Clearly you've played here enough to know that you go along, go along, it's fine, and, man, it bites you quick. And you saw that at the end. Is that just kind of typical of this place and Major venues? You got to keep it going or else it's going to bite you?

JAY HAAS: I guess I'm not thinking of it in such day-to-day terms. It's just it's a long race and I was glad to be 3-under par, glad to be 1-under par. I was disappointed, again, that I bogeyed those two holes coming in. But I will make some bogeys this week for sure. You have to be patient. We talked about that yesterday. You can expect that here.

Obviously on a day like today hitting 14 out of 14 fairways would have been pretty a great accomplishment. If anybody does that, they deserve to shoot a really good round.

But, yeah, I feel that -- I'm disappointed a little bit with my finish, but all in all, when I'm back in the room resting and watching the guys out here on TV this afternoon, they're freezing and windy and everything, I'm under the covers maybe, I'll be happy about that.

Q. How tough was it to start in those conditions this morning?

JAY HAAS: Thankfully, it wasn't that windy when we teed off. And the first few holes downwind and that, the wind, what there was, did not play a real huge factor.

But it was cold. I don't know what, somebody said it was a chill factor of 37 when we teed off. Again thankfully it didn't rain very hard out there. They were talking about showers and then we got a little bit of showers early this morning. And I think some of the guys ahead of me maybe played a hole or two in a fairly good rain before I even went out to practice.

But it's not great, especially at 54, when the temperature is that cool. When you got -- basically you hit a poor shot here, you'll make a bogey. So when it's cold, you're stiff, it's pretty difficult.

Q. Even though it was five years ago, when last you played here, you finished that weekend really strong, back to back 69s. You shoot another 69 today. Did you have the good feeling left over or was that too far in the rear view mirror?

JAY HAAS: That's pretty -- two weeks ago is probably too far in the rear view mirror, probably. Five years ago is certainly too far.

But I do feel good, I feel comfortable here. I know I've played well here before. I know kind of what you have to do to play well.

You just can't really attack this place. You kind of have to play position golf. The ball tends to run out of the fairway here and there. A lot of little slopes and in the landing areas.

So I feel comfortable here. But in 1980, maybe, no, '89 I guess I think I shot 69 in the first round and shot like 78 in the second round and missed the cut at the U.S. Open. The one that Curtis won. So I know what's out there and how you have to be patient. And it's a long week. But I think too if you play well, I think if you hit good shots, you're very much rewarded here. You don't just -- it's not impossible.

So I think the lure of possible birdies and a good round, a good score is out there. So it's not like you're climbing Mount Everest.

KELLY ELBIN: As a reminder, Jay tied for fifth in the PGA Championship here in 2003.

Q. Jeff Sluman mentioned having a guy like Greg Norman who doesn't come out play and how good he feels if he can get out here a few weeks to have a guy like Norman out here. He finished plus 2, in contention maybe for this week. Is that, does that mean something for this tour? Not just to have him out here, but if he were to play well and be in contention?

JAY HAAS: I would like to think I helped talk him into playing this week. I don't know if you talked to him, I saw him at Augusta at the Golf Writers dinner there and he was with Chris and she said, I'm going to make him come out and play some. And I said, come on, you know, you'll have a great time. And he said, I think I'm going to commit to the Senior PGA Championship. So here he is.

Well I saw him on Tuesday and he was cussing me under his breath because it was so cold and windy.

(Laughter.)

So, anyway, but I didn't know what he shot. But I thought he played well. He looks to me the same as he always did. He looks like he's capable of shooting a 65 any time he goes out. So, yeah, I think it's great that he's here. I know Jeff probably enjoyed playing with him. I enjoy the heck out of playing with Hale and Eduardo. And it's fun to see great champions in their element and doing well. It can only enhance the Champions Tour and senior golf if Greg came out more.

Q. I see you got your wind breaker still buttoned up all the way to the top. How difficult was the cold and then when the sun kind of poked itself out, the wind picked up. So it was almost, there was something that the elements really conspired.

JAY HAAS: I was dressed pretty warm. I got my silk underwear on and I got full rain gear on, my pants and such, so I was warm. I won't say I was sweating by any means, but I was comfortable.

And I actually on No. 12 green the sun kind of popped out and I had about

a 12-footer for birdie there and I peeled this thing off and handed it to my caddie and as I was lining up my putt, the wind kind of hit me and I was kind of sweaty and all of a sudden now I'm chilled. And so I just put it right back on and I didn't even think about bringing it, or pulling it off again.

It's kind of hard to quantify how hard is it. It's just, again, it's just very difficult to keep a rhythm. And you just like to go out and in short sleeves and swing at it and don't think so much about the elements, just try to attack the golf course. But it's, you know, you just have to hit a lot of good shots to shoot a good round.

Q. As a follow-up, to get through today, especially knowing the elements, how bad the elements were, and hoping that it looks like the forecast is going to improve, how to -- I guess the key was getting through today, was it?

JAY HAAS: It would be nice to say, well, I need to shoot a good round or I'm going to shoot a good round because the elements are poor and it's going to get better. I'm trying to shoot low every time I go out. But obviously I wanted to get off to somewhat of a good start just to be feel like I didn't have to catch up so much.

And there could be some good rounds in the afternoon. I doubt that I will be the only score under par. I could see a 68 or 67 or 66 even, some of the guys in the afternoon. But you have to play well. And I'm very, very pleased with getting off to the start that I did.

Q. You mentioned three times in the rough, three bogeys. Do you see the rough improving as the weather improves or will it be like a U.S. Open mentality?

JAY HAAS: I don't see them cutting the rough by any means. It's just standing up pretty good. Standing straight up. Not many of us are strong enough to power it out of there. At least I am not.

If it warms up a little bit, the ball might be going a little bit farther as the weekend progresses. But you know, seems like the rough's going to be growing and as a couple days go on here, if the weather warms up a little bit.

You see some of the areas where guys walked in there and hit some shots and maybe walked it down a little bit. But what you can maybe hope for is when you hit it way off line and where the people walk, that you get some kind of break.

But right off the fairway, it's not easy. And I didn't, No. 2 I had no chance to get to the green. I didn't hit, I hit the first cut at number 7 and I knocked it on the green. 10, I was in the first cut. I was all right. Then 17 I was left and I could have gotten it on the green, but it was, I didn't really have control of the ball. And then 18 I was in the bunker. And had I been in the rough there I wouldn't have been able to reach it.

So very rarely are you going to be able to knock the ball on the green from the rough. I don't care this week, next week, and when spring time comes.

(Laughter.)

Q. The PGA in 2003 the rough was I think eight inches deep. I think everyone kind of agreed it was a little over the top. For a senior event, how much rough is enough? Is there too much, is it not enough, or where do you think it ought to be for this event for this field?

JAY HAAS: I think it's set up like a Major. What we would consider a Major tournament. Now I've seen it worse. I don't think I've seen -- I think this might be the hardest set up for a Major tournament on the Champions Tour that I've played. The wind really blew hard at Oak Tree. And that made that very difficult. But I don't think the rough was quite as thick as it is here.

The greens are very quick. It seems like they could kind of just dictate what they want the scores to be on the weekend here. But I don't think it's too much, I don't think it's too difficult, I don't think it's too easy. Sometimes when you get, when you make it a little bit shorter the guys go for greens more and run off the edge of greens and take more gambles and it's almost more of a penalty. But I think it's pretty fair right now.

Q. You've played several Major Championships now, events here, after having finished today, are the conditions on a scale of 1 to 10 are they worse today then or harder today than when you played the last PGA or at the U.S. Open?

JAY HAAS: I would say I've played harder Major tournaments on the PGA TOUR. The last one I played was at Medinah. And I thought that was one of the hardest courses I ever played. The way it was set up with 7,600 yards, whatever the length of it was there.

But I still say that Winged Foot in 1974 when Hale won at 7 over was probably the hardest course I've ever played in my life. The last -- and when Geoff Ogilvy won it was maybe a toss up.

But under the conditions, what we had, what we played with back then and the way and as far as the ball went and all that.

So I've played harder, I don't know how you would rank it, how I would rank it, an eight and a half maybe or something. I have played definitely played easier Major venues than this.

KELLY ELBIN: Jay Haas, in at 1-under 69, leader in the clubhouse.

JAY HAAS: Thank you.

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PAGE 1

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