

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:

JEFF SLUMAN

KELLY ELBIN: Jeff Sluman, the leader in the clubhouse in with an even par 70. First round of the 69th Senior PGA Championship. Jeff, congratulations, 38 going out, 32 coming in. Thoughts on what went right on the back nine.

JEFF SLUMAN: All I have to do is, you were kind enough to have my stats in front of me. Pretty apparent how you can shoot 38-32. But I just was, candidly, a little tight. When I get tight I usually hit just a fraction left. Which I did on the front nine. Missed a bunch of fairways.

And this golf course, if you miss a bunch of fairways you got your work cut out for you. So I got up-and-down on 7 for par. But I didn't do it on 8 and 9.

So I made the turn at 3-over and I just thought it was not time to hit the panic button or anything, but I just knew that I needed to relax and regardless of the score that came out, just try and play the way I've been playing and I hit a bunch of good shots on the back nine and made a couple of nice putts and I'm very pleased to be in at even par.

KELLY ELBIN: Go through your three bogeys on the front and three birdies on the front, please.

JEFF SLUMAN: 3-wood on 1 off the snow and into the left trees.

(Laughter.)

Just kind of chipped it out and hit 9-iron in there 12, 15 feet and missed it.

8, I thought I hit an okay drive, but it landed up just in the left rough. And I got it just short of the green and hit a nice pitch to five feet and Fuzzy and Greg were both on my line and both made putts, one for birdie and one for par, and candidly I was reaching to get the ball out of the hole and it just didn't go in.

Nine was just a routine five, you know. Pulled it left and couldn't get it on the green and hit a bad wedge to 25 feet and 2-putted.

So it wasn't a very sterling front nine.

But the back nine I hit a nice drive off of 10 and hit a wedge in there and probably made a 25 foot putt. Which really kind of got me started. Played pretty solid from there.

I drove it in the left rough on 13, but hit the green.

And 15, I think we had 180 yards at the time and it was starting, the wind was starting to pick up right in our face and the pin was on the left. So I hit a really nice 5-iron in there about six feet under the hole and made that.

Hit a nice drive down the middle of 16. This golf course is much easier when you hit the fairways. And I hit a wedge to about two feet. Made that.

And then made two nice par saves on the last two holes after probably my best drive of the day that was on 17, it looked like the only, it looks like the only fairway I missed or I mean green I missed.

I hit 6-iron in there and just left it a little to the right. But managed to make a nice par save.

And 18, I just, I remember watching Curtis in '89 putt down there kind of that pin, Fuzzy was just a little past me and he putted it six feet by. And I don't know how in the world where we are, how you're going to not run it three or four or five feet by. That green is unbelievably fast and I was just glad to get away with a 2-putt there.

KELLY ELBIN: Open it up for questions, please.

Q. You mentioned about being tight. Did it have more to do with the weather or being back home and wanting so badly to play well for the home crowd?

JEFF SLUMAN: I always have certainly stated that you really want to play well. And golf's a very challenging game at best, but when you really want something and try too hard, judging by my past experiences in Rochester, I haven't played very well.

So I was just trying to, I was certainly less tight this year than in previous years. I finally relaxed out there and started to play some good golf. And that, but the weather was also a little problematic at first. But I went in our fitness trailer and got heat packs and everything and stretched out and everything, which most of the guys do.

And we were, we weren't stiff, you know, I don't think anybody that goes in there to get to the first tee, you're in pretty good shape to go. So it really wasn't that bad.

Q. In terms of your gallery, were you able to keep it focused, did you hear anything in the background?

JEFF SLUMAN: Certainly heard stuff, pulling for you, knock it in, you know, the usual kind of stuff, which is great to hear.

But I stayed pretty focused. I didn't see my brother or my nephew. Really I kind of kept like you were looking down a bowling alley, just trying to keep very focused and I know I would see them after the round, so.

Q. In terms of this, you made joke about the snow when you started the day, how tough was it the first, you were warm you said, was it tough to get the feel and feel the shots and get it going for a few holes there?

JEFF SLUMAN: Yeah, absolutely it was. And Fuzzy was probably more than anybody in our threesome a little, you could tell he was a little stiff and that.

And he got off to a non-Fuzzy start, but it was difficult. There's no question, but the golf course doesn't let you just kind of walk in there and get loose. I mean Oak Hill, you better be ready and loose and be ready to play on that first tee shot. And you know, that's okay. But I warmed up enough and that, I just was a little tight.

Q. Greg said he didn't hear too many Australians out there, it was a great trio, and obviously the largest gallery today, did you feel it was a Sluman gallery, did you feel the love?

JEFF SLUMAN: Well, I mean, there was a lot of people obviously pulling for me, but you got two wonderful players and great players in Fuzzy and Greg out there and I think everybody was pulling for all three of us, really.

Fuzzy was great with the gallery. He got off to a bad start and I heard him, he was joking with them the whole time. And Greg is, he played really well. I know he must be a little disappointed with his finish, bogeying 17 and 18, but, you know, it's great to see him out here.

He's in terrific shape. Looks like he's enjoying playing the game again. And we sure wish that, for players on our tour, the caddies, to spectators, boy, I hope with all his businesses and everything that he can -- if he could carve three or four or five weeks out and come out and play with us, that would be just, everybody would love to see him do that.

And boy, you know, but he's so darn busy with everything that it is very difficult. But we would sure love to see him a little more, because he brings excitement to the course and to the gallery and it would be terrific if he -- whenever he's out there we're just really happy to see him.

Q. Just to follow-up on your comments on Greg, he certainly didn't look like somebody who was ready to drop golf for tennis, right?

JEFF SLUMAN: He's, he was so rock solid over the putts and he drove the ball very well. It didn't look like he's taken any time off from the game at all. He looked very sharp for the limited amount he's been playing and like I said, it was really great to see him.

Q. In terms of score, 70 obviously is pretty good at this point. It may hold up as a Top-10 finish by the end of the day. So talk about, do you feel that you got all you possibly could have gotten out of your round today?

JEFF SLUMAN: Yeah, I think so. I'm happy with 70. I think that anybody teeing off at 8 o'clock like we did would have taken 70 and got a cup of coffee and stayed in the clubhouse. But that's the best I could do. I didn't really waste any shots out there. I mean, so I'm pretty happy with it and basically I feel like I, the other times that I was here in 2003 and '89, that I hardly beat anybody. So at least I didn't play myself out of the tournament in the first round. Which essentially I've done previously.

Q. I'm guessing that you wouldn't be surprise that Jay is the only guy under par now. He's 3-under going into 17.

JEFF SLUMAN: Yeah, a great player and knows the golf course very well and anything Jay Haas, whatever he does, it doesn't surprise me, about playing great golf.

Q. Jeff, did you do anything differently in preparation this time to come back home to play? Did you sneak in and play a few more round here. I know you know the course very well. Is there anything different at all in your preparations?

JEFF SLUMAN: The only thing I did was probably be less prepared on the golf course. Really. I didn't come in early, I came in Monday night because we had to play in the Tuesday pro-am. Monday would have been a wash anyways, with the weather I wouldn't have gone out there.

When I landed I said, you're not going to do yourself any good at all on Monday, because it was just a disastrous day with wind and cold.

So yesterday I only played nine holes. I mean I know the golf course. I've got enough rounds under my belt and that. And I know what to do. So now it's just a matter of getting out there and trying to do it and allowing yourself to do it.

Q. What would it mean if you could win it here, this Major tournament on your home turf?

JEFF SLUMAN: What's first prize? No. Just kidding.

(Laughter.)

I'm not even going to answer that question. To me that's almost like bad karma if you say what would it mean. I'm going to go out and try and compete the next three days and if I have got a chance to win on Sunday, regardless of what happens, I'll take it that way as a great week. But just playing well in front of your family and friends is a lot, means a lot to me.

Q. Obviously the greens look pretty fast today. Are they going to get worse as the sun comes out and they dry out a little bit, are the conditions going to be more difficult?

JEFF SLUMAN: I don't think so. I think there's enough moisture on them that they're rolling just perfect. Could they get a little bumpy in the afternoon with all the traffic on them? Possibly. But I didn't see any of that happening this morning that they were so soft that you would have heel prints and then it dries out and it's, you know, like Melba toast up there, you know, I didn't see that happening.

So I think the greens are, they look terrific, they're actually still pretty firm. You hit in there and you make a nice ball mark, but there's a great base of sand on it and I would be very surprised if the greens dried out and it kind of got lumpy or bumpy. But they are very fast. I do not remember them being this fast, but they're in terrific shape.

Q. Talked to Denis Watson yesterday about pressure, whether he has it as defending champ, you have it, or a guy like Tom Watson. Do you feel you have pressure because it is your home course or do you have an

advantage because it is your home course?

JEFF SLUMAN: Pressure is just one of the things that at this point in your career you either you put it on yourself and don't play well because of it, but as a younger guy coming in here for a tournament first time in '89 I felt a lot of pressure, but now it's just I'm pretty comfortable with what I do. Playing a good round of golf or a bad round of golf doesn't define me as a person.

Where when you're young you think, oh, my God, you know, if I don't play well, and da, da, da, you get all wound up and stuff like that. So I don't know if that's the right answer, but it's just kind of one of those things. I played enough to realize that it's still just a game. And if you give it your all, and you can look in the mirror at the end of the day and say it's the best I could have done, I'm a happy guy.

Q. The putt at 17 really seemed to keep your momentum. How important was that to make that and stay there?

JEFF SLUMAN: It would have been disappointing for me to make bogey on that hole after the drive I hit. It was certainly the best drive I've hit on today almost. And one of the best drives I think I can remember hitting on 17. I drove it down there a mile and I probably would have, should have hit a 7-iron in there. And I kind of eased up on a 6 and tried to hit a little draw and I thought maybe I could hit it over because the green kind of runs from front to back, it kind of mostly runs front to back there.

And so probably should have hit a hard kind of draw 7. But I eased up on a 6 and left it in the rough. And it was the first time I had to chip from green side rough all day. My irons were pretty solid and that. So, and the times I drove it in the rough, I couldn't get to the green, I got it back on the fairway.

So like I said, I would have been not devastated, but it certainly would have been disappointing to make bogey at that point, because I was hitting the irons so well.

Q. You had the momentum too.

JEFF SLUMAN: I'm kind of old, I can't hear you very well.

Q. You had the momentum from 15 and 16 as well?

JEFF SLUMAN: Yeah, and it obviously carried over to the tee shot on 17. But like I said, I would have been a little disappointed, but fortunately I made the putt.

KELLY ELBIN: Rochester native, Jeff Sluman. Even par 70.

JEFF SLUMAN: Thank you.

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