

Ernie Els excited by new-look West Course

12th November 2009

For Immediate Release

Seven-time World Matchplay champion Ernie Els has revealed his excitement about playing Wentworth's new-look West Course after this week hitting the first ever shots onto the spectacular 18th green.

Els, whose design team have been overseeing the £6 million renovation project of the West Course, returned this week to Wentworth to see the final phases of the spectacular modernisation of Harry Colt's classic.

He said: "Since my last visit to Wentworth in the summer the guys have kept me right up to speed with everything that's been happening on the West Course. And obviously throughout the whole process I've been involved in discussions about the key design features. So I knew work had been going really well, but it's great to come back here and see it for myself.

"I've walked the course a couple of times since getting back from the HSBC Champions in China and it looks fantastic. I can't wait to come back again in the spring and play the course. That will be very special."

Speaking about the quality of the workmanship, Els said: "It's as good as you'll see anywhere in the world. And you can now see just how spectacular the course will look when it re-opens."

"This project has all been about refining, improving and modernising a Harry Colt classic," Els said. "Our objective is to make the West into Europe's finest inland golf course and I think we are now very close to achieving that goal."

George O'Grady, the Chief Executive of The European Tour who had just flown in from Shanghai and Hong Kong, said: "This was a perfect opportunity to review with Ernie the exciting re-design and dramatic improvements he has brought to the West Course. We congratulate Chairman Richard Caring and the Wentworth Club for their vision and commitment that I feel will enhance the BMW PGA Championship enormously and also greatly improve the experience for our spectators and TV viewers alike."

One of the most dramatic and talked-about changes of the West Course is the 18th green, which will feature a spectacular 100 yard long brook wrapping around a re-shaped green.

Wentworth Club Chairman Richard Caring, who has been actively involved in the extensive modernisation, believes the new-look 18th will become one of the most talked about and celebrated finishing holes in professional golf. He said: “In years to come the West Course’s new 18th hole will I’m sure be the scene of much drama and excitement in professional tournaments. I think it is a very special and fitting finale to an iconic golf course.”

Wentworth’s Chief Executive, Julian Small, reflected on the last six months work on the West Course and looked ahead to it’s re-opening ahead of next May’s BMW PGA Championship. He said: “It doesn’t seem that long ago that we were looking forward to work starting on this phase of the West Course renovations. Here we now are with the finishing touches starting to come through in many areas and the course looking absolutely spectacular.

“We anticipated having all 18 greens completed by the end of October and I’m really pleased to say we’ve hit that key objective. The progress this past few months has been nothing short of amazing and it’s such an exciting time for the Club. Like a long distance runner, the hard yards are now behind us and we’re powering on to the finish line.”

Small continued: “We are delighted with Ernie’s very positive feedback on the changes we have made and cannot wait to welcome him back in the Spring to play the course. It will be a very special moment to see him tee off on the first.”

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