



The All New Jeep Lineup



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How tough?

Even the designer says Hutchinson's newest golf course is difficult

By Doug Hanna

The Hutchinson News

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Nick Faldo designed a course tough enough even for him.

"Too tough," Faldo said.

Golf legend Faldo, who designed Cottonwood Hills Golf Course, played the full 18 holes Friday, a day before the course's grand opening, shooting a 6-over-par 78.

"It shows how rusty I am," Faldo said. "The last time I played for two days was in Turkey about six weeks ago when I opened that golf course. That seems to be the only golf I play right now."

Faldo was also joined by Baseball Hall of Fame shortstop Ozzie Smith and NHL veteran Jeremy Roenick, currently with the Phoenix Coyotes

Faldo won six major titles, including the Masters three times in his career.

The par-72 course stretches more than 7,200 yards and is marked by blind shots, numerous bunkers, and rolling greens.

None of the three had played the course before, though Faldo clearly had the best knowledge of it, leading to some interesting situations.

After one of Smith's shots went awry: Roenick said, "I think you put it right in front of the water."

Smith replied, "There's water?"

That was one of the blind shots that will soon become a trademark for the course.

"They made it as natural as possible," Smith said. "When you do that, you end up with a lot of blind shots."

Roenick started the day off in a light mood.

"I can't use my favorite line anymore," Roenick said. "When I hit a bad shot, I can't say, 'I'm a long way from Kansas.' I'm right in the middle of it now."

Roenick finished with an 82. Smith scored an 87.

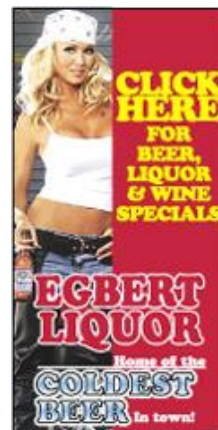
Roenick, a former Massachusetts high school state champion, ranked it as one of the toughest courses he had played.

"If you're a good golfer, it will test you," he said. "If you're not a good golfer, you might want to take a knife to your throat."

Smith compared it to Oakmont, home of the recent U.S. Open.

"The rough isn't as tall as Oakmont," Smith said. "But the greens reminded me a lot of Oakmont."

Smith had the best shot of the day when he chipped in from 20 yards away on the eighth hole.



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"I hit it in the right spot, then the ball had a chance of going in," Smith said. "I got it rolling, and the hole got in the way."

Faldo was thrilled with the outcome of the course.

"It's nearly 85-90 percent there," he said. "The way the course set up, the angles and everything, we're very pleased with it."

The recent heavy rains have caused some problems, such as unplanned ponds in the middle of the fairway and heavier than anticipated growth in the rough.

"The vegetation has grown like crazy after those rains," Faldo said. "We have to make it golf-friendly, give them a little more room."

Faldo took advantage of some of the hills to put in long, sloping greens.

"A lot of those slopes were there naturally," Faldo said. "Generally when you see the way the greens flow, well, that's what we've got. Let's try to make it into a green. Generally, we pulled it off."

Faldo was surprised by the length of some of the tee boxes, especially on the 12th and 18th holes.

"I didn't put that one back here," Faldo said. "Someone else did."

Roenick had high praise for the course.

"If it's not in the top 20 in America in the next couple of years, there's something wrong with Golf Digest," he said.

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