

Travelers Championship

Thursday, June 22, 2023

TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Brett Stegmaier

Quick Quotes



TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

Q. Brett, nice playing after Monday qualifying. Nice to be back in tournament mode. Pretty good round to start off. Must be happy with that.

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, it's always great to come back here. I've been coming to this event since I was eight years old and been lucky enough to play in it, this is my sixth time.

I've had a little bit of success. Played decently the last two years I played, but that was five years ago. Was a little shaky starting the round. Front nine was a grind. Made some good comebacks for par and then four birdies in a row on the back.

Yeah, definitely happy to be under par and rest up for tomorrow afternoon.

Q. We haven't seen you on the PGA TOUR for quite a while. I know you played a few some Korn Ferry events. What's been going on with you for the last few years?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, no status last year. Had some health issues that I had to deal with. Conditional status this year, but some injuries at the start of the year and only played twice on Korn Ferry, so figured I would do some Monday qualifiers on this tour.

Figured if I am going to shoot a low round I'd want it to be in a Monday qualifier to get into a PGA TOUR event. Luckily it was at my fifth major, so it's always fun to be a local kid and be able to come back here and play.

Q. I know you attended this tournament as a kid. What memories do you have from that, and is there one in particular that stands out?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, just cool to see how the tournament has grown. My first year playing was '06 and they were losing the sponsor and Travelers stepped in. The field has gotten better every year and this year it's an elevated event.

Yeah, I think I was eight years old when I first came here and getting autographs from guys people wouldn't even know who they are at this point. Yeah, and then to be able to play in it once would be a dream come true, but like I said, my sixth time being here is definitely special.

Q. Still have any of those autographs?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Honestly I found them like not too long ago just stashed away in some scrapbooks, Billy Ray Brown and Calvin Peete, guys who are way past Champions Tour at this point.

Q. Is it a point of pride for you as a Connecticut guy to see this tournament doing well?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, definitely. You know, I guess it's New England's only PGA TOUR event now that the Duetsche Bank is gone.

I think every top player that plays the PGA TOUR is here except Spieth because he's hurt I would assume.

And yeah, it's always been a well-attended event. I remember they got biggest crowds when I was young, and I remember seeing Notah Begay win in 2000. Just the scene around 18 then was incredible, and it's still like that now.

Like I said I think everybody in the Top 10 that plays this Tour is here, so it's definitely exciting.

Q. How about family and friends? Who is with you?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, parents didn't make it up from Florida. It was last minute. My girlfriend is attending a wedding this weekend so she couldn't come either.

So it's pretty low-key. Seen a few familiar faces, gave out a few tickets. My life has been in Florida for the last 15, 18 years so don't have too many connections up here anymore.

Yeah, I mean, having been a TOUR member it was nice to



see familiar faces just TOUR staff and players. Nice to be back after five years away.

Q. Another generation of Connecticut guys coming through. Ben James is teeing off at 2:00 today. Know anything about him? Heard anything about him?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Honestly only heard about him last year. Yeah, he's obviously a stud and had a great college season. I think he won five times. You know, with PGA TOUR U now there is incentive to play well in college and stay in college. I would assume he would be doing that.

I'm sure he'll be out here full time in two, three years or however long he has left.

Yeah, I mean, there haven't been a ton of Connecticut guys. J.J. has been out here, I've been out here, few guys who went to college in Connecticut way back in the day.

Yeah, nice to see Connecticut represented with Ben.

Q. What would it mean to make the cut this weekend?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, I mean, I'm just thinking about resting up for tomorrow and hopefully get off to a little better start.

Yeah, I mean, obviously that's everyone's goal, but just trying to stay in the process. I did well on the back nine; front nine I kind of didn't commit to a few shots. Hopefully clean that up for tomorrow.

Q. We have some weather coming in, so thinking back, I know Florida is home now, but cutting your teeth in Connecticut, when you look at a Ben James, yourself, even the New England's guys, right, how does playing in Connecticut cut you for being ready for any weather?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Oh, I hate Connecticut weather. I like 95 and humid, so I was freezing this morning. It warmed up by the time we tee'd off. Looking at the weather last night it was supposed to rain today so I was prepared for that; luckily didn't get anything.

The wind was tricky. It's a tricky golf course if you're in the wrong spots. The wind was kind of weird on a few shots. Hopefully it rains in the morning tomorrow and not afternoon and we get some soft greens.

Yeah, I despise Northeast weather except for three months in the summer, so I wouldn't say I'm used to cold at all. More a Florida boy now.

Q. Going back to the Monday qualifier, I think you played early and set a score. What's that like when you do that and sit around and wait?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, there was only the morning wave. I think there were only three groups after me, so I only waited probably 30 minutes.

Unfortunately bogeyed the last and thought maybe that would put me in a playoff, but, yeah it held up and 5-under played off and not 6.

It was nice to be in clean. Mondayed for Puerto Rico last year. That was the last time I Mondayed. That's a TOUR event but doesn't have the feel of being here, so just having not been a TOUR member for five years, it was a little -- there were some nervous shots this morning.

That's the feeling you want to have. I'm sure I'll feel that way tomorrow, too, but hopefully I can deal with it well.

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