

American Century Championship

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Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Stephen Curry

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Attention in the media room, we have your 2023 American Century Championship winner, Stephen Curry!

Steph, way to save the best for last! I mean, that was incredible. Take us through that putt.

STEPHEN CURRY: I think the way golf works in terms of hitting decent shots on the back nine, there was a lot of bogeys there. I was hitting the ball pretty solid, not giving myself -- I wasn't getting too close to the hole, so I had a couple of bad three-putts and bad up-and-downs.

But I felt like I was striking it well enough to just give myself a chance, especially on the last hole. That's what you dream about in this game, to know what you have to do, 18th hole, bottle up the nerves, the adrenaline, lock into what you're trying to do, hit three really good shots, and understand like the moment.

I do want to shout out Mardy Fish because he played unbelievable today. It was amazing to watch. I didn't see him the first two rounds, but he played unbelievable. It was just fun to see that type of ball striking and scoring out there.

We had an unfortunate incident on the 18th tee that you have to acknowledge, but in terms of it coming down to that last putt, like that's what I dream about. I've seen guys on TV. I've seen the Tiger at Torrey Pines, those type of moments.

When you're in there, to myself, I was surprisingly calm, which was a fun feeling to just be in the moment and enjoy it because that was an amazing atmosphere out there. Me and my guy J. Rich on the bag.

I had a pretty confident read. I couldn't make anything on the back nine, but I made one, and that was the one I needed to make. I got this thing, so it's pretty special.

THE MODERATOR: How far would you estimate that putt?

STEPHEN CURRY: Probably 18 to 20, somewhere in there. Probably 18 or more.

These greens are unbelievable. I don't know what they're rolling on the stimp, but they're fast. I was above the hole all day. So just trying to get the pace right to give myself the right line and just trust it and hit it.

In those moments, it's all about routine. I've learned that over the course. You can't switch up anything when you get a little nervous or you feel pressure. You've just got to stick to the routine, and the routine hopefully you live with the results.

As soon as I hit it, hit my line, it starts to do exactly what you envision it doing. The last five feet felt like slow motion because it was right on line. I think I dropped the putter and I was already ready to celebrate. It was the perfect putt at the right time.

THE MODERATOR: How does this compare with a three-pointer at the buzzer to win a game?

STEPHEN CURRY: It's pretty damn close. Like in this game you obviously have a lot more time to think about the scenario and the moment and just the routine of it all is the most important.

Like on the basketball court, it's all about reacting -- Can-Can, can you do me a favor, please? Thank you.

You think about you have a lot more time to react on the basketball court. Here, it's all about what happens in here. To be able to kind of maintain focus, contain the emotions, like -- again, I don't do this for a living. You dream about like moments like this, watching the guys that play at the highest level, to put myself in their shoes for just a second.

Freddie Couples sent me a text -- I'm name-dropping. Freddie Couples sent me a text last night to remind me of it's okay to assume you're a professional golfer for the day and block out all the distractions, be in the moment, enjoy



yourself, stick to your routine, and it was helpful to hear that. I was like a kid in a candy store all day. It was the most fun I've ever had on a golf course for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Whose arms did you run into across the green when you made the putt?

STEPHEN CURRY: Funny enough, I made a hole-in-one yesterday, and between holes 7 and 12, I'm celebrating, on an adrenaline high, trying to gather myself, and I'm also making plans for my wife to drive up -- she was still back in the Bay with our kids -- to drive up for the final round knowing I was in good shape.

I proceeded to go 3-over for the next four holes, and then finally I regained focus down the stretch. But the logistical planning of making sure she was here and Canon was here for the day, I mean, I can't draw it up any better to make that putt.

She knows how much I love this game. It's always on the TV as much as -- it doesn't matter what tournament it is, I'm watching the game. I'm trying to soak up as much as I can.

So as soon as I made it, I made the putt, I knew where she was, and I had to go straight to her because I told them downstairs I appreciate the fact that, even on our vacation, she'll let me play. She's getting into the game now too. But I get some reps even on our vacations, which help me prepare for this. So it's a nice little balance, and I appreciate the fact that I got to celebrate with her.

THE MODERATOR: And Dell and Seth were nearby, weren't they, as well?

STEPHEN CURRY: It's been like the tournament within the tournament, where a couple years, the last couple years, I'm not in contention to win, but we have our own little game going on, obviously, for this beautiful Curry belt right here.

So I've been in scenarios where they've finished their rounds and come and watch like the last two or three holes. So for them to see me struggle -- I made par on 16, bogey on 17, and to see that eagle on 18 to win it -- we love this tournament. You all know that. It was special for the whole family.

THE MODERATOR: Three eagles during your tournament.

STEPHEN CURRY: Four.

THE MODERATOR: Four, excuse me.

STEPHEN CURRY: Four, yeah. One on the first day, hole-in-one, and two today. Crazy. Took everything out of me to get this fourth one. That's crazy.

THE MODERATOR: We talked about the introduction of you on the tee the other day as far as you've won four NBA championships and all the accolades, and then the announcer said, But he hasn't won the big one, the American Century Championship. Well, history, what do you think now?

STEPHEN CURRY: He's back there in the corner. I know he writes his own stuff. He's got his own material. I told him he manifested this because he never really acknowledged how much I wanted to win this, and it's special.

I don't know what you're going to have for next year. I'm looking forward to the creativity. It will be fun to come back. You know I'll be back next year trying to defend a title, which is great.

THE MODERATOR: I think that was our good friend Nick Casanova with NBC.

STEPHEN CURRY: Appreciate you.

THE MODERATOR: Jon Miller, NBC Sports, come on up.

JON MILLER: Here's your scorecard. And you get your own trophy to take home.

STEPHEN CURRY: I get the protocol. Let me take this one, please. I'm going to feel like Wyndham Clark in New York tomorrow, holding it up and going crazy. Thank you, Jonny. Appreciate it, man.

THE MODERATOR: There was one thing that I understand you're playing with two other guys that we talked a little bit about this yesterday as well, with Mardy Fish and with Joe Pavelski, and you're all good friends.

I understand, when Mardy walked by you with your putt on 18, he said, "Make it."

STEPHEN CURRY: That's the kind of guy he is. He's won before. He understands the moment. It was hard because you want to be like real cutthroat and like not talk to your playing competitor, do like the old Tiger Woods routine that you heard about.

But it's hard when you have two great guys that you're playing with that you know so well. So balancing that was an amazing day. Mardy played amazing the entire day, hit



so many good putts, played steady.

It was just fun to be in that group. We've played casual rounds before. We've played in the same group here. But dream come true to play with Mardy and Joe, two guys that I know very well, good friends with, have a lot of fun with every time we put the tee in the ground.

That comment was real. Like he knew what the stakes were as soon as he missed that birdie chance to win it, he said that to me. And it was cool just to accept it, fall into my routine. I still can't believe I made it. It was crazy.

Q. Congrats, Steph.

STEPHEN CURRY: Thank you.

Q. I've seen you play a lot of golf. I wish I had been there. That was a cool round to watch. You and others have talked about comparing it to a three-pointer at the buzzer, but I'm just sort of curious how much that experience helps, the fact that you often play in those tight, tense atmospheres in basketball. How much do you think that helps when you're standing there on the 18th green today trying to make that putt?

STEPHEN CURRY: It helps because the reps, but even more because I failed it so many times. So there's no real, real fear of failure in that moment.

Like I was thinking to myself all day, like kind of acknowledging what was actually happening. You're in the final round of a golf tournament that you love so much. You're playing with two guys that you enjoy their company. You understand the stakes.

But then when it gets to hitting shots, it's all confidence. It's what happens between the ears. So the reps on the court definitely help, not being afraid to take chances, not being afraid of the result. A lot of people would love to be in that scenario where you're having an 18-foot putt to win a tournament, a member-guest, a member-member, whatever it is, a skins game, all that stuff.

That's why everybody loves the game of golf. You're searching for those moments, and I was fortunate enough to have it here, fortunate enough to make it. It's all about the process of just enjoying myself, trying to remember that the entire round, and got to the finish line.

Q. If I could ask one quick follow-up. We've talked many times about why you love golf so much. As you noted earlier, you haven't really publicly talked about how much you wanted to win this tournament, and I

realize it's still fresh, but can you sort of articulate what this means to win this particular tournament? And given how much you care about golf and how much you follow it. We talk about it all the time. Obviously it matters to you. How would you sort of articulate how much it matters to you?

STEPHEN CURRY: I started playing the game at 10, fell in love with it. Obviously basketball is my craft, my job, my passion. You put so many hours and hours and hours and reps into it. Going into my 15th year in the league, like I've had a lot of amazing experiences.

Golf has a special place in my life, a couple times a month during the season, a lot in the off-season. One, it's kind of my therapy just to be outside, play, be amongst friends, and find the competition. That's what this tournament provides for some amazing golfers who are as passionate about the game as I am.

I think overall like there's a little bit of selfish like pride of saying I'm good enough to win this tournament, but there's also an understanding of everything is about putting golf on a major stage to understand how fun it is, create more access to the game. Everything that I've been doing with Howard University, with Underrated Golf Tour, you name it. Golf is a centerpiece to create opportunity.

For me, I know a lot of people, they watched the hole-in-one, they watched that last putt. Who knows if they would have ever been introduced to the game of golf otherwise? It's pretty special to know I'm in that position, and continue to try to stay on that mission.

THE MODERATOR: Steph, you're the first active player to win this event since the year 2000 when Al Del Greco won. It's been 23 years. We know when John Elway was still active, his number one goal when he came here, he said, I can't beat some of the really good players, I want to be the lowest score with the active players. You've kind of done both today.

STEPHEN CURRY: I've talked about that a lot before. That was a lot of the motivation, not giving up hope that it would have to take till I was retired to be able to play more golf throughout the year to be ready for this.

Honestly, like it sounds weird because I've sacrificed so much -- my family does in terms of basketball, but like I said, I love this game. I'm passionate about it. And even the last two months since we finished our playoff run till now, like the preparation for this tournament has kind of always been the running joke, and it paid off.

Q. What does it mean to have your family there? I saw



your moment with Canon and just that moment to share with them, and how much are you looking forward to showing off and bragging during the Underrated Tour this summer?

STEPHEN CURRY: I just left the championship day at Firestone a couple weekends ago and saw all the kids and hit a couple shots in front of them. I told them a little bit about the tournament I was preparing for. I know a lot of them have been watching.

Everett Whiten Jr. from Howard University, who's such an amazing golfer and has a promising future, he even texted me yesterday after my shot and was giving me confidence to try to finish the job.

Everyone in my circle -- family, teammates, friends, the young men and women who are on the Underrated Golf Tour, the Howard golf team -- they all understand how much this game means, so they were all cheering for me. Hopefully it just gives them more excitement and energy around what they're doing.

I'll see a couple of them in Washington in a couple weeks, and I'll bring the hardware for sure.

Q. Of the putt, the hole-in-one, and the shot you had on Friday, obviously the winner for the championship, is that your favorite? Or which shot was the best of the three?

STEPHEN CURRY: I mean, the hole-in-one is crazy because how often do you see that in a tournament setting? But that helped put me in position to have a lead and be able to get through these last 18 holes and try to finish it off.

But there's nothing like that moment where you walk up on the green, you see the stage is set, and you know, okay, if I make this, I win a golf tournament. People that have experienced that, there's no greater feeling whether, again, it's a casual round trying to win a couple bets, whether it's a member tournament, whatever it is, or something like this.

I got to be a professional golfer for a day, and then I'll go back to my day job.

THE MODERATOR: I'm not sure you're a professional golfer. I think you signed the amateur clause before the tournament.

STEPHEN CURRY: I did. Professional golfer without the paycheck, yes.

(Laughter.)

THE MODERATOR: It sure seemed obvious that you were the favorite out there among the fans, with your tenure with the Golden State Warriors, and a lot of that is the person you are too. How did that feel out there with the fans on your side?

STEPHEN CURRY: Yes, a four-hour drive from my house to here. Like you said, a lot of Warrior fans. Surprisingly, there's -- well, not surprisingly. There's a lot of Kings fans, and surprisingly they were way more loud or vocal than the Warriors fans. I heard a lot of "Light the Beam!" I heard a lot of "Let's Go Kings" and that kind of stuff.

That gave me a little gas in the tank too for sure. That's part of -- even for my rookie year, after my rookie year was my first time playing in this tournament, you could tell there was a lot of Dub Nation that would make the trip up and be here to support the tournament before I even accomplished anything in the league, and it's only grown from here. I appreciate the love and support for sure.

THE MODERATOR: As far as Korn Ferry Tour events, how many have you participated in, and any PGA TOUR events?

STEPHEN CURRY: Only two Korn Ferry Tour events out in TPC Stonebrae and out in Hayward, it was the Ellie Mae Classic. The first year, 2017, I believe, was kind of like the coming out party of how serious I take the game and the first time I got real compliments on my game from all the professionals that understand how hard tournament golf really is.

I think I finished like 14th from last, so I beat some pros out there. The second year I think I shot 71 or 70 in the first round and was like three off the cut line. So I had to sleep on that thinking I could actually make the cut on a Korn Ferry Tour, and then I shot 87. So I got humbled really quickly.

Q. Steph, based on watching TV, your reaction to when the fan yelled in Mardy's swing was pretty striking. I'm curious your take on that incident and how it affected the final hole because obviously, if Mardy makes birdie, you guys are going to a playoff.

STEPHEN CURRY: Yeah, like I said, you have to acknowledge it's an unfortunate situation. I don't even know what to call him. I don't want to say names. But a guy trying to sabotage what was going on for a moment.

Mardy is such a class act, and I complimented the way he bounced back to give himself a chance to make a putt on

the last hole. It's kind of hard to acknowledge that and also understand that, if I make that putt, like you said, we go to a playoff, and if he makes that putt on the green, he wins.

It's tough. Like I said, I hated it. In that moment, I felt just embarrassed for like all the other fans because there's so much great love for the 99.9 percent of the other people that come into this environment and are so supportive and bring so much energy, and you got one guy that loses his mind for a second.

I don't know what Mardy said about it, but I just appreciate the way he handled it. You don't want to ever see that in a moment like that.

Q. Congratulations on winning the big one, Steph. How much extra value has it added to the belt you're wearing?

STEPHEN CURRY: I mean, as much hardware as I can get, I'm going to take it all. I didn't think I could win this without winning that, so there's, like I said, a lot of extra motivation all the way around to just -- I can't say how much I enjoyed today. I enjoy every round I play up here whether you're in contention or not.

But to be in a final group and just be locked in like that for the entire round and to come out in the last, I cannot tell you how much fun I had. That's what this is all about.

Q. I can see your feet being permanently well on the floor, but how emotionally high are you right now after this victory?

STEPHEN CURRY: Pretty up there.

Q. How well will you sleep tonight, if at all?

STEPHEN CURRY: I'm going to sleep on the plane. I'll be good. I'll be good.

Q. And in all seriousness, how many extra rounds did you get in with your early exit from the playoffs this year? And how much do you think that helped?

STEPHEN CURRY: It obviously helped. It's the consolation prize for getting beat in the playoffs. I think I played -- I had like four extra weeks. So I probably played 10, 12 extra rounds.

I said it, I think, the other day. It's all about continuing to find ways to enjoy the game a little bit more, get a little bit better. Just kind of stacking those blocks on top of each other. I've been on that, quote/unquote, serious journey for three or four years now, just trying to find a way to get

better at the game knowing that this was something I knew I had the skill set to do but you've just got to go out and do it.

Q. Congratulations once again. Have a great season on the court, and we'll see you next July.

STEPHEN CURRY: Appreciate it. Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Steph, you've now provided thrills to people in another sport. Congratulations to you. Thank you for everything you've done for the tournament, throughout the weeks.

Q. You just mentioned that you had the extra four weeks to practice. Did you do anything else during the year to prepare? How did you get from not being in a standing to winning?

STEPHEN CURRY: The thing is I finished tied for fourth twice. When you get -- I had a couple of great Sunday rounds that we call the backdoor top five finish, going real low 17 groups ahead of the final group. So I knew like, again, if I could just get off to a good start, that I could give myself a chance, then you just take it from there.

I've always struggled out the gate and gotten better as the tournament goes on. So the 27 points on Friday like just gave me a newfound confidence. I didn't do anything different other than just play a little bit more. You can beat balls on the range and work on mechanics and all that type of stuff, but you have to play to make it work and make it useful.

So playing those extra ten rounds definitely gave me a little bit more confidence and a little bit more rhythm coming into it. All of that stuff is just muscle memory. Same way on the court. It doesn't matter what the situation is, it's muscle memory shooting. When you're in the AT&T, you know you've got to try to hit a good tee shot. Then you know you've got to try to hit a good approach shot. Then you know your routine on the green. All that stuff is just muscle memory, and it definitely helped.

Q. Now that you've got a taste of the trophy, are you going to retire from basketball and pursue this?

STEPHEN CURRY: Have you all seen those CBA terms in the NBA? Life is good in the league. I'll be all right (laughter).

Q. You kind of took my question away. It's about Howard University and how people don't know --

STEPHEN CURRY: Howard?

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Q. Yeah, Howard. How you got involved with that, and how's that going.

STEPHEN CURRY: There's a kid -- not a kid. He's a grown adult now, Otis Ferguson IV, that I met as a screener when I went onto Howard's campus in 2019, I believe it was. He was on the club golf team. They didn't have their Division I program financed at all, and he talked about the efforts he was going through to talk to the athletic department to try to create a men's and women's golf team.

It was just a casual conversation. I took that and kind of understood the opportunity to support a major HBCU, Howard University. I didn't go there, but I talk to a lot of alumni, and they talk about how special it is.

I think from there, being able to create a six-year pledge to finance the team on both the men's and women's side, create scholarships there, Coach Sam Puryear, who's been leading -- he's the director of golf there. He's done an amazing job. I think they're two-time national champs from an HBCU standpoint, and now we're trying to create the most marquee golf program that can compete with anybody in the country.

There's some amazing men and women, student-athletes and golfers who are taking that opportunity and running with it. So it's special to know I had a part in that. We're trying to get to a point where we can create an endowment that that program will be in existence forever and kids will be able to pursue golf at the highest levels.

Obviously the north star is more representation, diversity, and getting more Black and Brown men and women in the game of golf because it teaches you so much about yourself, the world, and the business of golf is so wide. We want to get -- create opportunity in that space, and hopefully we can get more representation on the PGA, LPGA Tours. That's the north star. That's the mission. And Howard's a huge part of it.

Q. On the 1st tee, I saw you checking your pulse. I'm not sure what that was about.

STEPHEN CURRY: You caught that?

Q. You were doing this actually, yeah. I'm kind of curious what that was all about. Also, on the 18th tee box -- sorry, man.

STEPHEN CURRY: No, that's good reporting right there.

Q. If you don't mind sharing what that was about. But

also, on the 18th tee box, you're on the 18th tee, you're down by three points, you've only got one hole left. What's going through your mind, and what are you saying to yourself to calm your nerves?

STEPHEN CURRY: I was checking my pulse because I do that during timeouts in basketball. The adrenaline and the nerves and all that and your heart rate's going. I just kind of wanted to get a check on where it was. I do a lot of breathing work during basketball games to control all of that and recover quicker. So I try to bring that philosophy out here because I'm so -- I'm a fish out of water out here on the course dealing with those emotions.

It was just a little check to see how it was because I'd been thinking about the final round all night, sleeping on the lead and all that type of stuff. So just kind of a cool little experiment.

Then on the 18 here, I've heard enough professional golfers, legends talk about the game and their approach to it and not -- acknowledging where you are in the tournament, you know, I did take a look at the scoreboard, I knew where I was, I knew what needed to happen.

My caddie, J. Rich, he told me, Let's just hit a good one. That's all you can do is hit a good drive, keep yourself in it. All right. What's next? Hit a good second shot, you go on the green. Good. Check, check.

Then you get to the green and try to control yourself. Keep the same pace of walking, keep distractions out, but also don't look at the line and obsess over it because that's not the routine normally anyway. So just go through all that type of stuff.

Like I said, it's all the mental warfare you go through. It was fun to be in that scenario because I've heard how they approach it. It's entirely different in a basketball game because it's so reactive on the hardwood. But out here, you have to be able to control all of those thoughts and just seek positivity into yourself. Just tell yourself you're built for this because you've been through other scenarios where you needed to perform and you live with the results, like I said earlier. It's not like you can will it in. You just live with the results.

Q. It was a pleasure to watch. Congratulations.

STEPHEN CURRY: Thank you.

THE MODERATOR: Steph, you got everybody here fired up today. Great finish. Great to have you here. Thank you for all you do for the tournament and coming into the media room every day. We appreciate it.



