

American Century Championship

Friday, July 11, 2025

Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Erik Schnberger

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Talking about a new initiative that American Century had the last two, three days, the 14th tee Smash for Cash. Erik, we understand that the results are in.

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: They are. It was a great activation out there on 14 yesterday. Big monitors. A lot of engagement with celebrities. I think they had a good time.

For those of you who got to see it, thank you for coming out. For those who didn't, yesterday we put out a competition for something called Smash Factor.

Smash Factor is calculated based on ball speed divided by club speed, and it's really a measure of efficiency in your golf swing. So the maximum amount or measure for Smash Factor is 1.5. We had eight people yesterday that got 1.5 and one person who actually broke the system and got a 1.52. I think that has something to do with the elevation. That was Steph Curry, of course.

So it was great, though. We saw Rob Mac get out there and hit a 1.5 -- Kathryn Tappen, Trevor Lawrence, David Wells, John Smoltz. That was great.

But what was most important was that if a group averaged over 1.43, a \$500 donation to the Stowers Institute for Medical Research was registered. So we donated \$17,000 to the Stowers Institute for Medical Research yesterday.

Seth Curry won, his team won, so he also gets \$10,000 to allocate to the charity of his choice. I have spoken to him but I do not have the allocation just yet. So I'll let you guys know when that happens when he decides where he's going to allocate that \$10,000. Very exciting. Very successful activation yesterday.

Q. This was the inaugural year. What are the thoughts of bringing it back since it was so successful?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: That's a tough question, honestly.



We're always looking for new things to do out there to engage the celebrities. So on the one hand, it was so successful and integrated into play, which I think was really the key, so we'll think about it.

On the other hand, I really like thinking and stretching our minds about what we can do differently every single year. It's what makes this interesting, interesting for our clients, celebrities, for you guys.

So we'll be thinking about it over the year and we'll come back. You never know what we'll do next year.

Q. Expand on the different charitable initiatives that American Century Investments involved with this tournament, not just this year but previous years, what it's meant to this golf tournament, what it's meant to this community and beyond on a national basis?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: American Century Investments at our core, we're all about higher calling. So our investments are important and we're always thinking about how do we grow our clients and secure our portfolios and secure their financial future.

But in addition to that, we also direct 40 percent of our profits to the Stowers Institute for Medical Research. So we take that same culture and spirit into this tournament every year; \$8 million to local charities over the years. It really means a lot to Tahoe, especially, with bringing all of these fans here to experience this beautiful environment and show what Lake Tahoe is all about.

So we really just seek to get focus around fun, excitement, but also giving back in the same way and spirit that American Century gives back to humankind researching cures for cancer and other gene-based diseases.

Q. We also know looking back on 2020, which is the year we all want to forget, when American Century didn't even have to continue its title sponsorship because there was a question of, hey, are we going to be able to do this during COVID? And Jonathan Thomas and your group stepped up in a big way and kept this event going with their participation. So



you've earned a lot of street cred in this valley, I can tell you that. The partnership obviously between American Century and the Las Vegas Visitors Authority and all the sponsors has been special over the years.

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: It really is, and 2020 was a really interesting year. In March of that year, we weren't going to have this tournament, and then we looked at different protocol and we started learning about information. In May, we decided to move forward. I think that was absolutely the right call.

It really kept this going, and I think it was the launching-off point for the footprint for American Century Championship to grow even larger. Over the last few years, thanks to you all, actually, the media footprint has exploded. It's great for Tahoe. It's great for American Century Investments and NBC, and it's just a wonderful experience here.

Q. Were you able to calculate who was the person with the least body mass and the best swing efficiency, and who is the person with the most body mass and the weakest swing efficiency?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: I think you're going to get me in trouble with answering that question. I love that. We did not think about that. But that's a really interesting way to say it. Ultimately, we chose the Smash Factor because it isn't about how big or how small you are, it's really about how efficient your golf swing is.

That was a real consideration, as we thought about what statistics could we use when we measure someone's swing, we wanted to make sure it was something that anyone could win, and we saw that out there.

Q. I would imagine some of the smallest like Rob Mac and Steph Curry, names you mentioned, had a good swing efficiency. I can't think of anybody who was thinner than those guys.

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: You say that and they're much larger than me. So I think to myself, yeah, okay, they're small relative to everyone else out there, but they're huge to me.

Q. First, how long have you been with American Century?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: I started with American Century at the end of 2019. 2020 was my first one; six years.

Q. You never got to meet Jim Stowers, I take it?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: I did not.

Q. I'm curious, having learned about him through Jonathan and everybody else at ACI, what do you think he would say to this being part of that \$2 billion that's been donated to cancer research?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: He is and continues to be an inspiration for all of us. Where he started with \$100,000 and a handful of clients and grew American Century to over \$270 billion during his tenure and beyond, is truly an inspiration, but what's most important is how he donated and signed that giving pledge and donated 99 percent of his net worth. It's staggering. And it created this wonderful relationship, which is even more important now because there is some challenge to funding foundational science with regard to government grants and things like that. So the Stowers Institute gets to enjoy guaranteed funding model on a go-forward basis. It's really inspiring.

I think he would be so proud of what this tournament has turned into and how it not only highlights what Lake Tahoe has to offer and what American Century brings to the table, but also is so focused on charitable giving.

Q. We're seeing more and more stories every day about how much they've advanced in cancer research and some of the things they're able to uncover now to basically stop it. I mean, Stowers has a big part of that, I would assume.

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: Yeah, they ask really big questions. So one of the things that they are researching is regeneration and how can they learn about DNA in other animals that can be applied to humans, or around research for Alzheimer's. They're thinking and asking big questions like, well, let's first start with how is the memory formed? Can we understand how a memory is formed? If we can understand how a memory is formed, then we have a much better chance of finding ways to solve the challenges of Alzheimer's and dementia. There are not many, if any, scientific organizations doing that level of research, and it's afforded by the fact that they have a guaranteed funding source through American Century Investments.

So when our clients invest with us, they're not just investing in their future, they're investing in everyone's future. It's fantastic. Honored to be a part of it.

Q. This game raises money through fun and excitement, and I'm curious, how do you balance entertainment and purpose at an event like this?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: We focus very much on messaging throughout this whole thing and we try to really



stick to three core points. And one of those core points is the charitable aspect of this.

I think it's what makes this even more special because it is pure entertainment. These guys out here are fantastic, but they also are very much into the charitable aspect of this. So they bring it forward all the time through their appearances, and I think that really makes the difference by combination of entertainment and charitable giving is very unique.

Q. Do you think events like this, this type of activity, do you think it's going to draw younger audiences through philanthropy through sports?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: I hope so. If there could be more events like this, of course I would like to be part of the only event that does this, but I mean more events like this and really thinking through how do we all come together to make the world a better place and to contribute to local charities, national charities, medical research and other causes, I think that would be great for all of us. I really hope it does.

Q. When you built this, did you have any celebrity players in mind that you knew would bring the energy, or were you just hoping?

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: No, Steph's energy two years ago was unparalleled, and that hole-in-one was just magic. I think that really launched this to another level, and then last year, with Tim Brown hitting a hole-in-one and now having two returning champs competing for the title this year, you can't make that. We always think about who would be the best here to be ambassadors for American Century Championship, who are best golfers, who are the best personalities, but really it all comes, that's the best part of live sports. It just all comes together in a way that you can't plan for.

Q. You can't script it.

ERIK SCHNEBERGER: That's right.

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