

American Century Championship

Friday, July 11, 2025

Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

Vinny Del Negro

Steph Curry

Press Conference



Joe said it yesterday, Pavelski, you don't know what your game is going to feel like once you get into a tournament, the first round. Just kind of figuring out those first three holes.

Got a birdie on 4, which was nice, got me going. And then 3-putted 9, which was tough. On the back, I lost one on 13, got up-and-down for par, which was a good save. And the whole point of this is you want to make birdies, but keeping the big numbers out is always important.

As average as I think I played, I held the big numbers out, which allows you to stay relevant. Excited for tomorrow. Top 10 looks pretty stacked. Names that have won, who haven't won, and it should be fun.

Q. Are you a little surprised you finished so well, after not being able to be here last night and whatnot? I know you've been working on your golf game, obviously, after the NBA season concluded, but were you coming in here with a full load of confidence?

STEPH CURRY: Yes, definitely confidence, for sure. You just want to have a little bit of clarity on what you're trying to do, not really worry about the results too much.

So staying as present as possible. That's the biggest thing you learn playing this thing over and over again. You always sometimes can fantasize about what your score is going to be on 18 when you're on hole 4. You've got to go shot by shot. It's such a discipline. It was nice to get back in that environment really quick.

Q. Vinny, the other day when you were in here, you were talking about bad back, and today you were talking a little bit about it. Are you playing possum on these guys or what?

VINNY DEL NEGRO: This was my seventh round in like the last year. I've played very little golf, to be honest with you. I've hit balls the last few weeks, and my back, been getting a ton of therapy, I'm not exactly sure.

My caddie is like, hit it at that tree and hit it over the bunker. I was lucky today because I had like full shots. I

THE MODERATOR: We have two of our top contenders and both hoopsters. That's Vinny Del Negro and Steph Curry.

Vinny, you finished first. Can you take us through your round a little bit, the good, the bad, the ugly?

VINNY DEL NEGRO: I really struggled early on, to be honest with you. I was tentative. Had some back issues. Hadn't played a lot of golf.

I don't know what happened. I was fortunate. I just started kind of letting it loose, started hitting the driver a little better, having some shorter irons into some greens, rolled in a couple of putts, missed a couple, that's part of it.

Just I'm proud of the way I grinded through it. It could have went south really quickly on the front, but Joe and Cathy were just great to play with. They were patient with me. My caddie, Craig, was awesome. Just happy, getting the hoopers and representing after all these years. Steph's such a great basketball player, great golfer. But more importantly, he's just a great guy. Doesn't surprise me he's up there.

I think we both have the ability to play better, in talking to Steph. Hopefully that will be the case. But golf is difficult. We'll take it one shot at a time and try to make some birdies.

Q. With 22 points today, you're only one behind Joe Pavelski. Steph, your 21 points today, just two behind. Kind of a slow start. You picked it up pretty well on the back. Take us through it.

STEPH CURRY: It was obviously fun playing with my dad and my brother, the matching outfits and everything, getting the vibes going.



didn't have to let chip shots. I had a really like full-shot numbers where I really didn't have to think. It was hit a full shot there, and I know my number's up here.

We had to figure out the wind a little bit. But I had a lot of really just full shots. I hit my driver a little better than I have. That's always a big advantage here.

So many guys, like Steph said, have won this thing. Anything can happen with Stableford, eagles, birdies; you have to play well for three days, it's not going to be easy. That's what makes it great. We're all competitive.

I was fortunate, I played a couple years with Dell Curry, his dad. Steph used to come to practice. I've known him for years. Just a huge fan of his, not only as a basketball player -- which goes without saying -- but just the way he handles himself. Tremendous golfer. He's going to win this tournament many times, I think. He's young.

I'm just trying to keep as loose as I can as I get a little bit older. I used to be the young guy. Now I'm the old guy. I'm going to try to get some good therapy, lock in and make these guys work for it tomorrow.

Q. Any flashbacks to '21 while you were out there?

VINNY DEL NEGRO: I don't really get ahead of myself. I think what Steph said is really accurate. I think sometimes you're on No. 4, I made a bogey, now I have to stress. I think you have to take it shot by shot, hole by hole, all of a sudden you can make two birdies in a row or an eagle or chip in. Just stay away from the big number. I struggled, made a couple bad swings on 15 and took a double, and it was just a terrible double.

I'm, like, this is not acceptable. So I just kind of locked in after that, made some pars to get some rhythm, then was fortunate to roll some putts in.

Q. You guys both heard that Charles eagled No. 2 today?

STEPH CURRY: I heard the roar. It sounded like a hole-in-one vibe. He spun it back in, smacked the stick and it went in.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: He's going to let us all know it. He's another basketball guy. So I love it.

STEPH CURRY: What's he at now? I was trashing him yesterday.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: Good for Chuck. He's out here; he's grinding. He's a big factor in this tournament, just his

personality. Brings a lot of energy. Everyone loves Charles. Known him forever and kind of represents this tournament in a great way. Just happy he's out here. Known him a long time. Great guy.

Q. Vinny, you mentioned locked in. You locked it in in 2021 when you won here, 23 points the first day. 22 today. If you loosen your back, lock in your game, you should be good to go. So good luck.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: I appreciate it. Who knows. Like Steph said, there's so many really good players. You have to play well for three straight days here, make putts, hit it in the right spots. I'm going to go have some lunch with my wife, get some therapy and get loosened up tomorrow and hopefully just kind of hit it well and enjoy the environment and make some good shots.

Q. You haven't played many rounds, and you come up and finish in second place today.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: Whisper Rock, where I'm a member at, great guys, great golfers. John Singletary and Keith Coker and guys that have helped me get through my back issues the last year have been really instrumental for me kind of even to be sitting up here. I was really pleased the way I battled through after a slow start.

Q. Steph, some pep talk questions. Who has the family championship belt right now and what's the family bet?

STEPH CURRY: Seth has it now. Him and his caddie, Will, they wore it walking from 16 green to 17 tee, proudly. It's cool. This is the first year where -- obviously Seth has it now. But we've all had it. My dad had it first. I had it second. Seth won it last year--

Q. You wore it in here when you won?

STEPH CURRY: That was two years ago. Seth won it last year.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: How many shots do you have to give them?

STEPH CURRY: My target is 75. My dad's target is 42. And Seth's target is 24. So Seth hit his number today. My dad was a little short of his, I think, or maybe right on it. I'm like four short of mine. It's kind of perfect. You've got to go win it.

Q. What is the bet this year?

STEPH CURRY: The bet is the belt. That's hard to say.



The bet is the belt. Pride. You get to put it on your mantel.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: It's a good bet. Makes him lock in because he's obviously a tremendous golfer. I think it's a fair bet.

Q. First, Steph, how would you describe the adrenaline or momentum changes? You were struggling with your putter obviously on the front nine then kind of got it going on the back, just how that adrenaline feels compared to basketball and how it can change so quickly?

STEPH CURRY: It's totally different because what Vinny said, you can't really go get it. Like in basketball, if I'm struggling, I can force the issue a little bit, maybe even just get a stop on defense and kind of give yourself some momentum.

But in golf, you have to just let it come. Me and my caddie, Jason Richards, was talking the whole time about accepting what happens. I hit like four bad tee shots. You accept bogey. You don't want the double to come in. Then you're happy.

I made a bogey on 6 that felt like a birdie because I got up-and-down from the back bunker the second time.

Those little things keep you going, as long as you have the right perspective. You can't get frustrated or mad about not playing perfect golf because it doesn't exist, but just find a way to score, and that's kind of how I approached the round.

Q. You pumped your fist after that bogey, if I recall.

STEPH CURRY: I did.

Q. On 18, describe that opening. It looked very narrow from where I was. What was your thinking? Because it worked out great with a birdie, but it could have been a big number.

STEPH CURRY: I had three different shots at one point. So I got there. I'm not even looking at that window, looking left, trying to punch out to hundred yards. Somebody behind me said, "You're not going this way." I was like, "Oh, let me just see."

I moved the whole crowd. I was looking up to try to get it over the tree that was in front of me. And that was like the first idea. Then I walked back to the ball, that doesn't make any sense because the leaves were hanging over. Then Jason told me why don't you go underneath it. We went through the different checkpoints.

To your point, that was just knowing I'm not a professional golfer; I want to win this tournament. This is kind of a cool shot. It's probably dumb, let's go for it. That's kind of what happened, and it worked out. Then I had to hit the nice little chip shot to get that birdie. That was cool. I didn't want to have a five-minute wait to move all the people and not pay it off. So that was good.

Q. Steph, when you won in 2023, you broke a 22-year drought of active players winning. There's only been six, but there are a lot more active players in the hunt these days. Do you have any idea why that might be?

STEPH CURRY: Well, the tournament is doing a great job of recruiting good players who love the game, been playing for a while. That's awesome. You want to see the field expand with more great players. You want personalities. You want a little diversification of sports, athletes, actors, influencers, celebrities, the whole gamut.

It's cool to see guys and ladies who take it serious enough to be in contention out here. Hopefully that field continues to grow as we get deeper into it.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: I think it's great to see Austin Reaves and Alex Caruso and NBA guys. Obviously, the NBA on NBC is coming back this year. You're obviously going to see Steph a ton on NBC and all over the place.

It's nice to see basketball guys kind of get more involved in the tournament. Steph's going to be around a long time. Austin, Caruso. They're good players. Solid. Ray Allen is a good player. It makes me happy as a veteran guy, NBA guy, to see the younger guys really compete at the level they are and take it serious.

They're all worthy of obviously playing very good golf.

Q. I've got a question about your foundation. Could you please explain it and your passion for it?

STEPH CURRY: Me and my wife, Ayesha, started the Eat.Learn.Play Foundation that we support and planting our flag in Oakland, trying to support the next generation of kids, especially through the Oakland Unified School District where they go to eat, learn and play. Every single day, we focus on early childhood literacy, obviously healthy and accessible meals.

We do a lot of play space and library refurbishments to make sure kids have age-appropriate and culturally relevant books at their disposal.

We're trying to do a lot in our adoptive home. We've been



out in the Bay for almost 17 years now, and it's pretty crazy.

I came from the East Coast, North Carolina, coming out to the Bay, making that home and being able to have a presence there and a chance to make the community better than how we found it.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: My wife and I started, for kids, a charity called Bright Side in West Springfield, Massachusetts years ago, a long time. Trying to impact the area I grew up. As well as supporting the V Foundation for Cancer Research, my coach, obviously, in college, Coach Valvano, passed away way too soon, but obviously he made a huge impact. Shane Jacobson and COO, everyone that's involved with the V Foundation, do a tremendous job raising money trying to find cures for cancer.

As busy as all of us are, it just goes to show you the person that Steph is, him and his wife, his family, making the impact in the Bay Area, that's what it's all about.

We have a platform. We're very fortunate, and Steph being a superstar that he is, to spend his time, his family, his money, everything else that people sometimes take for granted, it shows you the quality person he is, the quality family he comes from, and that's what it's all about.

At the end of the day, he's going to have to retire at some point. There's going to be a better golfer at that time. But he's going to continue to make an impact because that's where his heart's at.

That's what's most important. As I see these young players that have great foundation, great branding, and the opportunity to play in the NBA, and financially what his dad was able to do in the league and all the veteran guys and all the great players that played before us that gave us an opportunity to play at the highest level, where the NBA is right now, guys like Steph make an impact on and off the court. That's what makes me most impressed for the young guys.

Q. You've both been here for many years. Tell me about the crowds. It looks like it's bigger and bigger every year. This is wild.

STEPH CURRY: I feel like I'm a tape recorder: When you come out every year, this is the biggest crowd on a Wednesday, this is the biggest crowd I've ever seen on a Thursday.

I'd say the same thing about today, Friday. The energy is unbelievable, from the time you put the tee in the ground

on the range you can feel it.

That's why this tournament is so special. We're out here trying to live our best golf dreams, and fans are creating memories with parents and their kids and multi-generation. You see it all. It's awesome to see. The course is playing hard, too, which is making it interesting. And hopefully that continues over the weekend.

VINNY DEL NEGRO: When I started here, I think it was like 27 -- I think I've played in this thing 27 years. I've been playing it six years from coaching. I think when I started, there was like 2500, 3,000 fans.

It's just the atmosphere, the enjoyment. I mean, what we feed off, we're used to that, but I don't care how -- shooting a basketball is a little different. This environment, whether it's on 17 or whatever and you're trying to hit golf shots under pressure, being as competitive as we are, I love it.

I know he loves it. We love the competitiveness and challenging ourselves, and the crowd brings that. The volunteers. I can't say enough about the kind of just all the greenskeepers and everyone that's kind of put this course together.

American Century's first class. NBC gets bigger and better, the events. And over the years, it's just great to see -- for me, at this point in my stage, I used to be the young guy, now I'm one of the older guys, the relationships that I've been able to garner over the years, it's amazing. Just really blessed to be in this situation.

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