

Workday Charity Open

Wednesday, July 8, 2020

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Steve Stricker

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Steve Stricker into our virtual media center here at the Workday Charity Open. Before we get to the news of the day, Steve, we'd like to get your comments on being back here at Muirfield. You won the Memorial in 2011. You've won a Presidents Cup here. Just talk a little bit about what this place means to you.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, this is a special place. Thanks for having me. To come back here, Jack Nicklaus's place, to have won a tournament here, to have won a PGA -- or a Presidents Cup here, is a special, special place. Played a practice round with Davis today, so it brings back a lot of great memories. We talked about the little pet squirrel that he had during the Presidents Cup back in '13, and yeah, so a lot of good stuff.

THE MODERATOR: Talk a little bit about the state of your game. What can we expect to see this week.

STEVE STRICKER: Ooh, I lost a little something during that quarantine time, so I've been working hard the last couple weeks to try to find something. But a great place to try to do it here. You've got a great practice facility. Course is in great shape, and excited to play.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously the news of the day, the Ryder Cup and the Presidents Cup have been moved one year out. Can you talk a little bit about that decision, the decision that was made, how it affects you, how it affects the team?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, I mean, it affects the whole country, right? Every golf fan in the world enjoys watching, and we enjoy participating in it. It's just an unbelievable experience and a great spectacle to be a part of or to watch.

Yeah, it was a tough decision. I'm confident that it's the right decision, and just because of the uncertainty that we're in right now during this time of this pandemic. Yeah, it's difficult. Believe me, I would love to play it this September, but we also want to be smart. We don't want

to be a cause of the spread of any of this disease, and we just want to make sure we're doing the right thing. Companies are hurting. People are hurting a little bit. We just want to make sure we're doing the right thing, and this is the smart thing to do.

Q. A lot of past captains have talked about how strenuous the two-year process was for them, and now you're adding another year. Have you given thoughts about being a Ryder Cup captain for three years?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I guess I'm the lucky one, huh? Yeah, I've been thinking about it, and I just told Davis, you get to the point where you want to play it. You've put so much time and energy and focus in on it that you want to play it and you want to get there. I couldn't wait for September to come, you know. Well, now it's going to have to wait another year.

Yeah, it's going to be a challenge, but you know, I can focus a little bit more on my own game now. We've done a lot of the work now as far as team rooms, hotels, the course. We've done a lot of that work. We shouldn't have much more work to do next year. I should be able just to watch these guys play a little bit, come out here on TOUR and be around them and play with them. We've got to work on the points structure and the qualification process, all that kind of stuff now, but you know, it should go on the back burner for a little while.

Q. Did you really think that you could have played this without fans or played it with limited fans, and how much different that would have been if you had decided to go either one of those routes?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, we talked about every possible scenario. I think the players made it quite clear that they would love to play with fans. I would love to see fans there. I would love to see full fans there. You know, half fans would have been a good alternative, I think, but I just don't think, given the uncertainty of what's going on now in our country and the spike of this virus, it's just hard to plan for.

But every scenario was talked about, believe me, and we all wanted to play. But I think a Ryder Cup without fans wouldn't be much of a Ryder Cup, to be quite honest. This event is built around the fans, and players feed off that



energy from the fans. The people love coming to this event. It's an unbelievable spectacle, and to play it without fans I think would be cheating out everybody, every golf fan in the world.

Q. Was there anyone that you talked to that felt that we needed to play it this year?

STEVE STRICKER: No. There was not -- as far as players, we were trying to make that work. I mean, if it could be done in a safe way with fans. Yeah, sure, we talked about it every scenario. But when it comes down to it, there wasn't -- I didn't talk to anybody that said that, for playing this year.

Q. Why do you think it took so long to come to this conclusion then?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, like I said, we were trying all the way up to the last possible -- I mean, the PGA has got to build it out, right, that needed to start in June, the middle of June at the very latest, and you're building something to an unknown. You don't know what's going to happen. You know, I just feel like the reason it took so long is because everybody, all the golfing world has got to get on the same page. The PGA TOUR has the Presidents Cup next year, other events are scheduled for when the Ryder Cup is now taking the place of. So it's just getting all these organizations together on the same page and making sure that it can work.

Q. The European Tour already came out and said they're freezing points up until the new year. Do you feel like these events that are going to happen on the PGA TOUR should be counting?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, we put that in place before we came back four weeks ago. As of now, they're counting. But we're going to get together, the assistant captains and myself and PGA of America, and we'll come up with a plan going forward.

We've never had to deal with anything like this, right; we changed the points a month ago or two months ago, and now it looks like we'll come up with a new plan probably starting for this fall and next year, and whatever that is, I don't even know. We haven't even talked about it because we've been putting our focus on being able to try to play this event, and we haven't really looked into anything else going forward.

Q. Given that there now is this longer period of time, is six picks too many to have for you?

STEVE STRICKER: No, I don't think so. I mean, but we'll

look at it. And it may stay the same. I don't know. Or we may go back to eight and four; I don't know that, either. We'll take a look at all the scenarios. We just want to put our best team forward, and whatever that looks like, we're going to do. I'll talk to all my guys and see what the best thing to do is, and we'll go from there.

Q. What's the best way you heard a Ryder Cup without fans described to you?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, I called it a yawner. But I haven't heard -- there's been some pretty vocal players saying that it just wouldn't be much fun, and I'm kind of in agreement that it wouldn't be a lot of fun without fans. It would be more like an exhibition. And that's not what that event is about.

You know, the state of Wisconsin, to cancel that and not ever go to Wisconsin would be in my mind a tragedy, right; the state of Wisconsin has been so looking forward to having a Ryder Cup there and they've supported it thus far by buying the corporate tents and the tickets have been unbelievable. They've been so excited. Everywhere I go I hear about the Ryder Cup. So I think to not go there at all would be a tragedy.

So I think this is the next best thing. We're going to put it off and wait until next September and see, and hopefully we can play with 100 percent fans and put on a Ryder Cup and a show that the golfing world expects when you watch a Ryder Cup.

Q. There's kind of a bit of an open week there now. Would you like to see some sort of exhibition take its place? Would you be up for maybe playing Pádraig?

STEVE STRICKER: I don't even know the schedule. I mean, I didn't know what any other events are going around it. But yeah, you know, there's so much going on around Ryder Cup week. You know, not really. (Laughs.)

THE MODERATOR: Steve, we appreciate your time, and best of luck this week.

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