

Sony Open in Hawaii

Friday, January 12, 2024

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Stewart Cink

Quick Quotes

Q. Stewart, nice playing, 8-under through two rounds; tied for the lead. How would you assess what's been working for you through two days here at Waialae?

STEWART CINK: I think I've just managed this course really well. It's been pretty breezy. Yesterday especially. Today not quite as breezy.

But just the course that you just need to manage your way around. Not going to hit every fairway out here. The rough is significant this year, so just managing your shots and where you miss, and when you do hit fairways and you're able to take advantage of some good comfortable yardages, that's when you have to take advantage.

I've done a pretty good job of both of those things.

Q. Is this a course where you feel like in terms of you have a better chance to contend than at other courses on tour at this point in your career?

STEWART CINK: I have no idea. I like playing here because I think the course is pretty cool and I like being in Hawai'i in the middle of wintertime.

So I just always feel good and positive about coming out here after a break. That usually has lent to me just being in a good mind frame playing here. I haven't always played great here, but had some pretty good play over the years.

I have no idea statistically if I match up with this course well or not. No clue. Wouldn't want to ask that.

I just feel like I have good positivity coming here every year that has lent itself to having a good attitude on the course and patience, and those are usually good things for golf.

Q. The off-season did you take much time away from practice?

STEWART CINK: Yeah, I did, because I played about what I would normally play in the fall, but I threw in two trips to Italy for the Ryder Cup, which really had a cost.



By the time we finished with RSM I was pretty whipped. I played a couple small events with some friends, like little pro-member type things and the PNC Father-Son at the end the year, but kind of didn't do much practicing after that.

Normally I would practice hard getting ready for this and I just kind of purposely rested and felt like that would a smart thing to do, to be well rested coming into the year instead of grinding.

Q. How many tournaments do you think you'll play this year if you were to guess?

STEWART CINK: I would say --

Q. Combined obviously.

STEWART CINK: Yeah, I would say I'll probably do 23, thereabouts. That's what I've done for a long, long time. This year I'm not in the Signature Events yet, but I am in the Champions' events.

Q. Are you in next week?

STEWART CINK: I'm in next week. It who Hualalai I'm playing there, yeah.

I played 23 events. I don't pick that number out. It just works out that way. I have a feeling I'll probably do about the same this year.

We have a grandbaby coming. Our older son, Connor, and his wife, Jess, are expecting in February, so that's sort of the line in the sand for me schedule-wise.

Once that happens I'll reassess the schedule. Barring any weird circumstances, I would think somewhere around 22 to 24 tournaments.

Q. Do you ever talk to anyone a little bit older than you who has made the transition? At what point do you stop competing out here? How do you know? Do they ever tell you how you know?



STEWART CINK: Nope. Most everybody I talked to just said, you'll know. They didn't say how or even how they knew. Just said, you'll know.

Every time I three-putt or hit a ball in the water or something like that, that's when I feel like I know that it's time to stop and quit.

Q. That's just one shot, Stewart.

STEWART CINK: That's what golf does to you, makes you want to break every club in your bag sometimes. Most everybody said you'll know. They offered the advice to pick one and stick to it.

I'm not doing that. I'm not going to pick one and stick to it. I'm not making the FedExCup or the Schwab Cup my top priority to try to capture one of those Cups. I just want to play good golf and I don't care where it is. Just play the best I can play and get as much out of myself as I can. If that means playing half here and half on the Champions TOUR I'm okay with that.

Q. Play okay today?

STEWART CINK: I played okay, yeah. It's not spectacular, but I had a good score and managed myself around the course fine.

Q. Early in the round did you have any contrast of club selection from yesterday afternoon to this morning on certain holes?

STEWART CINK: I'm sure I did. I would have to think about it a little bit.

Q. 5 might come to mind; 1 maybe.

STEWART CINK: Well, 5 I hit -- I hit fairway both days with 5, and I hit 4-iron, which wasn't going to be enough club yesterday, and today I hit what could have been 8-iron. That's a pretty big difference.

The wind wasn't a complete switch. It was just about 45 degree change and that put a lot of the holes into crosswind situations.

Q. Even though you're kind of a fence sitter, at least when it relates to which tours you can play, do you like the way golf is headed with these Sig Events, Top 70, instead of 125?

STEWART CINK: If I was in the top 50 I would really like it, but I'm not, so I don't like it. Unfortunately I do think it's

probably the right thing to do for golf fans. If all the players play in those and we get great fields playing for a lot of money then it's great.

It's just I don't think it serves everybody, and PGA TOUR kind of has been about doing the best for everybody, for all the pros and members.

So I'm a little mixed on that.

Q. I see that. I agree with you. I'm also seeing non-Sig Events, playing for 8.5 million on average.

STEWART CINK: It is. It's relative. It's what you're playing for in points, too, and you're keeping your job security, ranking.

Q. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

STEWART CINK: To me, it's a little bit out of balance, a little bit out of balance. I understand where it all came from. We had to do something because we had a competing venture out there trying to swallow our players up.

So we had to give our players a reason to stay, so I get it. Been doing this a long time. I've sat in the boardroom meetings -- not lately. Thank goodness. I don't want to be part of that right now.

It's not easy, but where I'm sitting I don't really love it. I'd rather be playing for 20.

Q. Do you get any sense the 10, top 10 in the FedEx and the little swing stuff for the 5, is that enough or should it have been more? Still a chance for you to get to Pebble.

STEWART CINK: I think it's okay, that if you -- a top 10 or Top 5 finish out here is noteworthy these days. You got to play so well to finish in those spots.

So to honor those finishes with a chance to move up into these Signature Events, I think it's good. I just -- one thing that personally I am not for is I played in the first year of the elevated tournaments when they were called designated, so long ago, you know.

They were mostly full field tournaments with cuts and all the top players played. I thought they were just absolutely brilliant. It's hard to convince me and a lot of the players that aren't in those fields why being a small field matters. That's where I stand on it.

Q. Was that probably a big divide in terms of



membership, cut, no cut?

STEWART CINK: Yeah, and you can imagine which way it fell. Fell about to the 81st player. Everybody above that wanted to have small fields. I don't know why. I'm just not convinced why an 80-man field is --

Q. If that.

STEWART CINK: -- more elite than 156-man field. I don't get it. I played in all those when they were full fields. Not that Phoenix is 156 players, but as full as they can get it for the daylight and the frost and all that. 132 I believe. It had a cut. All the players.

I thought those were such great tournaments that year.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports