

Waste Management Phoenix Open

Friday, February 5, 2021

Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

Steve Stricker

Quick Quotes

Q. Talk about today; No. 1 strokes gained putting today, so the putter was rolling well, 295 yards off the tee. Talk about today.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it was a good day except for the last couple holes. Hit a couple poor iron shots coming in. Tried to hit just a little 8-iron on the last hole. I was in between clubs and hit it awful.

Other than that, it was a good day. I did a lot of good things again. Didn't drive it quite as well, but gave myself some opportunities and made some nice putts again, made a couple nice saves along the way, as well.

Q. Mark Wilson is our analyst this week and he said there comes a point for a veteran where the adrenaline kicks in, it's automatic. Is that what you started feeling out there?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I haven't been in this position for quite some time out here, and obviously on the Champions Tour a few tournaments here and there where I've won or been in contention, but yeah, this is why we're here, to play at this stage, at this level. So it felt good to get in there and to start the way I did today, this morning.

I played really solidly to start the day and I got under par on that opening stretch, which is a good stretch when it's so cold in the morning. And I hit some quality shots. That gave me some confidence going forward.

Q. The Packers lose to the Buccaneers. I know you're kind of hanging out down in Florida. Are you rooting for the Bucs or how is your Super Bowl going to go?

STEVE STRICKER: You know, deep down I'm a Bears fan, but when the Bears are out of it, I root for the Pack. It was sad to see them lose. But now I'm kind of on the Brady bandwagon, I guess. I think it would be an upset if Tampa bay beats them. Patrick Mahomes is a heck of a player and they've got a great team, but I'm going to root



for Tampa bay, I think. It would be kind of a cool story if they pulled it off.

Q. Does he inspire you because he keeps himself in such incredible shape and so do you.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I'm not in as good a shape as he is, obviously, but he sure does keep in great shape and he wants to continue to play so that fire burns deep inside of him. Just like me, too, I still have the desire to play and to play out here, too. It makes me feel good when I can come out and put up a couple good rounds like this and have an opportunity this weekend.

Q. Just some general comments on your day if you can.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it was a good day, good start to the day really. It was cold this morning, and we were the third group off. It's always tough to get going around here in the morning, and we started on the back nine with some pretty good holes and some water holes that can come up and get you. But I got off to a good start and kind of set the tone for the round.

I putted well again today. A couple hiccups coming in on 8 and 9. Made a good save at 8 but then just hit an awful iron into the green on No. 9. But overall a good day.

Q. Did you get any texts or calls from any players, anybody, about how well you did last night?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, Snedeker is in my kitchen saying you need to smile, you're leading the tournament, why aren't you smiling. So he was in my kitchen a little bit. I played a practice round with him last week out at Torrey.

Yeah, I got a couple other texts from guys, too, so it was good.

You know, I know all those cliches; it was only one round. So I knew today was an important day to come out and try to back that one up that I did yesterday.

Q. Do you feel like you're in this for the weekend, that you're going to be there on Sunday?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, well, that's my goal. That's my



intentions. I've got to clean up a couple little shots that I messed up coming in, but I feel pretty good about my game and where it's going. The putter has felt great. Hit a lot of putts on my line today, and it was really kind of a stressless round until the last couple holes.

All in all, it was good.

Q. How about just the atmosphere out there with the lack of fans? You've played this tournament when there's 170,000 out here and now there's almost nobody.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's totally different. This whole period since we started last May or June has just been really weird. We're fortunate. We're fortunate to be playing. We're lucky to be playing, to have some great sponsors like Waste Management, to be able to come here and still play and to be able for them to support the local charities and give back to their communities. So we're lucky to be able to do it.

But yeah, we're ready to get the fans back in full force, especially at an event like this.

Q. What would one more victory mean to you out here?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it would mean a lot. I mean, I know it's a long shot. I've got to play my very best, just like anybody else does out here. But you know, I've been there. I've won a few times out on this TOUR and I know what it takes, although it's been a while. It would be fun to see how I handle it if I do get that opportunity.

Q. Does the Champions Tour really kind of keep you -- kind of you're in contention, you're on the leaderboard, now you're here and you're in contention on the leaderboard, you've done it like five times in the last three years?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, for sure. I've always said that each Tour helps -- I've played both tours the last three years, and each Tour helps the other Tour. When I play out here and I go to the Champions Tour event, the courses are a little bit shorter, the pins are a little bit more generous, so playing out here helps me when I go there. And then when I go there and get in contention or win an event I feel that that gives me confidence and motivation to come back out here and play. I've felt that that's been a good balance, to play both of those, and I feel like each one kind of helps the other.

Q. I don't know how much leaderboard watching you did today, but hot on your heels is Jordan Spieth, and

you're a guy who kind of went -- you were in the wilderness at one point. What's that like, and what do you see from Jordan, and what does that mean for him do you think to be up there again this week?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it was good to see him playing well today. I think it's just a matter of time. He's got so much talent and so much ability, and he's a great putter. I think as soon as he figures out a few things here and there, he's going to be right back where he was. And that's the hard part, right; he had such great years, career years, in just a short period of time, that all of us when we do that we have those expectations that we need to do that every year, and that's just not possible out here. There's so many good players and the talent pool runs deep. It's just not fair for everybody like us or him to believe that he can put those numbers up year after year like those few years that he had in '14 and '15, I think.

I think once he kind of gives himself a break and finds out a few things with his swing or whatever he's been working on, he's going to be right back to that Jordan Spieth we all know and love. I'm rooting for him. He's a great kid. I've spent some great times with him, and yeah, I'm rooting for him to be playing well again.

Q. What are you looking to see from him?

STEVE STRICKER: You know, I'm looking for him to just get right up in contention, and I don't think it's going to take much for him to get back in there and win again. He's done it so much in such a short period of time, even though it's been a few years, he knows how to do it. He showed us he knows how to do it when he was winning all those events and majors. I think when he gets in there it's going to be like riding a bike again and he's going to feel comfortable and do well with it.

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