

# Valspar Championship

Friday, March 22, 2024

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

## Stewart Cink

### Quick Quotes

**Q. How would you compare that round to yesterday's? I know the conditions were a little bit different, but can you explain the challenges in both rounds?**

STEWART CINK: Today's round was a lot like the last half of yesterday's round where I started off pretty scrappy and trying to find my footing and then I did. I finished very strong. Just carried over to today. Hit the ball solidly, a few more fairways today, which was nice. This golf course kind of requires it all. You have to be long and accurate off the tee and smart with your decisions coming into the greens and hit really solid approaches, and then the short game you have to do that everywhere.

But there's a reason that so many players rave about this course. It requires everything, and so far this week I've done everything fairly well.

**Q. You're kind of splitting your schedule a little bit this year with the Champions Tour now that you're 50 and playing here as well. I know you've been out there in contention a little bit, what did it feel like to be back in contention here?**

STEWART CINK: It feels great. Being in contention feels the same way no matter where you are, to be honest. Obviously the field is a little different here at Valspar than it was the last time I teed it up at Cologuard in Tucson on the PGA TOUR Champions. But it still feels the same and I didn't have a very good finish there. I was -- to say in contention would be like understating it. I should have won the tournament and I didn't finish it off. I had a little bit of a meltdown.

So I'm just thrilled to be right back at the top of the leaderboard to test myself out again this week because that's really what you want at the start of the year. You want to get in contention as much as possible and let the chips fall. You start trying to control too many things out there, it doesn't work out in your favor. So I get another chance to learn some really great lessons and maybe some hard lessons this week again.



**Q. Being out here for a long time, staying healthy, good longevity, you make the cut and it's going to be your 500th on TOUR. What sort of mark does that -- how do you feel about that?**

STEWART CINK: Well, I didn't know about that until somebody told me a little while ago, but I guess milestone would be, you know, appropriate language to use. I've been playing out here a long time and I've had some ups and downs, but a lot of ups. I've thoroughly enjoyed myself. To make 500 cuts, I think is -- I think that's pretty respectable, I guess. I know a lot of players are celebratory when they reach 500 events. So to be able to put that number on your cuts made, I'm proud of that.

**Q. Kira also talked to you about your cross-handed chipping. A lot of people probably haven't seen you do that until today. How long have you been doing that or experimenting with that?**

STEWART CINK: I've been doing it for about two years now in competition. It's been kind of unnoticeable because my golf has been kind of noticeable for the last two years. I was practicing that way a little bit and I just noticed that my technique just seems to be better gripping the club that way. I cannot explain it. But seeing Matt Fitzpatrick have success with it kind of gave me the confidence to take it into competition. Out here you kind of don't want to be the first guy to do something. It takes a lot of guts. So to have another player already doing that in competition kind of gave me what I felt was kind of like a green light to go ahead and just throw it into competition and it was a transformation almost immediately. My short game statistics have been a lot better and my attitude, my mindset, around the greens has just been like night and day difference and it's so much fun.

**Q. You have always taken a few risks, though. That's never been an issue for you. Why do you think that is as far as -- why are you made up that way to take those risks?**

STEWART CINK: I think you're right about that. I have always been -- I'm not a risk taker personality, but in golf, my career out here has been full of big changes. I think I



learned early on that I respond pretty well to the focus required with big change. Going all the way back to like when I won the British Open, I won the tournament with basically an entire new putting approach. Like, I ditched long putter, I started using a short putter, changed my grip, changed my whole approach, my preshot routine and everything, and I was still so new into that that it required focus.

So that kind of change -- or that kind of focus and that result just kind of gave me the confidence to know that like not only like change is good, but it feels like it's almost required for me to stay locked in.

**Q. You recently became a grandfather. What have you learned from that position and how satisfying has that been for you?**

STEWART CINK: What I've learned from becoming a grandfather is I marvel that we were able to do that with our own kids because I've seen my son and my daughter-in-law just not sleep and just do what's required. They're amazing. They're so natural at being parents. But it's been a little while since we had a little baby around and it's exhausting, but she is just fabulous. Her name's Stella and we just are just so thrilled with her.

**Q. Back to the golf. What would you say was your best shot today or your best moment out on the course?**

STEWART CINK: My best moment on the course for sure was I hit it left off 6 and I was in the pine straw, it's really matted down over there, almost like hard pan, and I had a little opening, but I needed to curve a shot about 30 or 40 yards and I hit just the most beautiful hook, like sweeping underneath the trees, that carried just short of the green perfectly, went up there about 6 feet from the hole. I mean, that was literally escaping from jail. It was a cool moment and finished it off with a birdie.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports