

U.S. Open Championship 2026

Saturday, June 20, 2026

Southampton, New York, USA

Shinnecock Hills Golf Club

Sam Stevens

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: We're here with Sam Stevens, 2-over 72 today. There's only, as of right now, three rounds in red figures. How difficult was it playing out there?

SAM STEVENS: Yeah, it played hard. I think this morning, it looked really windy out there. The wind laid down a little bit in the afternoon for us, but the greens got really firm. Yeah, it was hard to get the ball close and hard to make putts.

I think Wyndham is playing well, and there were a couple other guys that played really well. Yeah, overall it felt difficult to get the ball close to the hole and make birdies, and it didn't feel that hard to make mistakes. So yeah, it played pretty hard.

Q. You are tied for second, but currently seven shots back. What's the mindset for tomorrow going into chase mode?

SAM STEVENS: Yeah, so much of it kind of depends on what Wyndham does. I could play a great round tomorrow and shoot 3- or 4-under and still lose by seven. So I think I'll stick with kind of my regular game plan. You don't normally shoot a low number trying to shoot a low number. You kind of shoot a low number just because it happens.

Hopefully I can hit some good shots early, make a few putts and get a little mojo going early and see what happens.

Q. Sam, you've been around for a while, obviously, but I think a lot of people are going to turn on their televisions tomorrow and say --

SAM STEVENS: Who the heck is Sam Stevens?

Q. Yeah, so who the heck is Sam Stevens?

SAM STEVENS: I don't know, I'm an average PGA TOUR player, I guess. Yeah, I don't know. That's a good question. I'm just a golfer.

Yeah, I'm excited for tomorrow, and hopefully I can play

well enough to help a few more people get acquainted with who I am.

Q. How anxious were you to get some momentum on a couple of those last three-putts for birdie, the last three looks for birdie?

SAM STEVENS: Yeah, I saw that 1-under was the lowest score in the clubhouse. I think Tom Kim was in front of me, so if he had gotten to 2-under, he would have been in the final group, but I thought that maybe I could get in the final group if I made a putt coming in.

I hit three pretty good putts. Like I said, it's just hard to make putts on these greens. There's a lot of slope, and they're not super fast, but you have to be kind of careful with them. It can be difficult to match the line and the speed.

I felt like I got three good looks. I kind of struggled through a lot of the back nine, to be honest, so to get three looks on the last three holes was nice and has me feeling a little bit better about today.

Q. You've mentioned this week that you've had a bit of a mental reset in how you look at golf. How much was that tested on 10, 11 and 12?

SAM STEVENS: Yeah, I mean, it's kind of tested all week. But I think I said this earlier in the week; it's almost easier for me knowing that the course is playing really hard to just kind of accept the fact that you're going to make a bogey.

Like 10, I don't hit my wedges very high, and I'm hitting straight up the hill and it's straight downwind. I don't know if I could even hit that wedge shot on the green if I hit it perfect, and I did hit it pretty good. So I wasn't too frustrated about that.

Then 11 is a brutal hole. Everyone kind of knows that. Didn't hit a great shot and made a bogey.

12, I freakin' sliced it, and that's kind of what I was doing for a lot of the day.

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Like I said, it's just easier knowing that a bogey doesn't kill you. If you can kind of contain the damage and give yourself a few looks, you can kind of right the ship and hang in there, and I felt like I did a good job of that.

The real test is just kind of doing that over the entire tournament when I've got 18 holes left.

Q. You mentioned, I think it was yesterday, that your wife had some advice for you last week. What exactly did she say?

SAM STEVENS: I think we just talked a lot about having a proper perspective. Golf is obviously my job, and everyone wants to do their job well, so it's easy to get frustrated when you're not doing your job as well as you want. But at the end of the day, I've got four kids. We live close to family.

We have a fairly simple life and a very blessed life. I get to play the PGA TOUR, which is what I've always wanted to do.

It was nothing earth-shattering. It's just a little recognition of how fortunate I am and allow that attitude to kind of be the one that's dominating my thought process instead of looking at the things that I'm ticked off about, whether it's my game or -- yeah, whatever it is. There's a lot of things to get upset about, but just having a proper perspective has helped.

Q. When you look back on this week just kind of -- when this is all done -- your best finish in a major had been at The Open last year -- what do you think this will mean to you when you look back on it across your career, just this special week, the chance to finish in the top 10, maybe even top 5? What do you think a week like this will mean to you, looking back on it?

SAM STEVENS: I guess it depends on how I play tomorrow. If I go Tommy Fleetwood on it and shoot 63, it might mean something different than if I play really poorly.

I don't know. It's a fun week. It's always good to play well, and it's fun. I can't remember where I was to start the final round last year at Oakmont. Maybe I was, like, in 15th place or 20th, but at the time that felt like a pretty big deal to me.

Now this feels like a big deal, but I feel -- I'm just excited to play, which is a good place to be. Again, if I have the proper perspective, I think every week should mean something, whether it's good or bad. This week has been good, so it's been enjoyable. Hopefully I play well

tomorrow. We'll see what it means after tomorrow.

Q. A lot has been made of the fact that you didn't play every tournament in college. In this day and age with transfer portal and NIL, do you think if that had been around then, would you have transferred, and if not, why was it so important to cut your teeth against some of the best players in college golf there?

SAM STEVENS: I don't think I would have transferred. Too much pride for that. But I really enjoyed Oklahoma State. I was playing with the best players in the country, and I knew that.

Yeah, I think it was great for me. I think if I had gone somewhere maybe smaller where I could have been the best player or I could have traveled a lot, I might have thought what I was doing was okay. But when you're getting your teeth kicked in by Matt Wolff and Viktor Hovland and a lot of the guys on the team were kicking my teeth in there for a while, I knew what good golf looked like. So when I got out of school, I knew what I had to do to get better.

It wasn't always fun. There was definitely some times where I was pretty frustrated that I wasn't playing more, getting to go to the tournaments, getting an opportunity to play, but I obviously wouldn't change it. I'm really pleased with where I'm at.

I think there's a lot to learn for kids to kind of grind it out. Yeah, some kids do, some kids don't. But it is what it is, I guess.

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