

The 150th Open

Mixed Zone

Thursday, 14 July 2022

Stewart Cink



Q. When you don't have maybe your best round going at the Old Course, The Open Championship, what's the best way to manage your expectations overall?

STEWART CINK: Well, I don't think I have an answer for that because I didn't do a very good job of it. I felt like it was just one bad decision after another out there. I kept being wrong. I'm not really accustomed to that. It's usually a straight line, and it really hurts to have a day like today because I love playing here. It's my favourite venue in golf.

And with Reagan caddying, just to have a day like that, it's just, I don't think I have an answer. I don't know. You get off the rails, and you just feel like you stay off the rails.

I felt like I never -- I might have set a record today. I might be the first person ever to hit it in the burn on 1 and hit it OB on 18 in the same round. I don't know, but it was just not a day for me in any way. I couldn't judge lies right. I read putts wrong, and I also executed some shots pretty poorly.

Overall it adds up to about 78.

Q. Did it take a little too long to make, from the transition, adaptations there?

STEWART CINK: No, it wasn't like an adjusting thing. I should say there was a couple times where we made some bad -- we underestimated how far the ball was going to roll out on some of the greens. The greens were quite crispy out there. No. 9. No, No. 8, for example, the par-3, we had 200 yards and really only needed to carry to about 155 to be pin high, and all of us were trying to hit about 170 because that's what we're more accustomed to.

And I think that a lot of us, probably a lot of people in the afternoon probably underestimated how much the ball is releasing out there. Then it was just a tough day around the greens and on the greens for me too. I just didn't -- I found myself on the wrong side of the knobs a lot, and getting the ball within 10 feet of the hole was just a hard thing to do and I wasn't making any short putts.

It was a quadruple whammy out there.

Q. You get yourself away from the result of the numbers of today. I know I talked to Reagan over the phone right before you guys left The Open last year, and he was talking about the anticipation of possibly this Open, you guys maybe coming here. Like as a father and son, like away from the result, like how cool is that? Because it rarely happens where you get that kind of --

STEWART CINK: Yeah, it is rare, and it's also, it's my favourite course, and Reagan has a love affair with the course too. We're both completely fascinated. Maybe a little too much anticipation for playing here to the point where I just was asleep at the wheel today a lot.

I don't have a lot of explanation for what happened today, but I just got off on the wrong foot early. It could be I was just maybe looking forward to this too much and caught up in the romantic nature of this place and how much I love it here.

And anyway, whatever it was, it wasn't the right way for me to start this tournament. And it's just -- I'm really sad about today. Just really a sad day for me. I love playing good golf, and I love playing St Andrews. And I just do not like being like not my best self, and I wasn't my best.

Q. When you -- this range, do you believe the course, 1 and 18, the way it sets up, how helpful is it for sight lines and targets out there the way they have set up for this week?

STEWART CINK: I haven't noticed anything. It looks like, the way I'm doing it, I'm aiming at things in the distance on the range just like I do on the course anyway. I could just tee off the ball on the beach and aim for stuff in the distance. You make whatever you can out of the practise area.

And this here, this practise area is perfectly fine. There's nothing -- they've done the best they can do. And it's been the range here as far as I remember in all the Opens I've played here, it's been the same place.

It's got links turf and a little bit of breeze and that's what you want.

Q. You were talking about this being one of your favourite Open venues. I know Muirfield is coming up, the Women's Open, it's a big deal for them to finally get a chance to play.

How cool is that for their opportunity?

STEWART CINK: I'm excited for them. I think Muirfield belongs on the rotation for both this tournament and their tournament. It's such a fabulous course. It's probably the purest links test of all The Open venues.

So it will just be a delight for them to play. And I'll be watching. I'll be looking forward to seeing it because I love Muirfield, too. And it's good to hear that Muirfield, as a club, is sort of turning the corner and hopefully in the future it will be back on this rotation.

Q. What would be a couple of LPGA players or LET players that you think might have a shot at Muirfield? I know it's a little specific. But is it maybe longer hitters that are good with keeping it in front of them, basically?

STEWART CINK: No, I think -- well, I don't know the women's game that well, but power works in golf. So we'll just say that. But then also you've got to -- I imagine that their tournament, they're probably not going to have a lot of rain between now and then. It's going to stay dry. And that course is going to be a brick like this one.

So it's going to take someone with a lot of imagination and a lot of patience. And I would look for probably like a pretty experienced player to win that. I'm not naming any names. I don't know that many names.

Q. Aaron Jarvis, you played with him today. He grew up in a place, they have only one 18-hole golf course in the Cayman Islands. Now he's played the Masters. I just wonder what you saw in him today at all, if you see much about him in just one round of golf?

STEWART CINK: All the young guys look great to me. I watched him win that Latino American Amateur, so I saw it on television. So I already knew a little bit about it. And no surprise that he played really good golf. We all took our lumps out there a little bit at times. But he hit some nice shots and he's powerful and he's going to school for golf and that's great. I think that's awesome and I'm happy for him. And he's a pleasure to play with. You can tell he's excited about being here and he's got a good attitude.

That's what I look for the most, enjoy it. Don't come out here and try to be one of us already. We're serious. We have fun, too, but let him have a good time.

Q. Do you get the sense that, like anybody who has experience, that you just have to take a little time to learn links golf?

STEWART CINK: He does take some time. He's got a guy

named Kevin who caddies here caddying for him. I think that's a good move to have someone you can trust who knows these holes and the wind directions and the bounces and the reads.

But yeah, it takes some getting used to it. And this is -- what you see out there on The Old Course right now is links golf in extreme form. With the way -- the ball in the fairway is just rolling until something stops it. That something is usually rough or sand.

So it is extreme links golf. And it throws you for a loop sometimes. Even somebody like me. I played in 24 of these, I think. It threw me for a loop a few times with some of the bounces how far some of the shots were going, short and long on both different wind directions.

So I don't think the forecast is for a whole lot of wind. But if it was blowing 20 to 30 miles out there, I don't know how you can play this thing right now. I don't know. It's kind of insane out there. In a great way, though. I love playing here. But I feel very blessed and fortunate to be able to play St Andrews when it's like this. And that's why I'm really disappointed that I played bad today. It's such a fun place to play.

Q. In the other 24 you've played, have you seen something --

STEWART CINK: I think it was 2005, it was really firm. 10 and '15 I think we had wind and rain delays. So I think it's been like this before. I think it was 2005 when we were talking about how the fairways were fashioned in the greens.

But the only other time I can think of where the turf was this firm in The Open Championship as a whole was at Carnoustie a couple of years ago, '18. But Carnoustie is a regular course compared to this. This, you've got the double fairways. You've got the pot bunkers. The terrain here is so much more lumpy and broken up than it is at Carnoustie.

So Carnoustie, even though when it was playing the way it did, also it was predictable. And this has got unpredictability, which is, that's why it's extreme links golf.

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