

PGA Championship

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Quail Hollow Club

Sepp Straka

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Sepp Straka is with us now at the 107th PGA Championship.

Welcome to your fifth PGA Championship. A big win for you last week. What did you do well up there in Philly, and how are you feeling coming into this one?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, it was a great week. The putter was really hot, which was key. Those greens were really tough to putt. I felt like I was able to make a lot of mid-range putts, which was huge. Ball-striking was solid, not anything exceptional there, but definitely was able to take advantage of a hot putter.

Q. How has the week been so far, and what are your impressions of the course?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, it's been good. I got down here Monday evening. The course is long as ever, longer than it was, and with the rain, it's playing even longer than that.

It's in really good shape, though, considering all the rain that we've gotten here. Looking forward to a good week.

Q. Just wondering, after your win, where did the emotion last week center on, Man, this would be great not to have to be a captain's pick, and I can nail down an automatic spot for the Ryder Cup?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, definitely was a little bit behind in the points. So the goal all year has been to make that team.

Yeah, it's nice to kind of get that big chunk of points. But yeah, hopefully I can keep playing well and be in one of the top six there by the end of the year.

Q. You had a caddie change last week, and I'm curious what the update on that is coming into this week.

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, Dewey had an MRI yesterday, my regular caddie. He's not going to go this week, but hopefully will be ready coming up here in the next few

weeks.

They told him to rest a little bit. He's feeling a little bit better, so things are looking up there, and my brother is going to be on the bag this week.

Q. How did you decide for your brother to be --

SEPP STRAKA: It was already planned. Dewey's daughter is graduating college on Friday, I believe. So my brother was already going to caddie Friday, Saturday.

So it wasn't a huge change of plans. We just told him he's going to be going the whole week instead.

Q. When you think about the final stretch here, what makes it major-esque?

SEPP STRAKA: It's really hard. You've got to hit excellent, excellent shots. 16 is just a brutally long golf hole. I feel like that bunker is not really in play for me because I can just aim at it and stay short of it and hit a 4-iron or 7-wood in. But it really just depends on how it plays.

Yeah, then 17 is a really tough par-3. You've got to hit your number with a long iron within five yards to really hit a good shot, which is obviously very hard to do.

Then 18 I think is the best of the three holes. You've got to hit a good drive to get it in the fairway. If you're not in the fairway, you're pretty much done for on that one.

It's going to take a lot of controlling the nerves and just executing good shots under a lot of pressure.

Q. Following up on wins, a lot of people talk about how difficult it is to play successfully the week after winning. After your last three PGA TOUR victories you finished in the top 10. Besides Diet Coke, how do you keep the energy and momentum up after winning on Sunday?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, it's definitely tough. I've had a lot of off weeks after my wins recently, which definitely helps

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to decompress, take it all in, get your energy back. But when it's a quick turnaround like this, it's hard.

The big thing is getting energy back. You get kind of drained. There's a lot of pressure. You're wrestling a lot of things, and then obviously after you win, there's a lot of adrenaline still going.

Last night, I had a really good night of sleep. So hopefully, hopefully, we're getting back on that track.

Q. Sepp, top 10 in the World Rankings now. And then we've been talking recently about Collin Morikawa. Xander used to be in the same position; he's been up there but also under the radar, not getting much attention. What are the advantages of that, and do you enjoy that position better than having attention all the time?

SEPP STRAKA: I definitely do. I'm not very outgoing. I'm not a big people person. I'm a little bit shy.

So I definitely enjoy being under the radar a little more. That's probably a big reason why I am that way is because I just don't bring a whole lot on myself.

It makes it maybe a little bit easier to prepare for tournaments because you don't have all the eyeballs on you. But internally, I think every player, whether they have a lot of attention on them or not, their standard is a lot higher than what other people have for them. They're just trying to meet whatever standard they set for themselves. That's kind of the same with everybody.

Q. Different for Austria; you're making history for Austria. There's more people watching golf now in Austria. What kind of effect is it having, and what are you getting from your country people there?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, it's incredible. The response from there is really amazing. Austria has grown as a golf country since I've been around, since I was a little kid.

It's grown a lot. People love it over there. It's definitely not one of the major sports in Austria. Pretty limited with the seasons. But they're definitely golf crazy, and it's awesome to see the support that I get from Austria.

Every week there's somebody from Austria in the crowd that's rooting me on, or I get messages from friends. It's really cool to see kind of the support from Austria.

Q. We had Luke Donald this morning in here. It looks like you have a guaranteed spot in the Ryder Cup. Kind of your memories of the last one and what you

expect this year?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, memories, it's incredible. I got to play with Shane on Sunday last week, and he's become a really good friend of mine. What a great week, great group of guys. Just still, kind of, the group chat still going from the last one. Hoping to be in the group chat for the next one.

Yeah, the next one is going to be very different, I think. The environment in the room was incredible. Obviously we were the home team, so that's expected.

But it's going to be quite the opposite in New York. I think the fans are going to be coming out in full support for the U.S., and I think it's going to be fun but in a very different way. I think they're going to make it very challenging, and it's going to be tough.

Yeah, hopefully I can get my game in shape and keep it going through that time.

Q. Last week when you were winning, there was a lot of talk on TV of the great Austrian downhillers, Franz Klammer.

SEPP STRAKA: Hermann Maier.

Q. If one of those downhillers is your hero, who is it?

SEPP STRAKA: Hermann Maier is for me. Just growing in that that era, when I was a kid I was always watching him. He was kind of my hero.

I was not a very talented skier. I grew up in Vienna. So not a whole lot of skiing there, but he was the one I always grew up watching, so he would be my one.

But my mom would say Franz Klammer because he was a golfer and a skier and very talented in both. Yeah, it's a nice history there.

Q. When you won last week -- you just mentioned Shane Lowry. Was there a touch of awkwardness knowing how heartbroken he was?

SEPP STRAKA: I don't know about awkwardness. We talked in scoring, and he was very happy for me. He was obviously very upset that he didn't pull it out.

But Shane is such a good guy. All day we were very fiery, we were very competitive, but I don't think that ever came in between us being friends, or that would never really jeopardize that. So no, definitely no awkwardness.



But yeah, I definitely felt for him because he's played some incredible golf over the last few years. Everybody wants to be the one holding the trophy at the end.

But yeah, he's just going to keep playing the way he's been playing, and I'm sure he'll be holding one here very shortly.

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