

KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship

Harbor Shores

Benton Harbor, Michigan, USA

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

Steve Stricker

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Defending champion Steve Stricker is with us now at the 84th KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship. Steve, heck of a performance last year in Frisco. How are you feeling heading into this one?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I feel good. Great to be back. A venue that I haven't seen until today for the very first time.

Yeah, but Frisco was a special place for us last year. Had our youngest daughter, Izzy on the bag. First time at the PGA headquarters there in Frisco.

Yeah, to walk away with a win there was pretty special, especially with having Izzy on the bag.

Q. What's the feeling when you're going to defend something and you're going to a different place? Is it a little different?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's a little different not really knowing what did expect when I came here this morning. I have heard some stories about what to expect from Mario. My brother-in-law Mario played here a couple years ago and some other guys that have played and gone around here.

But, yeah, I went in here with an open mind. I enjoy it. I enjoyed the course today. It's in great shape. It's kind of a course where you have to pick your spots.

You know, some of the driving areas are tight; some are wide open. There is a lot of the variety here. The greens are a lot of little greens in amongst one big green, so you kind of got to make sure you hit it in the right area or know where to hit it if you miss the green to get it up and down.

So there is a lot to learn here I feel like. Again, being pretty straightforward in regards to where you need to be in the fairway and on the green.

Q. I was looking at your results earlier today. You go down your season, you're 3, T7, 7, T6, T3. That's a dream season for a lot of people. Curious your take on it, if you feel a little piece is missing to keep you from winning.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I just -- you know, I broke my driver at THE PLAYERS Championship, so that's been a little bit of a bugaboo. Then I said, you know what? Maybe it's a good time to change some irons, so I tested some irons, but I went back to -- at Regions couple weeks ago I went back to the ones that I've been playing the last four, five years, so that seemed to be a little bit better.

Hitting the driver nice. It's a new Titleist driver that I am hitting. That seems to be going pretty good, so I feel like I finally got my equipment figured out.

Yeah, I really just haven't put it all together this year. What Pdraig said here, no matter where you play, no matter what level, you need to kind of do all the things well to win.

I've been doing kind of okay with all my parts of my game, so hopefully put it altogether here this week and have that opportunity coming down the stretch.

Q. Steve, you couldn't -- two years ago you were a late withdrawal because of COVID concerns and stuff like that.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah.

Q. Of course back in 2019, about 40 miles from here, you won a Senior Open. I still think it's a record for a golf course. So you're the only one who has a chance to finish the Michiana Senior Sweep if you win this week. And you've had a pretty good history at Western Amateur if I remember correct.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah.

Q. Talk about the golf in this area if you would.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, tremendous golf in this area. Yeah, it reminds me -- a lot of reflecting when we were



driving over. Bobbi and I drove over yesterday, and we were talking about the Western Amateur, Point O' Woods. And then Mario and I -- I played the Rocket Mortgage a few years ago during COVID and we stopped and played the Dunes Club, one of Kaiser's -- I think his first one.

Q. In New Buffalo.

STEVE STRICKER: Yep, in New Buffalo there. And then what is it, Lost Dunes? Yeah, another great course right here in the area, Tom Doak course.

So I know there are great courses in the area. The Midwest is blessed with a lot of great golf, and this area is no different, especially along the coast of Lake Michigan here.

I know there are some other courses up the road further north that I can't come up with the name, but we were going to go there years ago on like a sponsor trip to just take some sponsors of our golf tournament up there to play. I just know there are some great courses here in the area. So yeah, it's a special place.

Obviously Notre Dame is not far away and that was a beautiful course there, too. We're excited to be here.

Q. What about when you got here today, first time you said, so during the pro-am you got a chance to see the golf course.

STEVE STRICKER: Yep.

Q. When you go to play 7 and come up the hill and walk up to the green and boom.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, looks like an ocean out there. And a beach. There is a beach there.

Q. Talk a little bit about as far out and spread out as this golf course is how it all seems to come together.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, my daughter, Bobbi, she caddied for Mario here in '22, and she kind of hit it right on the head when she told me about it. There are like three or four different feelings of the golf course as you go around.

You're kind of out in the dunes on some of those holes, which looks almost like Whistling Straits in some of those areas out there, and then you're back in amongst some of the homes in the trees. There is all these different vibes as you go around this golf course.

But it's a beautiful piece. Challenging. Challenging on the green complexes for sure. Some of them -- I had to go hit

that putt with Nicklaus hit that putt from, and I'm like, how the heck did he even make that, right?

Q. How close did you get?

STEVE STRICKER: Oh, well, no, I missed it way over there to the right. He's just walking around like it was no big deal, right?

But really cool design. It's in great shape. It's a great venue for us.

Q. You think about that kid that used to come back and play the Western Am just starting out, you have these dreams and aspirations, as you look at how things have panned out, did it exceed what you even dreamed of?

STEVE STRICKER: No. Never thought I would be back here in the area playing on the Champions Tour in a senior major. Yeah, never thought that far ahead for sure.

Q. And all you accomplished on the regular TOUR?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's been -- you know, it's been a pretty cool career. Very fortunate, very blessed to be able to play this game for as long as I have. Yeah, it's winding down, right? I feel like there are times I want to just go away and enjoy other things.

I'm getting close to that point. I don't know when that point will be, but that's a different thought, too, because I still feel like tour golf on the PGA TOUR as a rookie wasn't that long ago, but yet it was 30 years ago.

Yeah, so it's pretty weird how things have flown by so fast, and pretty surreal. But has been a great ride.

Q. Have you ever been back to the Point O' Woods?

STEVE STRICKER: I have not.

Q. Only eight miles down the road?

STEVE STRICKER: I know, and we may go there, because Bobbi played there a couple years ago and she brought her clubs. It would be kind of cool to go back. I used to stay with a family when I came to play. I believe the last name was McNamara. Yeah, so be interesting to go back there and check it all out again.

Q. Is Bobbi playing on the Epson Tour?

STEVE STRICKER: She doesn't have any status out there this year; she did last year.

Q. Because she played at South Bend?

STEVE STRICKER: She did.

Q. Is she on the bag?

STEVE STRICKER: She's on the bag.

Q. There are guys out here that tinker constantly with equipment. You've always been the total opposite of that. What's the reasoning behind that?

STEVE STRICKER: I just feel like I've got a putter that's 23 or 24 years old, 3-wood that's 15 years old, you know, and utility club -- yeah, I just have never really -- once I find something I like and I know that it works, I got confidence in, it's hard for me to change. It's kind of a process.

I tried to do it with some irons the last month or so. It's kind of -- yeah, it's just hard. You have one idea what the ball should do and then when you put a new club in your bag is does something different. It's about getting used to, and sometimes I just don't want to even take the time to get used to it just because I know that what I've been playing works and I like the look of it and all that kind of stuff.

So it's been hard for me to change over the years.

Q. You talked about the new Titleist driver. Still have that old V2 shaft?

STEVE STRICKER: I do still have the old shaft, but it's a new head.

Q. Got some new stuff.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I put some new stuff in there I'm like, that just doesn't feel right. Then I put my old stuff in there and I'm like, that's the way it's supposed to feel.

Yeah, I go back and forth, but typically end up with my old stuff back in my hands again.

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