

KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship

PGA Frisco

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Steve Stricker

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: 2023 KitchenAid Senior PGA champion Steve Stricker is with us. Steve, first off congratulations and how does it feel to win your second straight major this season?

STEVE STRICKER: Thank you. Yeah, you know, it's a battle. The course showed some teeth at times today. Some difficult pins. Some easy pins. But it was a little crustier I thought on the greens. The wind was tricky at times. Yeah, but it feels great. It feels great to do it not only to do it and have Izzy on the bag was even more special. We had a great time this week and that was the goal, right, just to come here and have a good time with her and to throw a win on top of it is even icing on the cake.

THE MODERATOR: Perfect. We'll take some questions.

Q. The birdie at 11 put you ahead. Could you take us through that and then what do you think the difference was this week?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, the birdie at 11, hit a good drive and a nice wedge in there. Three feet or so. Again, it seemed like I had a lot of downhill putts today that you just kind of had to coax in there. That was another one. But got that to go.

Had some opportunities really from that point on too that I really didn't capitalize on that could have made things a little bit easier coming in. But I had a couple putts on 18 that I just didn't get to the hole. It was a little bit slower than it seemed, like grainier and slower, and I kind of -- I couldn't get it there. But all in all it was a great week.

I think just course management was the key again. It was tempting to hit driver on 18, especially in the playoff. But that's the way I kind of played the hole all week. I hit driver the first day, hit it in the crap where Padraig did today in the playoff. It's just such a hard driving hole and the wind is whipping from the left. In the playoff it got even more

across than what it was in regulation. So it was even a harder tee ball.

So I just stuck to my game plan. I thought if I could just get a wedge on there and try to make a birdie the hard way. And that's what I've been doing all week. So I just kind of stuck to my game plan and there was some tempting shots again today. Kerry Haigh set it up to a point of where there was some real challenges mentally.

15 was one of 'em. I didn't expect that tee box to be all the way up there. I just, I'm not familiar enough with the course to know where the miss should be there. So I just thought just put it in play and get myself another wedge. And I did a good job of that, just didn't make the putt. But, yeah, I think just the key was just sticking to my game plan and playing smart around here.

Q. You touched on number 11, but much earlier in your round on 5 you had an incredible par save there. Do you mind taking us through that?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, drove it in the left rough, but it got about a foot into the tall stuff and just drew a horrible lie. Didn't really feel like taking the chance and getting it over the hazard that crosses the fairway there. So I just barely chipped it out 30, 40 yards and told Izzy, if we can just get a look at it, give myself a 20-, 30-footer. Because that wind was howling downwind and it was hard to stop the ball there too. So I hit a nice shot in there and made a nice putt.

Stuff like that, that's, you know, a big momentum for me there, just to continue the round. I had started off with a couple of birdies and that was a big par.

Q. During the playoff hole when you guys were on the green it sounded like you might have asked Padraig what he was lying. Were you kind of surprised that where how he was able to hit it from back there?

STEVE STRICKER: I just wanted to make sure, right? I mean, I wanted to know where I stood in relation to what he was doing there. I didn't really see what he did over there. I heard Roger Maltbie say that he took a whack at it

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and it just went down -- but I didn't know. I didn't see it. So I just, I wanted to make sure that I had that putt to try to win and not, you know, that he was one shot less. So, yeah, it felt kind of odd to ask the question, but again I was like, I just wanted to make sure.

Q. Not to put you, not to put you on the spot with Izzy in the room, but how does the caddie pay work out this week?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, that's a good question. I'm going to have to ask the accountant on that one what's the best way to do that.

Q. Was it kind of crazy that he had a putt at the end and you're standing there and sweating it out?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I know. I mean, yeah, I mean, he hit a great shot in there. He hit some sort of utility wood, I think from --

Q. 5-wood.

STEVE STRICKER: 5-wood? And he had a legitimate look at it. And it was kind of the same putt that Stewart Cink had in regulation that he made for eagle. So, yeah, I told Izzy, I'm like, Well, we got to expect him to make this and we're going to go again. But, yeah, tough putt, just trying to die it down there and luckily we came out on top.

Q. You mentioned in your first question that it was important for you to have fun this week. For those young golfers coming up behind you what advice would you give to them about finding the balance between being dedicated and still having fun?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, and it's easy to have fun when you have your child with you, your daughter here with you. We really did. It was business, but we had fun doing it. We had fun at night time, dinners, hanging out. But it was still, when we got out there it was back to business and working hard and trying to win and trying to play well. So I think there's that balance and I've gained a lot of perspective over the last few years and it's easy to just come here and have fun, especially when she's here.

Q. What's it like to win this one in particular and then do you own a trophy taller than that?

STEVE STRICKER: No, or heavier. The thing is super heavy. But, yeah, this means a lot. I said it in there when I was toasting the people inside there that I spent a lot of time with the PGA of America during the Ryder Cup. I got to know a lot of people. We spent basically three years, two and a half years because of the COVID issue and I

developed a lot of friendships. John Lindert from Wisconsin as well and just special people to me and our family. I mean, they gave me an unbelievable opportunity to captain a Ryder Cup team in my home state.

So this means a lot. To play in another PGA next year I think will be a lot of fun, too. Where is it at next year? Is it Valhalla? Okay. So I got that on my calendar already. So that's, I'm already looking forward to that.

Q. How was Izzy this week? I know earlier in the week you said she was a little nervous. Was she a vet coming down the stretch?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, she did well. Both of us, we got a little, we clammed up a little bit coming in. I think we were both -- I had my head down grinding and trying to figure out how to get it in the hole at times. You'll have to ask her, but I'm sure she was a little nervous coming down the stretch. But all in all, after it's all said and done, it was a lot of fun.

Q. Padraig complemented you on your toughness and your wedge game. He said you're about the last guy he wanted to face today. I'm sure there might be a little mutual feeling there.

STEVE STRICKER: For sure.

Q. Figuring his tenacity. When do you feel your wedge game got to this level?

STEVE STRICKER: I've always been a good wedge player all the way back to my days at Illinois. It was always the strength of my game. I grew up on a couple of short courses, small greens where I really had to manage my game around the greens. Chipping, putting, little shots into the green. So I grew up doing that. I take a lot of pride in it. I work hard at it. I feel like I've got a simple approach in my own mind and I continue to do it and do it over and over. I try to play to those strengths.

Just like on 18. For me to try to drive it there and then go for it, that's not my strength. So I just play back, lay it up and put a wedge in my hand and that's my strength. So yeah, it's something that I work hard and I take a lot of pride in.

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