

KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship

Harbor Shores

Benton Harbor, Michigan, USA

Thursday, May 23, 2024

Steve Stricker

Quick Quotes

Q. Steve Stricker with us now at the 84th KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship. Steve, 5-under today. How would you summarize your first round?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it was a good start. You know, this is nice first go around here, and there are some challenging pin locations, shots off the tee into the greens.

You know, you have to commit to a lot of things out here and a lot of shots that may make you feel a little uncomfortable. So I did that for the most part.

Put a bad swing on at 16. Hit it in the penalty area. And then really should have been a bogey at worst, but messed up the second shot there, too.

All in all a good day. Seven birdies. Putted well. Gave myself some opportunities, and it was a good start.

Q. What was the biggest factor that seven birdies through the first 15?

STEVE STRICKER: I think just putting it in play off the tee. I played pretty conservatively off the tee at times. Just not sure of some of the lines I need to take around here.

You know, the first couple days I played here we played in some wind, and all of a sudden today it was pretty calm.

So even on 15, the par-5, I hit 3-wood off the tee. Just doesn't fit my eye very well. You know, you almost have to hit it a little left-to-right, take on the water, and I just hit 3-wood, laid up, hit a wedge in there close.

But there are a lot of things like that where you can challenge yourself, you can challenge pin locations, but you can pay the price if you don't pull it off.

Q. When you go to a new place and you're learning this place and there is a lot of danger out here, does it help your focus a little bit?



STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, for sure. Again, it kind of was telling Bailey Chamblee out here, they tell you almost where to hit it. You can take on more if you want, but especially going into the greens, you know, on the last hole if you're going to take on that pin with the proper distance you had to be the right of that hole. If you're to the left of it you had a difficult up-and-in.

So it tells you where you need to be, and then it's up to you whether you want to take that on or play conservatively and try to two-putt or hit a longer club into the green or whatever.

Yeah, keeps you thinking all the way around here.

Q. If the weather changes and the wind comes up and stuff like that, you've played the golf course a little bit differently first two times you played it here, right?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah.

Q. So it'll make it that -- a little easier for you?

STEVE STRICKER: If it comes out of the same direction. (Smiling.) Again, it kind of tells you where you need to be, so if the wind comes up, it just may be a different club to get to that spot.

But, yeah, it keeps you thinking. Keeps your nose in that yardage book to figure out where you really want to hit it, especially coming into the greens. Sometimes you don't really have to aim at the hole and you can use one of those slopes in the greens or on the fringes to feed it towards the hole.

That happened with me on an occasion today on one of the holes. You can play away at sometimes and get the ball feeding into the holes as well.

Q. The shot at 16, was it your tee shot?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I over-hooked it, over turned it over. It wasn't a very confident swing. Yeah, didn't swing at the driver very confidently. Backed off it a couple times.



Hit 3-wood to make sure I got it in the fairway.

But I drove it on 18 with a driver. That was a really good one. Hit a couple nice ones but couple times I just didn't put a very confident swing on it.

Q. How comfortable you feel going into day two tomorrow?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's a good start. We've got a long ways to go, you know, but it was important to get off to a good start. I'm surprised the scores are that low. I'm surprised -- you know, starting off I started off on the front nine and a great pin location at 2, 3, 4 is a challenging par-3, and I look up on the board and I already see guys 3- and 4-under.

I'm like, what's going on? It was I thought pretty challenging right away. Guys got off to a good start. Scores are good. But we have a great day to play.

Q. So going back to 16, Steve, golf is such a mental sport; going off that hole onto 17, where was your mind at?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it was about hitting a proper shot and basically -- and that was a front right pin location at 17 that doesn't really fit my eye very well either.

It was about let's just make a three, make a solid shot here, get it on the green, and two-putt and make my three and move on.

You didn't want to compound that double with another bogey after that, so I hit a nice shot, nice 7-iron in there and gave myself a look at it.

You're exactly right. My focus right after that was to put a good swing on there and make a three and move on.

Q. Got a grade for your caddie?

STEVE STRICKER: She did great. Called her in on a couple reads today probably about three times and she was spot on every time. She's a good putter so I trust her with what she sees, and, yeah, she did a great job. We had a lot of fun.

Q. A lot of differences there with Izzy and Bobbi as far as on your bag, how they do it?

STEVE STRICKER: Not really. They were -- they're both pretty quiet. We'll talk as we're going around, but I think I had Izzy look at a couple putts last year as well just to get her into the game and make her feel -- and same with

Bobbi.

I trust what they see because they're good putters. They make a lot of putts when they're on their own, so I figure they must see it pretty good.

They're pretty similar in that regard. One is a little feistier than the other. Izzy is a little bit more of a fighter than Bobbi, but trust them both when I have them look at something.

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