

Senior PGA Championship

The Concession Golf Club

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Stewart Cink

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Stewart Cink is with us now at the 2026 Senior PGA Championship. Stewart, a real strong start to the season for you. What have you been doing well and looking to continue this week?

STEWART CINK: Well, says my driver has been a real weapon this year for me going back to the last part of last year, so I've been taking advantage of being in play more and keeping it -- the power is still there. We work really hard on that. It's been a real asset.

I work pretty hard on the stats. My driver has been a bigger part of my scoring than you would think. When you shoot low rounds, putting is always a pretty important part. You think, like, oh, he had a real outstanding putting, but when you consistently are shooting good rounds, you have to look at other parts of the game. As it turns out, driving is contributing an awful lot to what's been going on for the last half a year or so.

It's been a lot of fun. I'm excited and encouraged every week I come to a tournament.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Stewart, you were saying at this level and with this level of experience too you feel like everybody has a good short game, everybody has good putting. As you say, for the new guys, the new people coming, the driver is a factor, no?

STEWART CINK: Yeah.

Q. I wanted to see how much do you feel the difference when you coming here?

STEWART CINK: Well, coming here particularly this court is negatively biased against the driver in a lot of ways, because it just takes the driver out of your hands. You know, if you work hard to have power and speed with your driving, that doesn't just go away when you hit a 6-iron or a 7-iron. You could also hit really high, spinning, soft iron shots from farther back.

So power is not just a driving game. It's also an approach game. This course much more of an approach course than it will be a driving course.

So the young players that are coming out, as they turn 50, everybody from here on out that turns 50 will have participated in the PGA TOUR's power grab where we all knew that at some point you had to keep your speed up and try to hit it farther.

The players that came before me might have missed that just by a little bit. Maybe the players one or two years ahead of me, like Harrington, his age, would have been like that sort of leading edge of guys coming on the Champions Tour who worked on speed really hard for the bulk of their career. I'm in that group.

Everybody that comes out here now will be concentrating on speed, trying to hit the driver far, super optimal, launch angle, all that stuff. We're going to hit it farther. As a whole, the Champions Tour players will hit it farther. It will be fun to see.

You know, I think the fans like watching guys hit it far. If you can hit a ball far, it's a lot of fun to do that, especially if you can keep it in play. It's an effective way to play golf, and right now, you know, it's been leading to a lot of the success I've been having recently.

Q. Stewart, you came close to winning four in a row. Is this the best stretch that you've had in your career? Just what's it like to have this kind of confidence where you know every time you tee it up, you've got it a chance to win?

STEWART CINK: Well, it has been fun, and it is nice to know that what I have is enough to be in contention at the end of a week. If I do things really well, I know I'm going to be there.

Winning is its own thing. You don't necessarily wrestle that bull to the ground. Sometimes that just has to happen, but I know I'm going to be in the story if I am myself.

I felt like at the James Hardie and at Cologuard I really just wasn't myself, even though I had it tied for second and, I don't know, a seventh or sixth, or whatever at Cologuard. I just didn't feel like I was quite myself in those, and I just wasn't -- my caddie and I have really good game plans, and I kind of found myself wandering. I was just a little bit off. I don't know.

The third round of Cologuard was kind of a big moment for us, because after round two, we kind of had a little get-together, and I just needed him to hear me wake myself up and get back on to the same program that I'd been on.

Actually, I'm kind of proud of myself for noticing that, because I think a lot of players probably would never have noticed, because they just -- it took that being the outlier for me to notice is my point. I was proud that I kind of made that adjustment, and I went to Hoag with a real renewed commitment to game plan and discipline and pursuit of excellence in golf.

That turned into a win there. So I'm planning to do that again here too. It's not easy to continually stay in that mode, but it's rewarding and it's a lot of fun and it's challenging. That's one of my favorite parts of this game.

Q. First question is really quick. Your parents coming down this week?

STEWART CINK: I don't think my parents are going to come down. My dad is a little bit laid up right now. He's had a broken ankle. He's had a surgery. He's going to have surgery again Friday. He's in a rehab facility.

I actually went to them yesterday. Instead of coming here, I went and hung out with them at their house all day yesterday and drove down last night.

I'll miss them. They'll be pulling for me.

Q. Then, also, after winning the Schwab Cup last year, where does a major kind of rank in the things that are next to check on your list of boxes there?

STEWART CINK: It's there for sure. You know, this is the PGA TOUR Champions, and this is the PGA Senior Championship. It means a lot to me. The Charles Schwab Cup is really what I want this year. If I get there winning zero majors, I'll still going to be pretty satisfied, okay? I just want to be clear about that.

I do want to have a whole bunch of senior majors on my career record when I get finished, but I'm not specifically

focused on trying to win major championships, because to me, I don't know, all the tournaments mean a lot to me. I would think that we would be calling the other tournaments minors if we're calling these majors. So I want to treat them all like they matter a lot, and they do to me. Every tournament I play in matters. I wouldn't be going otherwise.

Yeah, at some point there's going to be like maybe a glaring hole in my list of wins if I don't have any majors. If that case comes, we'll address it, but I don't think we're quite there yet.

Q. How does this course set up for you this week?

STEWART CINK: This course, it sets up actually pretty bad for me, because I would love to be able to just hit my driver on every hole and outdrive everybody in the field. I don't know, maybe I can't outdrive everybody, but I would love to hit it far and straight and make the course easier that way. This course doesn't let do you that very often.

There's a lot of hazards that pinch in on both sides. There's a lot of target golf out there. We're not playing the whole golf course. The golf course is set up around -- right around 7,000 yards, and from the back, these tees could probably play maybe 7,600. It's really long back there.

It's a golf course that takes the driver out of your hands a little bit, but that's okay, because we got a really strong game plan for where we're going to hit it off the tees. We're going to be very conservative I think in a lot of places. It's just what the golf course is telling us.

We listened to what the architect did by building the course, and it's hard to overrule sometimes, you know, when you've got water over here and you've got palmetto bushes over here. There's only a certain amount of space for that driver to fit in. Unfortunately, this course doesn't give us a lot of that space.

Q. You had such late success on the regular tour. Did you expect to come out the gates as quickly as you did once you did make the change to this tour?

STEWART CINK: Quicker I think. I think like a lot of players I expected to come out here and win my first 11 straight tournaments. I did play fairly well late in my 40s, although my, like, 49, 50, 51 wasn't that great. It was all right by PGA TOUR standards, but it wasn't that great.

But the key is that I stayed after it. I was competitive, and I was pursuing being competitive on the PGA TOUR, which means -- that's a lot. It's a lot of work to do that, to maintain distance and -- I mean, constantly digging through



the data and the stats and the Trackman numbers and all that stuff to make sure you're where you ought to be. That translates really well when you turn 50 and start playing on the PGA TOUR champions.

Yeah, I expected more early. I was a little frustrated I didn't win early. I think when my -- I played both tours for a couple of years and then really committed to play PGA TOUR Champions late in 2024. I had already passed my 51st birthday. That fall I won my first tournament, the Ally in Michigan.

Since then it's been -- I've been very peaceful about the decision. I don't really miss playing on the PGA TOUR. I miss a lot of the individuals out there, players and caddies and the officials and all that, but this is my new home. I really love playing out here. It's fun to compete.

This is, like, the best part of professional golf for me. We're out here competing in the game we love to play, and it's very pure. The down side doesn't exist like it did on the PGA TOUR where you just got so much grind, and there's so much at stake. Out here it's just kind of all gravy, and we're having fun.

Don't get me wrong, we're serious too, and we're approaching this like a serious business, and it is for us, but it's just really fun.

Q. You win here, you got a spot at Aronimink in a month.

STEWART CINK: That's true. That's out there, yeah. I know that. I think we might have a wedding that week or something, though.

Q. Following up on what you said about this is your new home, I mean, of course, competing and your love for competing keeps you up here, but family has always been important for you and including your family in your golf career. Is this tour this week more accommodating for a family man like you?

STEWART CINK: It is, a little bit more. I'm playing roughly the same number of tournaments I played in for the last 15 or 20 years on my PGA TOUR calendar, so that part hasn't changed, but out here this tournament is a little different.

Normally I don't have to arrive until Wednesday. So playing the pro-am Thursday. Friday through Sunday we've got a tournament. Go back home.

My home life looks a lot different than it used to because I used to shuttle the kids to their sports and to their schools and stuff, and now I shuttle the grandkids places. When

we go home, our off weeks look a lot different. We've got three very small grandchildren, just barely turned 2 and earlier, younger.

So it's great to be able to know I have a tournament coming up the next week, but I don't have to leave until maybe as late as Wednesday evening, so I can still plan to do things at home Monday and Tuesday.

Of course, I mean, I still put the time into golf like always. I have to make that a priority, and I love to make that a priority. Don't get me wrong. I don't see that as a job. I see that as a real pleasure that I get to do that.

But there's always time to spend with the girls and our little grandson and our son's wives. It's great. Our family is just different than it used to be. It's growing.

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