

THE PLAYERS Championship

Thursday, March 12, 2026

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Sepp Straka

Quick Quotes

Q. Felt like that par on 18 was kind of symbolic of that back nine because if it weren't for the par saves you had early in that one, this round wasn't possible.

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, for sure. I felt like all day I was playing from the rough, which is not ideal out here. Fortunately my iron play and wedge play was pretty nice today, and I was able to make a lot of putts to save some pars. So yeah, hopefully a few more drivers on the weekend.

Q. We got to the golf course today not knowing what that weather would do and what kind of weather you would have to play in. I think it's obvious now that you guys got a pretty good break with the way that it softened the golf course a little, and we never had the gusty north breezes to make it as hard. How did you find the golf course when you finally got started?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, I definitely think we got a good break. The first 10 holes we played in rain off and on. That was probably the hardest part about it. But other than that, I feel like there was hardly any wind, maybe five miles an hour. The greens were receptive, so I was able to control some iron shots into the green, and yeah, that definitely played into the score this afternoon.

Q. I imagine you're a pretty easy client to work for, but what's the hardest thing you do to Duane in a rain thing? Is there one thing he has to keep dry? What's the number one mission?

SEPP STRAKA: I never really have to complain about it. He does a great job keeping the grips dry. That's the only thing I really care about. He gets extremely wet, so I'm sure he dreads the forecast a lot more than I do.

Q. I want to start with that chip in on 16. How much did J.J.'s before help you out there?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, it was nice got a little read off of that one. He hit a really good chip there and was able to see that it broke right at the end there. Yeah, it was a very



straightforward chip. It was just off the green, upslope in the first cut. It was about as easy as they come, and I was able to take advantage of it.

Q. Leading after day one or tied for the lead; how does that maybe change your approach at all over the next few days?

SEPP STRAKA: Not much. I honestly I didn't play very well today off the tee. I hit it terrible off the tee. My iron play was good and my putter saved me a lot. But yeah, definitely need to clean up the tee balls out there.

Q. Not too bad if you're in the lead after feeling like you didn't play your best today. Off the tee, is that where you feel like you have the most room to improve?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, for sure. I don't think I can putt much better than I did today or hit my wedges much closer than I did today. So can't imagine that would continue, so definitely going to need to find some fairways out there.

Q. What are the emotions for you after this round?

SEPP STRAKA: Not a whole lot. Just got to go to the range and hit a few tee balls and see if we can straighten it out.

Q. What do you consider your relationship to be with this golf course?

SEPP STRAKA: I love it. It's you one of my favorites we play.

Q. Does it love you back?

SEPP STRAKA: Sometimes. If I play well it does. If I don't, it does not. It does a pretty good job of identifying who is playing well that week.

Q. Lately with the conditions here, 65, 64, someone will go off early and everyone is floating around 67. What did you consider the best defense today?

SEPP STRAKA: I think early on the greens were pretty firm before the rain came through. Then for our wave it



played pretty easy, especially the back nine played pretty easy, but the rain throughout the front nine kind of off and on I think was a pretty good defense. You've got to hit the fairways out here, and it's hard to hit fairways in the rain.

Q. Is the rough higher than you're used to seeing?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, I think so. I think the rough's definitely a little more lush than maybe the last few years. Had a few where I had to just chip it out instead of being able to get it around the green.

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