

# RBC Heritage

Saturday, April 17, 2021

Hilton Head Island, South Carolina, USA

Harbour Town Golf Links

## Stewart Cink

### Quick Quotes

**Q. The lead is still five shots as you go into Sunday. Looking back at this round, boy, if the flat stick could have been a little bit better, especially 6, 7, 8 and 9 you had some really good looks. Your thoughts on the round?**

STEWART CINK: Yeah, I would agree with that. It was not the hottest day with the putter, but under the circumstances it's not easy to remain totally freed up, so that's kind of what I was doing out there today. I was a little bit tied up in the results and it's something I can recognize and hopefully get better at tomorrow. But it's natural; it happens to everybody. Overall, though, I'm still pleased with a pretty solid round and didn't do a lot of damage to myself.

**Q. Were you surprised that a lot of the guys went out early, they shot low numbers, but the guys in that chase pack behind you never really made a strong move?**

STEWART CINK: I think it's just the way this course plays out generally on the weekends when it's dry. It's generally much more difficult later in the day because the greens are firmer, the grass is just not really -- there's not as much hold in the grass, and the early rounds are really scorable.

That's just the way it's been here for years, and if you're near the lead in this tournament on Saturday and Sunday, you've got to be prepared for that. I did it myself, came from ten back, I think, or nine back one year.

I've been there, and I know what it's like to be on the early wave. But tomorrow I'm going to be late, so I've got to prepare and just keep being really solid.

The putter, it could heat up again. It's been pretty good the last few months, so maybe tomorrow will be hot.

**Q. Thoughts on the final round today; you obviously have a five-shot lead, everybody is coming after you and you know it.**



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STEWART CINK: Yeah, that's a fun part of playing this game. I was in this situation one time about 17 years ago at Firestone in what used to be the Bridgestone World Golf Championship. I remember sleeping little that night, and I'm a little different person now, and I think I'm treating this whole tournament with a little bit more gratitude, Reagan caddying and all that stuff, and it's been sort of a stop and sort of pinch myself along the way and enjoying it more than I'm fretting over it.

But it'll still be a roller coaster tomorrow emotionally, and it's going to be a challenge to embrace that instead of fighting against it, creating some kind of a conflict.

**Q. Today was 2-under; it's not the 8-under that you're used to. Is that a bit of a letdown, or are you happy with the day that you had?**

STEWART CINK: It's hard to compare today's score to the first two days because the first two days were really just flawless. Today I wasn't quite as sharp with the putter. I had a chance to shoot a really low round, and I didn't really shoot incredibly low, but it was still a solid day, and the conditions were a little bit more difficult today and more wind. Course was really dry.

All in all, I'm pleased with the way I played. I handled myself pretty well and I put myself in position to -- I'm halfway to home compared to where I was yesterday. It would be -- I think tomorrow I could play another round like this, and our game plan still held and it was good and there was no surprises out there really for the most part.

All in all I think it was a success.

**Q. Speaking of the putter, you had a little bit of that nerve tester for the birdie putt on 15. What was going through your mind when you don't see that putt go in?**

STEWART CINK: Yeah, that was a short putt, and it's just really easy when you're in that zone for your mind to really want the results. I fell victim to that a little bit there. It was a hard putt because I had to play it about a cup outside the hole, so it wasn't like the easiest tap-in, but I definitely didn't do the best job there of containing my emotions and staying in the present.

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It was -- golf just deals you a lot of moments where you can learn from, and that was one of those learning moments, and Reagan and I recognized it immediately, and we kind of readjusted our game plan on the greens for the last few holes. I made some nice strokes today, and the ball didn't find the hole. First two days a lot of those went in.

So tomorrow maybe, like Reagan said, I think the laws of regression will maybe take over and maybe a couple of those balls will lip in the sides instead of grazing the edges.

**Q. Earlier in the week you told me you had some really impactful conversations with both Reagan and your wife Lisa. What sort of conversations are you going to have tonight prior to tomorrow's round?**

STEWART CINK: I have no idea because I'm not usually the one that leads those conversations, I'm usually the one that's being talked to. I'm sure there will be plenty of discussing and relaxing tonight. It's Saturday night on the PGA TOUR event; it's always a little bit hectic packing and getting ready to leave, and we've got a lot going on next week at home, too, moving, moving to a new house.

It'll be a nice respite tomorrow from the real pressure which is coming the next three days when the movers show up.

**Q. Were you watching the lead as it goes from five to six to seven to six to five and all that stuff, or do you just say to Reagan, tell me if anybody gets within two?**

STEWART CINK: No, because really the game plan doesn't change until the last three holes, until you really have to start making decisions about when to be more aggressive or less aggressive on the last few holes.

I won't ignore the scoreboards, but I also won't just totally dwell on them, either. I'll just play my golf game until when it starts to become -- well, when the time is right. When the time is right with about three holes to play tomorrow, maybe 15 the second shot could be kind of a -- do we go for that green or not. At that point maybe we'll look into it. I just hope that I'm in position to where it matters tomorrow. So I'm giving myself a chance. I'm proud of that, and I like the way we're working, and so would like to just continue some of that tomorrow.

**Q. You hear players talk about the difficulties of playing with big leads on the final day. Is it because you can become defensive or what experience do you have in feeling that?**

STEWART CINK: Yeah, I think very few exceptions out

there of players who haven't been in that position, haven't felt that way when they get in that position, getting a little bit defensive and protective. It's just what you have to expect and you have to prepare for it and you have to embrace that. If you try to ignore those feelings or act like they're not there, it's going to consume you.

I've been there before. I've certainly been nervous and thrown up on myself and I've also played great in that situation. You know, I think it's a lot better to embrace it and enjoy it and feel the tingle as opposed to trying to act like it's not there.

**Q. Your scrambling today, especially after some bad placements off the tee, really helped. What were you thinking on 12 when you came up there and you saw the ball up against that little stick?**

STEWART CINK: Yeah, that was a weird one. Hard to think a ball could stop there, but I've had plenty of shots that I missed fairways and I ended up with decent looks at the green. Golf evens out, and that's just one of those places where I felt like I was probably getting one paid back to me.

But I was lucky that that stick was oriented where I could still get to the back of the ball. The stick was holding the ball up on that hillside, but I could still get to the back of the ball with a club, and it actually surprised us how far that ball went. We were really just trying to approach the front edge and play up the hill, and it took off really good. I hit it solid.

It was unfortunate, but sometimes you've just got to be really creative out there, especially a course like this.

**Q. The birdie on 14, too, I think television said that it had been 39 rounds here since you made a birdie on 14. Did you know it had been that long, and afterwards did you feel pretty good about that?**

STEWART CINK: If you asked me how long it had been since I made a birdie on that hole, I probably would have said something like eight. I have no idea. Stats like that are completely irrelevant to us out there.

The hole today was a kind wind direction. The pin placement sort of was in the area where all the golf balls are going to go, so that's about as easy as that hole can play from back tees. You still have to execute it. It's a hard shot to execute under the circumstances. I was really proud that I did a great job, stuck with the game plan and really hit a good shot there, and there I took advantage of it.

**Q. Those birdies on 4 and 5 that kind of steadied things for you I would imagine after the miscue on 3?**

STEWART CINK: Yeah, definitely. One of the things that we talked about before the round, and I talked to Lisa about it, too, was expecting some adversity out there and being prepared for something like No. 3 where I missed a pretty easy putt, just a little left-to-righter, four feet, I think. But that kind of adversity under the circumstances is something you have to expect, and we planned for that. It was just kind of all in stride.

The next hole I blasted that putt. If it hadn't hit the hole, it was probably going at least eight feet past, but it hit the dead center of the hole. Yeah, I did feel a little bit calm after that putt went in, and I hit a bunch of good shots on 5, just really nice shots on that hole.

And then I started that stretch of holes where I had really good birdie looks, and I could have increased the distance between me and everybody else. Unfortunately I didn't, but there's still some distance there.

**Q. Last year when you started to play so well, have you done anything different from a physical fitness standpoint?**

STEWART CINK: Yes, I have. I started working with a trainer named Cornel Driessen. He's a South African guy who's been out here for a long time, really great guy. Super knowledgeable. He's really helped me -- he's helped me -- well, in golf when you try to get stronger and fitter, you're really trying to build a support base in your body for what you're trying to do in your swing. You're not necessarily trying to gain speed and strength like that, most of us.

So Cornel has really helped me stabilize a lot of the areas of my body that take pounding from golf and can accept where I'm trying to be with my golf swing and what it takes to practice, and still get after it like I'm still doing.

And so it's been a huge help for me to have him overseeing sort of my physical state of my body. Went through an injury -- I was going through an injury right when I started with him in '19. I missed some time and had to work my way back from the medical ranks. Winning at Safeway was a big -- it was the icing on the cake as far as getting out of the medical ranks for sure.

But Cornel has helped me a whole lot, and he's helped me get in better place efficiently with my swing, and therefore I've been able to take advantage of that with equipment, too, and I've gained a little bit of distance. I'm much more efficient with my spin rates throughout the whole bag, and

just kind of a new golfer.

**Q. Is that mostly targeted weight lifting, like attacking certain muscle groups with weight training?**

STEWART CINK: Yeah, that's what it is. It's weight training, it's body weight, it's balance, it's core. It's what you would think about. Cornel has a really good way of specifically attacking muscle groups and making sure that there's flexibility here and there's strength here, sometimes both, but where you need it.

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