

FedEx St. Jude Championship

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TPC Southwind

Sepp Straka Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. We would like to welcome Sepp Straka to the interview room here at the FedEx St. Jude Championship. Welcome back. Start off with some opening comments what it's like to be back on a site where you finished runner-up last year in an exciting finish.

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, it's always good to come back to a place where you've had success and where you've played well. Last year was the first year I've been here, and had a really good week. It's always fun to relive some of the shots and some of those memories.

THE MODERATOR: Pushing for FedExCup numbers now that we're in Playoffs, but already a win and two runner-up finishes this season. How are you feeling about the season entering the Playoffs?

SEPP STRAKA: Pretty good, yeah. Had a really good season I felt like. It was pretty steady, especially the last few months I've played some pretty good golf.

It's always good to have a high position going into the Playoffs and see if I can make a push for it.

Q. Obviously the focus is on the Playoffs and winning, but how much do you let the Ryder Cup creep into your head at all?

SEPP STRAKA: In downtime you do. You definitely do when you're just at home. But with preparation and all that, you just kind of prepare for the tournament.

It's pretty easy to keep your mind on it when you're in the Playoffs because they mean so much, but yeah, when you're off the course, when you're away, you definitely think about it.

Q. I haven't looked at the standings; what's your way in, ranking points?



SEPP STRAKA: World Ranking?

Q. In terms of the Ryder Cup, what is your path --

SEPP STRAKA: Well, we have two different ones. On the world side I think I'm two out, but I haven't checked it this week.

Q. What about the points side? Are you pretty far down, the European points?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, I think -- I'm not even sure where I am.

Q. Too far to know?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah. Probably won't make that jump.

Q. Do you have any plans post-East Lake, any playing plans? What's your schedule after East Lake?

SEPP STRAKA: After East Lake I plan on playing Wentworth and then kind of see from there. A lot of it depends on Ryder Cup.

But yeah, kind of see from there.

Q. As it relates to this, you were I think 35 going into the post season last year, 15 this year. What's the difference? Don't say 20; I do math. What's the outlook? The goal is East Lake I take it, but is there less pressure on you or less urgency?

SEPP STRAKA: A little bit, but even -- I honestly don't even know how I'm looking for East Lake, but it's always nice to be a better position going into the Playoffs. I felt like I was in a good spot last year.

These tournaments mean so much more, so regardless of where you are, it's a huge difference if you can play well in these playoff events.

Q. As it relates to going forward into '24, are you comfortable with how this new system has worked out, A, only 70 guys making it to the post season, and B, the big events for next year?



SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, I think I like the schedule the way it's set up with the season starting in January and then Playoffs being in September. I think you can still have a bigger playoff.

But yeah, I guess other sports, everybody doesn't make the Playoffs, either.

Definitely more competitive. It'll be a lot more tournaments played up until the Playoffs, I think, by some bigger names, and then if you play well, you get rewarded in the fall and you can take a little time off, which I've never had in my career. I'm kind of looking forward to that.

Q. Can you see, I guess, the earn what you get out here, the meritocracy, by the fact that Harman and Wyndham Clark, Lucas for now, are in and Justin Thomas and Adam Scott are not?

SEPP STRAKA: Yeah, you have to play well. Top 70, you know, it doesn't take a terrible year to finish 71st. The competition is pretty deep.

Yeah, you have to play really well to make the Playoffs now. You always had to play well. I think 125 you still had to have a pretty solid season. Yeah, now it really is a little more cut throat.

Q. What about the idea of four sponsor exemptions? I'm talking about for the big events next year. Do you get a sense they're going to go to the same guys every time?

SEPP STRAKA: Probably, yeah. But the tournaments want the big names in their tournaments, so I can see that.

The smaller fields, I'm not a big fan of in the big events. I think big events should be big fields with a cut.

But I understand that it's easier to sell to sponsors this way, I guess. But yeah, I have no problem with the four sponsor's exemptions. I think that's perfectly fine.

Q. Did you pitch any of your idea of more cuts, more cuts, bigger fields? Obviously they've gone smaller, but did you feel like you had a voice, or did you not bother?

SEPP STRAKA: I mean, I've been talking to the player relations people. They're always in touch with us in dining and stuff. We've had a lot of conversations.

I know I'm in the minority, I think, even among the top players. But that's just something I've always grown up to

like is bigger field events with a cut.

I think they mean more if there's more players. But I see the other side of it. I just would prefer the bigger fields.

Q. What makes you think you're the minority?

SEPP STRAKA: Just hearing people out, I guess. I think the majority of people prefer smaller fields, faster rounds. I'm a fast player; I prefer that, too. But yeah, I don't really have a big reason, just hearing people talk.

THE MODERATOR: Sepp, thank you, and good luck this week.

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