

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Columbus, Ohio, USA

Scioto Country Club

Henrik Stenson

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Welcome to the 46th U.S. Senior Open. We're here with Henrik Stenson. This is your first time competing in this championship. What are some of your expectations for this week?

HENRIK STENSON: I hope to have a fun week, not too hot. Yeah, that could be challenging, right, this time of the year in this part of the world.

In terms of golf, I've had a long and healthy and nice break. I played the Senior PGA in April and the Europe legends tour on the back end of that. That's the only two tournaments I've played since the end of August last year. We're not overly tired from competing at least.

So it's pretty much the startup of my season in '26, this one. I had those two runs, but I'm going to play a lot more golf from this week until the end of the year. Yeah, just looking forward to getting going again.

There's been a lot of other things on the agenda. Like I said, one week in Abu Dhabi after the first week out, the chipped in, I guess that's all the practice I didn't do. So I definitely expect to be a little rusty. I haven't put all the reps in but still hope I can have a decent week, and it will be fun to be out competing again.

Q. What about the legacy of the U.S. Senior Open had your attention when you turned age eligible?

HENRIK STENSON: It's just playing with the boys again. Yeah, just at that -- I'm a rookie. I'm just at that age now where I get to kind of relive a little bit of what I did in my early years when you got into the big events and then the majors as a young player, then those guys were at the top of their game. We'll still see some of those boys out here competing this week.

Yeah, I know competition is very strong, and that's why I always go in with expectations that's are a bit more realistic. I know you can't just put your shoes out in this



company and then expect to do great things. I'll try my hardest, but in the long run, I think I need to go home and really put the hours in and the effort in if I want to be fully competitive.

We'll take that for another afternoon, but here this week it will just be fun to compete in front of good crowds and with good competition.

Q. Had you been to Scioto before this week, and what are some of your initial thoughts on the property?

HENRIK STENSON: Yes. So I'm going to play nine holes today, nine days tomorrow. That will be the first time now I see the course, but I've been here once for a prep for a U.S. Open qualifier. I think it was in 2011. And how things turned out, I never ended up playing the qualifier, but I did a little prep work. Hopefully that comes in handy 15 years later.

I've been around the property, a beautiful looking course. Obviously I'm aware of the history and Jack's connection and everything else. Yeah, it's a very nice course.

Q. This setup will be similar to a U.S. Open. It's a USGA event obviously, USGA Championship, but it won't be quite the same. Did you like U.S. Open setups when you were playing the championship?

HENRIK STENSON: It depends on how far back we go in time (laughter). There were a few events over the years that were kind of dancing around the borderline. The venue that we saw a couple of weeks ago in 2018 was certainly one of those.

But in terms of myself, I'd say I'm always up for a challenge. I like tough golf courses and tough competition. As we know, I think there's a line that you kind of tend to end up balancing towards at times, and as I think everyone's aware, even the USGA are aware, that that line got passed a few times over the years.

I think since then -- take an example in 2019, which was the year after Shinnecock, that time going into the week and I was playing well and enjoying myself at Pebble, and I thought it's like, yeah, when is it going to start? It was almost like when someone's going to jump out and scare you and you're looking around waiting for it, but it was two



days and it never happened.

Certainly I kind of feel like the setup issues, if you'd like, from the past have been trimmed back. I think from what I saw there were some other measures at Shinnecock during the early stages of the week that were handled in a different way due to the wind and the golf course setup.

So I think we're in a much better place with that. I've always enjoyed tough championships, and the U.S. Open has definitely been one of them over the years.

Q. Is there a comfort level seeing the guys again that you spoke of, the guys that maybe you were familiar with and spent the most time with? Almost versus the PGA TOUR where the young guys you maybe don't know them. Can you just speak to stepping back and going back in time?

HENRIK STENSON: Yeah, a little bit. It certainly felt like half a class reunion at the Senior PGA in April, and then it was a full on class reunion at the European Legends event in Barbados the week later. So there's a lot of familiar faces that I played a lot of golf with, so it's been fun.

I think when you get to this stage in your life, and many of the guys I spoke to said that as well, it's fierce competition, but it's a little bit more relaxed maybe during the practice and in the evenings and so on. There's a little bit more everyone's checking in on how the families and the kids are and all that.

When you're 25, it's just golf, golf, golf. So it's a different stage, and so far that's been fun.

Q. First off, a lot of players seem like they really like the old school golf architects, like the Donald Ross. Are you one of those that appreciate going old school and why?

HENRIK STENSON: Yeah, I think -- I mean, for me a lot of times -- and I think this goes for a lot of good golfers. They like to be in charge of their own destiny. You want to be able to land a shot in a specific spot and know that, if I do that, I'm going to get rewarded for it.

I think when we're looking at golf course architects in the later -- we always talk about the old stuff, but then we're making new stuff that's not really very similar to the old stuff.

I'd say a good recipe would be take some of the good stuff from the good old days and then kind of inflate it a little bit and make it a little longer and a little bit more fitted maybe to today's game but still keeping those things.

I mean, I like risk and reward and I want to be in charge of my own destiny. I want it to be down to me doing the good or bad things, not landing it on a big hump and ball bouncing away like a pin ball and take it from there.

Q. Second, 100 years ago this year, first USGA event. One of the all time greats won here, probably the greatest golfer the first half of the 20th century in Bobby Jones. Do players ever talk about golf history and Bobby Jones? Does that ever come up, or just moments when people like me ask these questions?

HENRIK STENSON: Bobby who? (Laughter).

Q. Oh, please don't do that.

HENRIK STENSON: It was teed up, I had to. I think some of the older players and some of the, if you like, more nerdy, golf nerdy guys, they might get more into that. I mean, I enjoy coming to these more historic venues and historic golf clubs where you got all the old photos and the model cabinets with trophies and some clubs from way, way back in time.

Yeah, I enjoy history. Even though we're still kind of here and now trying to compete and trying to play golf, every now and then you can let yourself wander back in time and have a look and see from those days. But I wouldn't say it's talk of the range this week.

Q. Scioto has hosted a lot of the greatest championships in modern history. The greens are going to be the story this weekend. As you know, the USGA, the U.S. Open, a setup that's going to demand patience. I'm just curious coming in what do you think is going to be important for you for your success this week? More emotional discipline or more ball striking?

HENRIK STENSON: I think it's a combo. I know if I play well and -- excuse me, if I swing well. Clearly my iron play has been a strong part of my game for quite a few years. Yeah, keeping the ball on the fairway and being able to be precise on your approach play is always going to be a good thing to have.

Then yeah, putting, pace putting, and I think if the golf course and the strategy kind of forces you to be a bit more defensive at times, then you've got to be on the ball with your mid to long range putting so you're not leaving yourself too much work throughout the day. That's one of the things I will focus on now for these next two days to make sure I've got the speed down and being as good as I can on the greens.

Q. Having not played a lot, is there an intimidation factor where you step into something where you know USGA set the course up? This isn't putt-putt, you know.

HENRIK STENSON: No, I wouldn't say so, not at this stage.

Q. So you just go in and --

HENRIK STENSON: I got Gareth Lord, my old caddie, on the bag this week. It's a fun reunion in that sense. Yeah, we're going to tackle it like we've always done at big events and big championships, and he's already made a plan. We'll go out and test that plan now for the next two days.

And I think at this stage at least we've got the strategy figured out, how to manage myself around this golf course in the best and most effective way.

Then as always, it's down to me if I can hit the spots and live up to the plan.

Q. Henrik, ten years ago you won your British Open. I'm curious, have you ever played as well or since?

HENRIK STENSON: Is it only ten years ago?

Q. It's only ten years. Hard to believe. Does it feel like ten years?

HENRIK STENSON: Time flies, time flies. If I look at my career, my best ever stretch was really from summer until the end in 2013. That's the stretch where I played the best golf over probably a six-month period. Then the second time around is the summer of '16 and, in particular, that week and that final round.

No, I don't think I've played better golf for 18 holes or combined for a week. Of course, taking down Phil in that match, and yeah, just being able to play your best golf when you need it the most on the biggest of stages.

Yeah, why don't we bring that bottle out and shake a few of those out this week? That would be kind of good.

Q. You mentioned talking about how you hit a shot and you know if you hit it good, it's going to end up good. That doesn't happen at Open Championships. You get a lot of odd bounces. You've got to mentally, I guess, accept a lot of different results. Was that hard to do, to adjust to that, where you're getting the odd bounce or you know that you're going to have to play a shot that is going to bounce a certain way?

HENRIK STENSON: Yeah, on links golf, I think it's more off the tee in general that you can get some more. It's hard to predict how the ball's going to react when it lands on the fairway sometimes. Clearly downwind they get a lot more fiery and a lot more bouncy and so on.

That's why personally I like some of the Open venues that are a little bit more like fair or like you hit the ball on the fairway, you're most likely going to get it on the fairway.

Q. Predictable?

HENRIK STENSON: Yeah, or a little bit more hit and miss. You're coming across on an angle and over a blind corner or a blind fairway, and then you don't know where did this ball end because I know it was in the left hand rough, but I don't even know if it landed there or if it landed on the fairway.

So yeah, I tend to like that. Like Birkdale where we're playing this year is one I find that, if you hit the fairway, then you're going to stay on the fairway most likely.

Yeah, links golf can be very different as well. I think at Troon in 2016 it was a little softer in a way. You're always going to get the bounces, but it wasn't like St Andrews back in 2005 or like certain years where it's been really burnt up, or we had Hoylake one time as well, where it's more concrete. Then you're going to be prone to those unpredictable bounces.

Yeah, I'm just going to go out there and try to follow the plan and see if I can get something going this week.

Q. Big championship this week but also a big game this afternoon. France-Sweden World Cup. How much have you been dialed in this afternoon, and how happy are you to see it?

HENRIK STENSON: I'm just happy to be stateside today, which means I don't have to be up in the middle of the night watching the game. I've only seen one match out of the three group stages. One was at 4:00 a.m., another started at 1:00 a.m.

So I guess I'm blue and yellow at heart, but not blue and yellow enough to be up at 4:00 a.m. watching. I watch the highlights instead. Yeah, I'm going to watch the game. It's obviously a super big challenge for the boys. France is a strong team and a strong football nation, but it's been some good upsets over the last couple of days, both Holland losing to Morocco on penalties and Germany being knocked out by Uruguay yesterday, right?

So it's been some upsets, and hopefully we can continue on that trend.

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Q. As you were talking about The Open Championship, the last ten years, is there any part of your game that's gotten better, whether it's physical or technical or emotional? I'd be really curious about that.

HENRIK STENSON: I think it would be hard to improve on anything I did that Sunday. I haven't shot many 63s since, so I don't think I've been getting better.

As an overall kind of view on where I am, I think physically I'm in good shape. Body feels pretty good, despite hitting about 16 million golf balls over the last 28 years or whatever.

So body feels pretty good. My yardages and everything else is more or less the same as they have been. I don't feel like I've lost a lot of distance in any shape or form.

Yeah, for me it's more motivation and really putting my mind to it. I've had a long and healthy break, and that's been good. There's been certain aspects I've missed not being out competing, but there's also been a lot of times where, okay, this is what life is away from competitive golf and being on the road all the time, which I have done for many, many years.

For me this season is a bit of a hybrid year to figure out really where do I want to go in '27 and onwards? How much do I want to play? Do I want to play a schedule that maybe starts, say, 1st of February and finishes 15th of October, in that window, that's where I play my golf, and then the rest of the time I can still be at home and be part of the kids' lives?

I've got a son who's 16. He's a keen golfer, and he's got another couple of years in high school before heading out to college and so on.

So just rewinding here, the first couple of weeks in May, I was like golf dad in Sweden. I was taking him to his events and so on. Yeah, there's other parts in life too, and I've gotten a taste for that.

So I've just got to make up my mind how much I want to compete. Being a competitor, I know I'm not going to compete if I'm not playing well, and to play well, you've got to put the work in.

So I've got to kind of figure out the balance there, and then we'll make a decision.

