

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Sunday, July 5, 2026

Columbus, Ohio, USA

Scioto Country Club

Stewart Cink

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Here with the 2026 U.S. Senior Open runner-up, Stewart Cink. I know that's not the result you may have hoped for, but can you talk about the week and the battle?

STEWART CINK: Well, it's always fun going down the stretch with a lot on the line. Today, as it turned out, I played poor enough where there was really not a championship on the line, but I was still battling hard for second.

I wanted to play well and set myself up for the rest of the year. I just -- golf got hard for me today, and it happens. It's been a while since I had a day like that where start to finish it pretty much felt difficult, but today it kind of did, and my scorecard pretty much tells the story.

Q. When you look back at this week, what are going to be your takeaways?

STEWART CINK: Coming into this week, I really wasn't in the best frame of mind with confidence because I'd been off for quite a while, and my practice coming into it had just not really been all that great. I had done a lot of it, but it just wasn't that good quality.

To come in here with some question marks and put myself in position to realistically win, I'm really proud of that, to be able to kind of fight through this week -- today wasn't very good at all, but there was stretches Thursday and Friday that were just really bad. I mixed in some good with it, too. I hit a great round yesterday, one of the best of the year.

But all in all, I think it was a tournament that I think I've shown myself that I don't have to be firing on every cylinder in turbo boost to be out here winning, that I can come in here with -- I don't feel like I have a lot and still managed my way around. That's where your game plan and your process and your -- just your overall preparation mentally, emotionally, all that stuff, those kind of intangibles take over when you're not in the slot, so to speak. I really



wasn't flushing it.

It caught up with me a little bit today, but I'll look back at this week and think about Saturday's round. It was absolutely a great round, great round, and I pulled a good one out of a hat with it on Thursday, and with a late flurry on Friday, too, kind of managed to salvage that round, and Saturday was what I said, and today I'll learn something from today. I'll evaluate it and figure out if there was anything I could have done differently.

All in all, Padraig played great. He was going to be hard to beat the way he was playing. He's been such a great competitor. I've had so much respect for him for a long time, and I'm happy that he's going to be the winner, and also Haymes Snedeker, the low am.

I got to know him a little bit better this week. I stayed -- my host where I stayed caddied for him, a member here. I got to spend a lot of time with Haymes, so I was proud of him the way he played, too.

Q. The guy who won shot the lowest round of the day, so you would have still needed a pretty good round of golf. It seemed like it maybe came down to the eighth hole after you kind of climbed back within a couple. He's got a 30-footer. He makes that, and you lose two instead of one --

STEWART CINK: Yeah, and go back to the tee, and I hit my best drive of the day, and it went in the creek.

Q. You didn't think it was going in the creek?

STEWART CINK: No, if I thought it was going in the creek I wouldn't have hit a driver there. The way we scout holes, my caddie and I, we kind of figure out where we can land it, like in a zone, and on that hole because there's water, you have to obviously put your zone way back here. The back end of our zone on that hole was 283 carry to the far end.

Yesterday on 18, I piped my driver with the same exact wind direction and carried it 276. So the math right there says I can't hit a driver further than that one yesterday on 18. This is a driver, and I hit a really good drive, and it went in the creek.

I'm looking forward to going back and watching that shot if I



can find it on the coverage and seeing where it landed and doing a little bit of math in my head and seeing if it just got a hard bounce or what, but that was very surprising.

George McNeill's ball, he hit 3-wood off the tee, and he almost reached the creek, too. That one surprised us a lot, especially considering it rained a little bit yesterday afternoon and last night.

But that one was definitely kind of a crusher there. I finally straightened the tee ball out after I hadn't hit very many good tee balls, and boom, I hit a great one and it cost me a penalty shot. And then Pádraig makes the putt.

That was a big hole. We are so in the present that we don't always feel those momentum shifts, but looking back, I'm sure it probably did -- that was a big 15 minutes.

Then also, I missed my putt on 9. So I hit it tight on 9, had about a seven-, eight-footer. That little series of events there for 20, 25 minutes there was a big deal. It could have flipped my way, and it didn't.

Q. Driver was a little struggle early it seemed like. When that happens, how do you mentally get back in it? You've got to find it now.

STEWART CINK: Yeah, I know. That's why golf is hard. We all know it. If you put a tee in the ground and put a pencil in your pocket, you know what that feels like.

It was just -- I know what my goals are on every swing. I've been doing the same stuff for years -- well, for a year. It's been very, very productive. Very productive. I've been able to snap out of a couple bad holes and just pipe it for nine straight holes. Going back to -- I haven't thought about this during the round, in Birmingham this year at the Regions, I was a little like this with my driver for a stretch of about four or five holes early in the round on Sunday, and I didn't miss another fairway after No. 9. The back nine I just smoked it down every fairway because I was able to just, like, get back there.

Today just early on, I just stayed behind the 8-ball too long and I couldn't really get back there.

Q. Is it dependent on what the other guy is doing sometimes?

STEWART CINK: No, it's not. It's not at all. It's more mental than anything else. It's more about holding on and steering and being a little afraid of where the ball might go. So you end up with a little bit of a protective -- your release isn't there, and for me anyway, I tend to kind of drag the handle and the face kind of stays a little open and the ball

glances right, and that's what I did on 2, on 3, on 4, on 5. Do I need to keep going?

Not 8, no. Not 8.

But 10. They're all the same shots. I recognized that they were there.

But it's just not easy to make a correction like that when you're swinging a club that goes almost 300 yards in the air and there's a lot of speed there and there's a lot of trouble on both sides of the fairway, and you're also trying to win a big tournament. That's one of the great things about this game is that it puts you in these -- almost like a mental straitjacket.

Q. You did have a great par, I think, on 5. Were you reading the putt downhill?

STEWART CINK: Yeah. We had to hustle there to make a par. I actually felt like that was a big moment there because Pádraig kind of hit -- he didn't hit a very good second shot and his ball ended up in a spot where he had to go over that knob in the middle of the green. He didn't have much of a shot there and had to go up the backstop on the back of the green, and he made bogey, and I picked up a shot there when it looked like I was going to lose one.

But then I turn around on 6 and I kind of overcorrect and miss it left, and then I'm in jail over there, had to go down 5 fairway.

Every chance I had to close the door on myself, I just kept on closing the door. I don't know, it was just a struggle out there. When I did finally get -- I did drive it well actually, pretty well mostly for the last -- on the back nine. After 10.

I just couldn't get the ball to fall in the hole after that.

Q. There are a lot of young golfers watching this. What was your biggest lesson from the journey that you'll want the youth to take away?

STEWART CINK: I think what I mentioned at the very beginning of our talk was that I didn't feel super confident like I was just like ready to come in here and destroy the world. Yet I still gave myself a chance to win. If I did myself today, I think I would have been right in there. I'm not saying I would have won the tournament because Pádraig played great.

But I think I'm confident in saying I could have kept it closer than four. But not having the confidence -- confidence is a thing that really is -- it shouldn't be an in-the-present thing because if you're thinking about -- basically if I wasn't



practicing well for the couple weeks before the tournament, then I'm kind of stuck in the past anyway. When you do that, you kind of start to be afraid of what might happen in the future, so you're not in the present. Does that make sense?

I was able to stay present minded a lot this week and do my best, and our game plan -- there's a lot of ways to play golf that don't have anything to do with hitting shots. Aiming, what club you're going to use, reading the greens and the bounce on the fairways, all that kind of stuff, the rough. I did a really good job with all that stuff. I just misexecuted a few too many times to cost myself a trophy.

Q. What is it like in the pre-tournament buildup when you're either the guy to beat because of how you played this year, you're going for some history, or you're one of the two guys to beat, which you didn't have on your PGA TOUR career? Guys are gunning for you; does that affect you in any way or does thinking about the history affect you in any way?

STEWART CINK: Not really, and it's kind of like being the defending champion. People say you have a target on your back; no, not at all. If anything, that gives you the most confidence, to know that in the most recent tournament at this course, you won. You beat everybody. The fact that I've played really well this year a lot of times and had won a few times, won a couple of majors, it just gives me confidence to know that I'm -- that I have what it's taking to win.

I don't feel like there's like a target -- no one is going to play better golf because they're playing against me, they're playing Scioto. You've got your hands full with this course. I don't think it's a target-on-your-back situation whatsoever.

I was aware of the possibility that maybe you could win all the majors, but this tournament meant more to me than some streak of majors or tournament wins. I wanted to play well here -- I want to win this tournament. This is a big tournament to me. It's a really great setup, and they do a great job. It's on my mind.

Q. Is this number one on your bucket list of tournaments on the senior circuit?

STEWART CINK: Oh, yeah. I think so. I think so. This is the -- it's certainly one of the premier tournaments on our schedule. It's probably the one that carries the most weight, to be honest, if I have to be transparent about it.

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