

ROUND 4 PRESS CONFERENCE
July 16, 2023



STEVE STRICKER (-11)

MODERATOR: Steve, congratulations on your second title here in the last three years, your third senior major of the 2023 season. How special is this one for you?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's very special. You know, it's our PLAYERS Championship. It gets me into THE PLAYERS Championship next year on the regular Tour, which was a goal of mine to get back there again before the end of my career. Very excited. Very, very excited to be able to go back there.

To have won here in the inaugural Kaulig Companies tournament, it seems like -- I just met the gentleman for the first time, but seemed to be very enthusiastic about being the sponsor here and that's what makes for a good event. So yeah, very excited to be the champion.

Q. Somebody earlier in the week said that one of the areas of growth seems to be your ability to close out tournaments. The knock-out punch was the putt on 15, about a 50-footer on 15, and the wedge on 16. Can you walk us through it a little bit, because clearly those were nails in the coffin there.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I didn't hit that bad a drive on 14 and I played over there because I know -- I didn't think I could reach the bunker over there at 14. It ended up getting right on the edge of the bunker where I didn't have a very good stance, thought it was really going to snap hook out of there and ended up making a bogey. So all of a sudden it's a one-shot game between Harrison and I, and I don't know what David Toms was doing up in front of us.

I hit a nice solid shot in at 15. So to make that putt and then to have Harrison miss that, I mean, that really was the turning point right there. That's a killer when you're on the other end of that. I know that, I've been there and it's demoralizing, but on my end it was really fun, to be honest. (Laughs.) I mean, that's why we're out there playing.

And then to hit the wedge in there at 16, that's my strong suit. Those guys both laid up in the -- my playing partners, in the rough, so I had a little bit of an advantage there. I took advantage of my strength and hit it in there close at 16.

Yeah, those two holes definitely won me the tournament, but that's fun, that's why we're playing and that's what's exciting for me coming down the stretch, to see if you can handle it. The more times I get in there, the more times I show myself that I can handle it, the more confidence I have in being able to do it.

Q. What was the club there, Steve?



STEVE STRICKER: I hit a 4-iron. It probably was a 3-iron today, but I just was trying to get in the center of the green. That's not a strong suit of mine, trying to flag a 3-iron from whatever it was, 220. I'm just looking at making a 3 and getting out of there, then playing those last three holes.

I've had that putt over the years, I know it's a little bit of a double-breaker from where I was there and it came off beautifully. It went in with perfect speed.

Like I said, that hurts when the other guy's in there closer and he doesn't make it.

Q. Would you say 50 feet?

STEVE STRICKER: You know, it was in the middle of the green. Without taking my yardage book out, it was probably a good 40-footer for sure.

Q. And how far was Harrison away?

STEVE STRICKER: He was probably 20 --

Q. He's got a makeable?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, he's got a makeable putt, for sure.

Q. I talked to Mario. Not to tell you what he says, but I want to ask you the same question: Is this the best you've ever played in your career?

STEVE STRICKER: You know, I don't know. I mean, I've gotten that question a lot.

Q. Have you?

STEVE STRICKER: I have. I'm playing very consistently. I have a lot of belief and trust in what I'm doing, I'm not getting rattled. Today I felt very comfortable out there being in that position and I think that's the difference from now to other years on Tour. I never got in -- I won 12 times, but I never got into contention like I'm getting into contention now on the Champions Tour. I have more cracks at it, more times to fail, more times to succeed. Then when you do succeed, you can draw off of those times. I'm just getting in there more times now than I did on the regular Tour. Yeah, I'm learning from it.

Q. Steve, we were talking earlier in the week about emergence, metamorphosis, whatever happens at 38 in you, your approach to the game and coming forward. At 42, 43 you're world No. 2. Do you think you're that player 14 years later now? Are there ways in which that player was definitely better than you at this (inaudible) but you're maybe as good in some other things, your putting, your wedge play, even off the tee? Seventy-four percent fairways, that's lethal with your wedge play.



STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, and I don't know if my wedge play's any better than -- I've always been a very good wedge player. I putted pretty well for the most part. We all go through ups and downs with the putter. I was probably a better putter than I am now. I putt well still, but back then that was definitely a strength of mine day in and day out.

I was longer probably back then. I would still probably take my game back then than I am now, to be quite honest with you. I think the older we get, you know, everything starts to deteriorate a little bit -- your length, your accuracy, up and down with the putting -- but mine has seemed to kind of hang in there a little bit longer than some of the other players probably.

But that's the challenge. I try to keep in shape and eat the right things and do all that kind of stuff because I want to continue to play. I want to play like Bernhard when I'm 65, that's my goal. Enjoy it while it lasts. I know we don't have a lot of -- we're on our downward cycle out here. We're not starting our careers, let me put it that way. I'm just enjoying the ride and enjoying the time and enjoying days like today when you're able to get it done.

Q. Steve, first of all, happy anniversary?

STEVE STRICKER: Thank you.

Q. Thirty years, right?

STEVE STRICKER: Yes.

Q. I'm right behind you, 27 years.

STEVE STRICKER: Nice.

Q. Yeah, we started off the week talking about of course the mental game of golf, but (inaudible) mentioned that he didn't think all of golf was mental, but when you have players that were similar athletic ability that it became mental.

You went down a little bit below the leaders earlier in the week. How did you regroup and stay focused on the task at hand, stay in the moment and lead yourself to victory?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, Friday was very disappointing for me. I haven't played that poorly or hit some of the shots that I hit in a long time. I mean, they were awful. Some short irons that I'm normally very accurate with, I was missing. I had this pull hook going and I just really didn't know where it was coming from. That was disappointing.

I went to the range Friday afternoon and hit some balls, worked on it and went back to some of the keys that I always go back to since 2005, started feeling some better things.



Did not sleep very good Friday night because I was so upset the way I played, so it was an important round yesterday to come out, and I think I only missed a couple of fairways and missed about four greens yesterday and hit a couple of those shots but not as bad.

And then today was just all in all just better. I don't think my numbers were better than yesterday, but overall I hit better shots, more consistent, and really put the pressure on my playing partners. I was very steady and very consistent all the way around today, so that makes me happy that I was able to bounce back after Friday's round.

Q. Would you say you were able to, each shot, just go through your routine and just be able to compartmentalize before each shot, get in the right mindset and just take one shot at a time?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, and I still fought that feeling like I was going to hit it to the left even today. So I wasn't swinging as freely as I'd like to, but I was still able to hit the shots and the proper shots at the times that I needed to. Yeah, that makes me feel good.

I'll get into why I was hitting those shots probably a little bit more after I take some time off and just try to figure out why I was doing that. Yeah, to bounce back means a lot.

Q. When you're at TPC next year you get to go after Jerry's record. Thoughts on that?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah. Well, that is a goal of mine is to beat Jerry's record of the oldest to make the cut at the TPC. And if I do make it next year and make the cut, I would top his record, which I don't think would make him very happy. Definitely I've got my sights set on that. I'm just excited to go back there and play again, too. It's a great tournament, it's our flagship event on Tour and I'm definitely looking forward to that.

Q. Where will you play next?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, good question. I've got -- I'm not sure. I know I'm playing Flint for sure. I may throw in one of those first, either Seattle or Calgary before Flint, but I'm not sure which one or if I will.

