

## PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE

October 4, 2023

**STEVE STRICKER**



**Q. Steve, thank you for joining us here at the Constellation Furyk & Friends. The defending champion here, Charles Schwab Cup leader. How's it feel to be back here at Timuquana?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, it's a great spot. The course is wonderful, it's in great shape again. Really enjoy the area. Obviously great to be here to support Jim and Tabitha and their work that they're doing here in the area with the charities. Yeah, you put all that together and it's a nice spot to be this week.

**Q. You just got done playing the pro-am. Last week you were in Rome. Before today, how much practice did you get in over the last week and a half or so?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** There's been no practice, and sometimes that's a good thing. You can kind of get away, recharge, let your body kind of recover a little bit.

Yeah, then I came yesterday, hit some balls and played. For the most part, just went out on the course just to chip and putt, which is kind of the work where you need it the most when you get away from the game for that amount of time. Did that, and then played the pro-am today and I'll play the pro-am tomorrow, so I'll get some rounds under my belt before Friday.

**Q. Steve, since I guess the last four, five starts last year and then so far this year, the streak you're on, do you try not to think too much about why you're playing so well, or is there a couple of reasons, a couple of things that are really working well for you that is leading to this kind of hot streak you're on?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** I just kind of go to each and every week with the same mentality and try to play well. I feel like if I play well and play my game, I could have an opportunity to be in contention on the last day, and that's what I've been doing. I've been managing my game well, I've been doing most every part of my game fairly well. There's always things we can do better and improve on, but I've been putting well, my short game has been pretty good, and when you do that, you can kind of scrape out some rounds when you don't hit it so well.

Yeah, I just kind of go in with a fresh attitude each week and think about getting in contention on the last day, the last nine holes basically.

**Q. And you're second in greens in regulation, first in scrambling. Are you just showing off at that point?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** I didn't know those stats, but yeah, you put those two stats together,



usually adds up to some pretty good scores.

**Q. Even the rare occasion you are missing the green, you're getting it up and down.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Right. That's a good thing.

**Q. Is there any way you're a better player now than you were when you were on the PGA TOUR?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** You know, I've been asked that question a few times and that's so hard to answer, and I don't think so. All of our abilities tend to deteriorate over time. The older we get, not hitting it as far probably, probably not as good a putter or chipper as I was when I was playing full time.

But it's still fun, it's still fun. To come out here and compete and try to beat the other guys is a lot of fun.

But that's a hard question. I doubt it, but I'm managing my game just as well as I ever have been. I get it around, I take care of the ball probably a little bit better than I did when I was playing full time on the regular Tour, so that part's been a lot of fun.

**Q. You've already set the season record for money, which is always handy.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah.

**Q. Are you going to keep on going or are we heading to deer season now?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Deer season is open, yeah.

**Q. Is that your next stop?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, that is my next stop. Izzi, my youngest daughter, qualified for state high school next week, so we'll watch her do that and then I'll get in some hunting. I may play the first playoff event, not sure about that, but I'll definitely be at the last one. I don't know if I'll play the middle one. Probably won't play the middle one. I'll either play Phoenix or I'll play the first and the last.

**Q. Would you like to tell everybody about your beer?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** My beer, Strick9.

**Q. Your beer.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Have you had it?

**Q. No, but we interviewed (inaudible).**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Oh, yeah. Did they like it?

**Q. I guess. They sent me a sticker.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** They need to send you the actual beer.

**Q. I know.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Not just the sticker, that does nothing. That's no good.

**Q. He sent me a glass.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Oh, did he? Sent you a glass, too? It's gained a little attraction in our state. It came out for just kind of -- special period for the U.S. Senior Open and then people have liked it and they've made more of it and they keep selling it. Then they come out with some hats and shirts and all sorts of stuff. It's been fun. All goes to our foundation for a good cause and all that kind of stuff, so it's been fun.

**Q. Well, I guess somebody from the Piggly Wiggly where you live up there --**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah.

**Q. -- drove into the guy's brewery and asked for 10 cases --**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Oh, really?

**Q. -- because everybody was coming into his store and asking for it and it wasn't ready yet.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** The Piggly Wiggly, that's where they're selling it.

**Q. Your mother had called -- well, there was like one somebody's bait and tackle shop and the Piggly Wiggly.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah.

**Q. Small town Wisconsin, so you know you get stuff wherever it is.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** That's right.

**Q. Wisconsin also sent Florida a pretty good quarterback.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** They did, didn't they?

**Q. Yeah.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** He's been playing well.

**Q. Well, whatever's going on there, he's not (inaudible), he's played pretty good.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, he has played well.

**Q. Steve, as far as -- obviously you still have some competitive fire in you since you're winning so much. Do you find that the more you win, the more you want to win on this level?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, for sure. Yeah, the more you get in there, the more opportunities you have. I didn't have this many opportunities on the regular Tour and then out here it's been a lot of fun. You get in there quite a bit and have that opportunity, you get a little more comfortable with the situation, and then it's kind of fun to see if you can pull the shots off or the putts off coming down the stretch.

That part's been a gas. That's what I really enjoy the most is to see how I've been handling the pressure come Sunday on some of the last few holes.

**Q. Have you felt -- obviously you felt pretty good.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah.

**Q. Any lingering effects of whatever went on last year? Have they ever been able to peg --**

**STEVE STRICKER:** No.

**Q. -- what exactly happened?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Nobody has -- no, they couldn't tell me what it was. I have a sneaky suspicion I know what it was, but I'm on no medication anymore, I feel great, putting on weight again and all that's good.

**Q. I was going to ask a question about last week. Seems like when the Americans lose the Ryder Cup, the default position among maybe people in my profession is somehow there was disharmony in the team room, and I've already talked to a couple people and they said absolutely that was not the case last week.**

**Why do you think that that is something that people trot out, and can you comment on your view of the unity of the team this year as compared to 2021?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah. I mean, it was very similar to 2021 to this week. These guys get along very well with each other.

I don't know who it was in the media, but I heard -- I was going through the locker room or somewhere yesterday, it might have been Brad Faxon on saying that we're too close, that we're too much buddy buddies and the wives are too much friends. I just, I shake my head at that. At first we weren't close enough, now we're too close? I don't get that. The team was very good.

There's some challenges that we face when we go over there. First of all, the course. You know, they have an opportunity to play that course a few times before we do.

I think the biggest challenge this year was, and Zach tried to get the guys over there for a practice round, which we did. That helped. You know, I think the time change, I think we need to get in there a day earlier than what we're doing to help with that. I think it just takes too long to get guys acclimated to the time.

And then this year it was four weeks in between the TOUR Championship and the Ryder Cup. That's hard to do. Everybody's a little bit different, but for the most part guys like to play a little bit and they start to play their best after a week or two.

So that's my gut feeling of what happened. I thought Zach did a good job. We got outplayed, the European players played great. They made the putts.

That's the other thing, too. I was thinking about over there watching our guys putt and they would come up short and have trouble with the speed. Somehow we've got to get it where these guys are putting on like 9 on the stimp meter for a week or two leading up to the Ryder Cup so when we go over there -- we always know the greens are going to be slow, so when we go over there, that they feel like those greens are actually fast, and vice versa. We go over there and you can't get them to the hole so guys struggle with the speed quite a bit, and they know that. And we do the opposite here, we speed them up.

It's just a few things here and there that I think would really make a difference. But it's tough.

And they played great. I'm not taking anything away from them, they played great. They hit the shots when they had to and they made the putts when they had to.

**Q. I think I know what you're talking about, what Brad was talking about, because I saw a couple things that said, well, it's become an "old boy network," but the narrative a few years ago before the task force was you're not relying enough on the past captains.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah.

**Q. So which is it?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, and unfortunately you take the blame. The captain always will take the blame when we lose. The players get all the accolades when they win, and that's the way it probably should be, but yeah, it's tough.

Again, there's no question in my mind these guys got along very well. They tried their hardest, they worked hard together, they did everything with the team in mind and they just didn't get it done, simple as that.

**Q. The Europeans seems to -- Sergio used to chip in all the time --**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah.

**Q. -- and he'd make all the putts and stuff, and then he would come to a regular event and he didn't do all of that.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Right.

**Q. So I don't know what it is, but they all seem to --**

**STEVE STRICKER:** They find another gear.

**Q. I don't know what it is, but they seem to.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, and we do lately at home. It's getting harder and harder to win on the road it seems like. So we'll see what happens at Bethpage.

**Q. Can I ask you a question about your transition from the regular Tour to the Champions Tour? Toward the end of your regular Tour career, you played a lot with Tiger. You played with him in playoff events, you played with him I think in Ryder Cup and in Presidents Cup.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yep.

**Q. Do you think you learned anything about having an absolute killer instinct to win from spending so much time around Tiger, because let's face it, he's --**

**STEVE STRICKER:** He's a different player altogether, right? Anytime you go out with him, you learn.

But his ability I think to close the deal and to get things done like you're referencing, I don't know -- I mean, you can watch how that is and try to emulate that, but sometimes it's just the chemical makeup of somebody that determines how you are that way. He was brought up differently I think than everybody else and he was taught to have that instinct, to have that killer instinct like that. So it's hard, but you definitely learn from him. You pick his brain as

much as you can and watch how he goes about his business for sure.

**Q. You and your daughter played in Orlando in December in the parent --**

**STEVE STRICKER:** No.

**Q. PNC?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** No.

**Q. Are you planning on doing that?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** I can't, I'm not eligible.

**Q. You're not?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** It's strictly for major winners and PLAYERS Championship winners.

It would be fun.

**Q. That would be fun.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah. I would do it in a heartbeat if I was eligible.