

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**STEVEN ALKER**



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**Q. Steven, defending champ coming back here, how's it feel to be back?**

**STEVEN ALKER:** Great. Always good vibes coming back to a place where you like coming to, a good golf course. And obviously being defending champ, yeah, it's maybe a little bit of added extra pressure, but I think you just kind of put that on yourself, you know what I mean? Just good to be back in the area, for sure.

**Q. And last year when you won the Schwab Cup, it was a pretty tight race down the stretch. How much did winning this playoff event do you feel like give you that extra leg up?**

**STEVEN ALKER:** Yeah, huge. I think obviously earning double points and then just getting that little bit of cushion on Padraig. You know, it was still doable for him last two events, but enough just to hang on and pull it out.

**Q. And then what's your game feeling like right now as you're going in No. 2 in the Schwab Cup standings again? Another great year from you.**

**STEVEN ALKER:** Yeah, picked up a few spots the last couple of weeks with some seconds. Just kind of feels like it's been trending. Took two weeks off kind of mid-September, a couple of events there. Just kind of freshened the mind up a little bit and just felt the game kind of just started progressing from there, so it's good.

**Q. What are your thoughts on this course here? I know you played it really well last year, but what tends to come together really well for your game here?**

**STEVEN ALKER:** Yeah, I think it kind of fits my eye off the tee. You can shape it a little bit here and there, so if you're in the fairway, you can have some shots at the green. Approach shots are pretty important here, and then the best putting greens, best surfaces we putt on all year. So yeah, the tee shot's obviously important, it is anywhere but more so here I think, then just kind of go from there.

**Q. You said last week that your short game had really made the difference in that second place finish. How is that feeling at the moment?**

**STEVEN ALKER:** Yeah, it's still progressing, you know, just small things. And I think the short game just kind of helps the long game a little bit. When the short game's getting better, you're more aggressive on the approach shots and tee to green. It all kind of works together. So that's definitely helped, for sure.

**Q. We talked to Pdraig a couple weeks ago and we talked about the Schwab Cup. He was talking about how he pushed you down the stretch, and he didn't mean this in a negative way, but he thinks that maybe you relished to win a little bit more because of the push.**

**STEVEN ALKER:** Yeah, I think so. I wanted it pretty bad, for sure, but I was kind of in the place where I wasn't really thinking about it. It was there, I was always reminded of it every week, you know, but I was just in a really good place and I was just focusing on me, on my game and that really helped.

So to answer your question, I kind of almost blocked it out in a way, which really helped.

**Q. And then one last one for you, have you had any practice now with the trophy in case you win again this year?**

**STEVEN ALKER:** I got a lot of hits on TikTok, I believe, from that, so my daughter said. Yeah, I'm prepared now. If something happens, I'll be ready, for sure.