

**STEWART CINK**

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**Q. Stewart, thank you for joining us here at the Mitsubishi Electric Classic presented by Venture. You're the tournament host starting this year. Can you just talk about that?**

**STEWART CINK:** Yeah, it's awesome. This is my -- I wasn't born here in Atlanta, but this is my roots. Gwinnett County, this big suburban part of Atlanta here, we've lived in this neighborhood over 20 years, so we've got a lot of relationships here, connections, our foundation's very active in this community.

I played many rounds and spent lots of hours practicing and grinding up here at TPC Sugarloaf, so I'm honored to return here to competition as a PGA TOUR Champions player where I played 12 consecutive years, I believe it was, on the PGA TOUR back in the day. It's been since 2008 and now we're 16 years down the road, but it's been a lot of fun.

**Q. It's Wednesday afternoon. Up to this point, what's been the hardest thing to balance for you as tournament host and competitor this week?**

**STEWART CINK:** Well, I'm sure any person that knows Atlanta, Georgia, will know that the answer to that question is I've got to drive down I-85 to get home and to get out here. It's always a little unpredictable except that you can count on traffic.

So I live about 30 minutes away now without traffic. That's the biggest thing is just driving out here every day. But all in all, it's not a big deal. I've had very few real heavy lifting responsibilities to do. The sponsors are people that I know. I've got a personal relationship with Mitsubishi Electric, I've got a personal relationship with Vensure, the presenting sponsor. They're already part of like a typical day, typical week for me anyway. It's been mostly just an added bit of fun.

**Q. You alluded to TPC Sugarloaf a little bit ago. Can you talk about the challenge that it presents this week?**

**STEWART CINK:** I think the biggest challenge at TPC Sugarloaf right now, especially this time of year, is the greens. The greens, they're not undulating, they're just tilted. There's a lot of tilt in the greens and they're very fast and firm. So being above the hole is going to be a pretty sizeable penalty.

This time of year there's not a lot of rough yet so we don't have a lot of penal rough, and the fairways are just immaculate. It will be the best lies that the players see all year. The greens are excellent, but they're challenging. You need to be in the right spots around the greens



putting uphill preferably, a lot of break on a lot of putts and there will be some defensive putting to some measures because of the speed.

**Q. And how do you feel about your game coming into this week?**

**STEWART CINK:** My game is kind of in a state of change right now in a good way. I've been attacking a few things in my golf swing for about half the year, half a year, since December. The changes are slowly getting comfortable and I'm starting to kind of understand the relationship between ball flights and patterns and feels.

So every day it seems like I gain a little bit, and putting it under competitive pressure has been a little bit of a rollercoaster this year. There's been a lot of good and there's been a lot of horrendous, so I'm hoping that I can keep on ironing out that horrendous part and get more and more comfortable competing.

**Q. Can you elaborate on what it is that you're working on?**

**STEWART CINK:** Without being too technical, it's just basically like a clubface angle thing. My clubface was just a little bit open and my swing plane was a little steep. That just is a place for a golfer with a lot of speed like everybody out here has is kind of an unsafe place to be.

So I just kind of went to work attacking some of those things, swing plane and clubface angle. You know, anytime you've been doing this a long time, making changes is not comfortable. It's been a pretty big challenge, I'm not gonna lie, to trust it and commit to it under pressure, but luckily I've put myself under pressure quite a few times this year, more than I might have thought I might have. It's been a good bonus to be able to test it out under fire. I have failed a few times under pressure. I've got a little bit of a hill to climb as far as that goes, but I'm getting closer and closer to the top.

I love changing and evolving and improving, I love that part of golf. I'm almost 51 years old and when I can still go out and be really fresh and really excited about making change, I see that as a real gift and a blessing.

**Q. Kind of on that note, a month removed, like what did you learn or take away from Tucson or Valspar now that you've had a chance to kind of reflect on it from a month ago?**

**STEWART CINK:** I think what I took away from it is I should be expecting to be in those positions a lot more. I probably went into maybe not as much Tucson where I did expect to be up in the mix, but Valspar, I probably went into those tournaments with probably lower expectations. It kind of surprised me a little bit to be like, whoa, I'm right at the top of the leaderboard here.

So I didn't handle those two quite like I would want to, you know, with the kind of resolve and



determination that I've had most of my career. It's a setback that every golfer faces sometimes, so I'm learning from it and revisiting some of those things and trying to take what I can out of it and go forward in a positive kind of way.

**Q. In 1998 you were playing in the final group with Tiger on Sunday and he famously saved par from the rocks. Do you remember anything about that?**

**STEWART CINK:** Yeah, I definitely remember like it was yesterday. He hit a big hook off the tee and it carried up above the little escarpment. I don't know what that is actually. But he got up there in the hay and he just hacked this ball out on the green about 10 or 12 feet and made the putt for par. Me and it might have been Mike Weir I was playing with, I can't remember now, but the other guy I was playing with, the two of us hit beautiful shots in there about 15 feet and both two-putted for par and we all tied the hole. Tiger doing Tiger things.

The hole before that he hit a magnificent 2-iron from about 280 that looked like a driver to 15 feet. That was a time when we were all astonished like, oh, my gosh, what can this guy not do?

**Q. You turn 51 here in a month or so. What has been your favorite part about the Champions Tour so far since you've been out here?**

**STEWART CINK:** My favorite part about PGA Champions has been the social aspect. I miss all these guys. These were my peers for so long and they turned 50 and they just leave the PGA TOUR and leave us behind. It's been fun to come out and see everybody. I go to dinners and just share a lot of the old memories and laughs. You're cutting up on the range a little bit. It's intense practice, everybody's doing their work, but there's just a little bit more of a sort of camaraderie out here. Mostly, all these players, we go way back and we just have -- we've logged a lot of miles with each other on and off the golf course. It's just a fun environment to be around socially.

**Q. And just an update on grandparenting life, how's that all going?**

**STEWART CINK:** I think of all the grandparents and the parents, I'm the most nervous person around Stella, our granddaughter. Every time she goes to sleep, I'm like, what did I do wrong? She's too still, she's just so peaceful.

It's so fun. The best part's probably watching my son and my daughter-in-law just become natural parents. They're doing such an amazing job. Any moment we get with Stella is just so special, she's changing every day. She lives about 15 minutes from us, so we're getting plenty of time. It's awesome.

