

**ROUND 3 PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**August 24, 2025**



**STEWART CINK ( -15, won 1<sup>st</sup> playoff hole)**

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**Q. Stewart, congratulations, our back-to-back champion here at The Ally Challenge, winning this one in a thrilling playoff over Ernie Els. Just tell us how special this one is for you.**

**STEWART CINK:** Well, this is one way that when a win happening in this fashion, I'm not sure if it adds or subtracts years off your life because it's pretty stressful, but if you're the one that wins, if you're on that side of the stick on this thing, then it feels great.

It was a lot of fun. I mean, putted great down the stretch. Ernie wasn't doing anything wrong and he was just in the wrong place today because I had just enough at the end to overtake him.

**Q. Can you talk about that finish, birdieing 16, birdieing 17, and then the clutch par here on 18 to force the playoff?**

**STEWART CINK:** Well, I really played very well on the back nine today, I really did. I don't know how many birdies I made but it was a lot of birdies on the back.

I made a bogey on 15. It felt like once I missed the fairway on 16, felt like the wind might come out of my sails, but we got a little opening, me and Chris, down the right on 16 out into the seventh fairway which gave us a pretty simple shot really from the other fairway and took advantage of that.

Played 17 really well. Kind of a dramatic par on 18 from in jail. And then the playoff was textbook, it was just kind of all over the place a little bit, but sometimes it doesn't take consistency to win, it just takes grit and desire and belief.

**Q. At the media day you were talking about you don't really buy into the defending champion kind of deal. I guess do you still feel that way after that last stretch of holes when you win your second in a row?**

**STEWART CINK:** Well, I still do buy into that. I like to think that if you have a mark on you out here, it's because you've played well and earned it more than 52 weeks ago. If that's the case, then I'm proud to wear that mark.

I would say the same about Ernie. Ernie's just such a quality player and everybody knew that if we were to catch him, we were going to have to play a really good round. I played a good round. It wasn't a spectacular round, had one of those on Friday.

Just an all-around good event. I'm sure it was probably fun for the fans, there was quite a few fans out here. Everybody was excited about it and we were, too. We could feel it inside the ropes.

**Q. And another big theme that you were talking about on Friday was your discipline, and after yesterday's round can you just talk about kind of your mental state heading into today and kind of just the ebbs and flows of this round?**

**STEWART CINK:** Yeah, it's really the ebbs and flows of golf. It was all kind of encapsulated in three days, and especially two, the last two days.

But like I told my caddie, Chris Jones, after yesterday I wasn't feeling it off the tee and I didn't really strike the ball that great. I hit it hard but I didn't hit it that straight. I told him I'm not changing one dang thing except I want to change my intent off the tee a little bit.

I just, we have this little thing we do on all of our tee balls and I wanted to change my intent just to be really good at doing that and forget about where the ball's going. It takes a lot of discipline and it was a challenge and the ball didn't always go where I wanted it to go, but when it really mattered on the playoff hole, it did. I hit a great drive and I was over there to the right of the fairway like Ernie was in regulation. It's not a good place to be. You know, there's a lot of bogeys that live over there. So I played disciplined golf there on 18 and par was enough to win.

**Q. You said the first one was special, but to be able to win here now in a comeback like that, which one would you say from last year to this year means even more to you?**

**STEWART CINK:** Well, they're like opposite ends of the spectrum because last year I won by a lot of shots and I shot low and nobody really had a chance, and this time I was behind by 2 with three holes to play and also in jail off the tee. So I was behind by like 2-plus shots and I gutted it out. I did a lot of everything, including making some putts at the key moments. 16, 17, and 18 were just some of the best putts that I've ever made in my career and I'll never forget those. Those are the kind of things you really build on. Makes me really happy, I had a great time, and me and Chris make a good team out there. I'm just glad to keep on doing these interviews after tournaments.

**Q. Both of your wins have come in playoffs. What does that say about you as a competitor?**

**STEWART CINK:** Well, I love the finality of the playoff. You know, nobody's going to finish fifth, there's two guys usually and you just throw it all on the line and see what happens. I did that in the playoff at the Insperity in Houston earlier this year and I did that today again.

Just had to dig deep because I wasn't hitting my shots from the tee all that great today and this is the hardest tee ball on the golf course. To stand up there and make a really good

swing and roast one down, well, almost in the fairway but a really good drive was something I'll be proud of for a long time.

**Q. And then you've mentioned Ernie, going up against him. What did it mean today, how fun was it playing today, and just talk about the whole round.**

**STEWART CINK:** We can just put both yesterday and today in there because we played with each other both days on the weekend. I've played with Ernie a lot. I know what his game's like, he's not going to make very many mistakes, he's not going to give you a whole lot because he's just, he runs a tight ship out there on the golf course.

I'm proud to be able to say I kind of went up against Ernie, Hall of Famer that he is, and got the better of him. Hopefully we'll get a chance to do that a whole lot of times and maybe he'll come out on top, maybe I'll come out on top, but it's going to be a whole lot of fun going through the process.

**Q. Just talk a little bit about how the course was playing today as a whole.**

**And obviously you had a lot of support out there in the crowd. Just tell me about the atmosphere especially during those last few holes.**

**STEWART CINK:** The atmosphere was fantastic out there. This tournament, even going back to the Buick Open days on the PGA TOUR, I remember the crowds were pretty heavy here and a lot of excitement, a lot of local support, and it's not changed since I've been coming back in the PGA TOUR Champions. It was like that today.

The golf course got a little bit more sunshine on it, it was a little more fiery, and it was a championship golf course out there today. This has always been a really good test, it's narrow and if you're just a little bit off with your tee balls it punishes you. You've got to really, you've got to figure out a way to gut out some pars out there and I was doing that. I'm sure all the golfers said the same thing.

The course was really presented well. It's not always easy to grow grass on a big property like this and they do a really good job here.