

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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STEVEN ALKER



MODERATOR: We're now joined by Charles Schwab Cup leader Steven Alker here at the Charles Schwab Cup Championship.

This is your fifth appearance, you won the tournament in 2023. Just to start, how great is it to be back here at Phoenix Country Club?

STEVEN ALKER: Yeah, great to be back as defending champion. Whenever you win a Cup, you want to try and defend. Nice spot, I love coming here. I've got a good record here. So yeah, just nice to be on the grounds.

The course is a little different to previous years with a bit more rough and a little softer. Yeah, it's going to be a good test this week.

MODERATOR: You've won the Cup two of the last three years, 2022, 2024. You're in the driver's seat entering this week. Just speak to that and how you feel entering this week.

STEVEN ALKER: Well, not focusing on the Cup so much, I think it's more about the tournament. We've got a tournament to play, a tournament to try and win. If that all goes well and win the golf tournament, then I can win the Cup. Focus on that. And then yeah, just not -- just try and stay in my place and not focus on my chasers.

MODERATOR: Last time we saw you was at the Simmons Bank Championship when you hoisted that trophy. Two weeks off, how have you been spending those last two weeks?

STEVEN ALKER: Yeah, it's been great. There was a four-week stretch there with the Playoffs and everything, so it was nice to have almost a full week off, get some recovery with the body, and then last week was kind of more just preparation for this week.

Yeah, that two-week stretch, that was really nice. Get some rest and just feel fresh coming in. It's been great.

Q. I was kind of going to ask the same thing. I've had two different opinions so far about that extra week off, but you did not want to just dive right back into another tournament?

STEVEN ALKER: No. You know, they say hot hand, just keep going, but we come off that four-week stretch and I just kind of felt like a minute of break and have that extra week just to do some prep and just tidy up some stuff that I needed to.



Q. And the 72 holes this week as compared to the normal 54, does that change how you come into the week?

STEVEN ALKER: No, not at all. Same thing. You just kind of keep an eye on where you're at after a couple days and kind of assess things from there and how you play, whether you're conservative or more aggressive.

It really doesn't change anything. We've played -- majors are all four rounds, so it's just one extra round that you've got a chance to catch up. That's kind of how I look at it, if you're behind you have a chance to catch up.

Q. How are your nerves getting ready for this tournament? Everybody's chasing you compared to getting in an airplane with your daughter at the controls?

STEVEN ALKER: What was I more nervous about? OK.

I had total faith in my daughter for a start. Her process and safety operation was fantastic. She does a great job.

The golf-wise, yeah, I mean, look, I've been here leading and I've been trailing. Just try and draw from those experiences. Yeah, I had a blast with my daughter the other day. That was the highlight of the week to me.

Q. I believe in the video they posted you said that she was a little more nervous than you. Where does that come from? Is that a proud dad, you have confidence in her?

STEVEN ALKER: Yeah. I think she -- I mean, Albert and I were the first persons that she had as a commercial single engine pilot, so she was a little bit nervous, yeah. As I said, she did amazing. She did her process and it was a great experience.

Q. You said before the course kind of fits your eye. How different is the challenge of the conditions out there?

STEVEN ALKER: Yeah, well, I think there's more premium just on just hitting the fairway this year. They haven't cut the rough down, they've let it grow. The overseed's come in and it's lush. I think there's more premium there on driving the ball.

And then the greens are putting as well as normal. So fairway and green and you can score. I think the tee ball's very important this week.

Q. Could you talk real fast on just the Skechers event that's coming up? I know that's down the line, but the World Champions Cup.

STEVEN ALKER: Yeah, yeah, fun event, I played two years ago. Yeah, disappointing we didn't have it last year obviously with the hurricanes down there and the season was bad.



I'm looking forward to it because never get a chance to do that sort of thing. The points system, the three teams, it gets -- it's amazing. It gets complicated and it's fun. So looking forward to doing that, alternate shot and best ball and then singles the last day. Yeah, it's just a fun event. It's great for TV, too.

Q. Have you played any professional events with those different kinds of formats?

STEVEN ALKER: I have, yeah. I played a Dunhill Cup way back in 1997. It was a long time ago. And then I played a couple of teams events in China on the OneAsia Tour, played some events out there as well.

Yeah, it's just a different vibe, right, than just playing for yourself. It's always nice, a nice change.

