

AMERICAN FAMILY INSURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP
June 1, 2015



Jack Salzwedel
Tim Finchem
Steve Stricker
Barry Alvarez

DAVE MARR: Welcome, everyone. I'm David Marr with the Golf Channel. Just wanted to let you all know that the Golf Channel is going to be recording this press conference right here, do some interviews and air it on a pregame show before the NCAA Championships later on today. Our schedule has been moved around and we're very excited with what we're about to have announced here, looking forward not only to this day but also next year and the years to come. Wisconsin golf is something that's been important obviously to the game of golf and to the Golf Channel, but now with the Champions Tour coming to town, it's going to be a lot of fun from this area. There's a player whose passion and foresight in all of his work really was the motivation behind making this happen. We have a video right now to tell you a bit about that man.

(Video played.)

DAVE MARR: This man, Steve Stricker, certainly is going to carry through, I'm sure, this event and onward. I would like to welcome everyone here, fellow members of the media; hopefully you're as excited as we all are, and introduce the folks here on the panel. I'm sure you all know down the far left is the director of athletics for the University of Wisconsin, Barry Alvarez. Next to him, a man who, again, the talent and decency I've met very few people who equal his gentlemanly stature in the game of golf, always a pleasure to be around and to watch play golf, Steve Stricker. Next to him is the chairman and CEO, Jack Salzwedel, who is the chairman and CEO of American Family Insurance, who is the foundation that put this event together. Thanks so much for all of your help. And next to him is the commissioner of the PGA TOUR, that's Tim Finchem. Mr. Finchem, Commissioner Finchem.

TIM FINCHEM: Well, we're delighted to be here today in this very different weather than we had in Florida this morning. It's nice to sit here in June and feel chilly, but more importantly to come to Wisconsin, which is a great sports state. Just on a personal note, having gone to the University of Virginia, I had great fun watching the Wisconsin Badger basketball team the last couple years. Barry, congratulations to you

on that program.

But a great golf state as well. A lot of tournaments over the years in Milwaukee, PGA Championship coming back up to Kohler here later this summer, U.S. Open coming, and now with today's announcement that the Champions Tour will be in Wisconsin every year here at the University Ridge Golf Course sponsored by American Family Insurance and the American Family Insurance Classic will be its title. It's exciting for us at the PGA TOUR and exciting for all the players on the Champions Tour.

I think that when you look at any tour, any of our tours, there are three things that are really key to a good solid tournament and it's pretty basic, really. You have to have a great sponsor, you need a terrific golf course, and you need a great field. Here with American Family Life, we have a really good sponsor, and Steve and Nicki Stricker are two of our favorite people throughout the PGA TOUR because this is so special. And when I met Jack for the first time, he's just like Steve Stricker. The folks in your company who have worked on this the last few weeks, the commitment you have to community values, we think this is the perfect match of PGA TOUR golf on the Champions Tour with American Family Life.

With respect to the golf course, University Ridge is a highly regarded golf course, and by the way, it looks spectacular this morning. I think the Champions Tour players are going to really enjoy coming here every year.

With respect to the field, you know, the Champions Tour right now with the Schwab Cup has a very consistent field week in and week out, but I think with Steve Stricker being involved it gives them a little extra edge because as players come up to that 50 age, they all love Steve so they can't miss the tournament. I was talking to a couple of players the other day, including Jim Furyk, and these are players who probably will continue to play the PGA TOUR well into their 50s, they're not going to miss Steve's event. So for those three reasons we think this is going to be a really exciting week.

Now, there's this other factor about the tournament and that is Steve's hosting the event. When you look at the PGA over the years, you have Byron Nelson in Dallas, you have Jack Nicklaus with the Memorial actually coming up this week, and Arnold Palmer in Orlando. It's kind of interesting that Steve Stricker will be the host this week because Steve Stricker, and when he received the Payne Stewart Award, which is the award we give every year for a player who best represents the values, the presentation, the professionalism of what the PGA TOUR should be all about. That award was started after Payne's death in '99 and the three players who were recognized first were Byron Nelson, Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus. So to have a Payne Stewart Award winner

host this event, a player who is so popular here in Wisconsin, has done so much for the community and believes in charity, we think that's really something very, very unique and special.

Just quickly I'll also mention that every week on the PGA TOUR is about charity and about economic impact for the community. So we're delighted that with Jack's leadership, the creation of the Steve Stricker American Life Insurance, or American Insurance Foundation that will benefit American Life sponsorship of the Children's Hospital here and also other charities will position this tournament very well in the matrix of what we do with charity. And then with economic impact, every week when you take into consideration television, the people that come to the community to see the event, the overall economic impact will be very good for this part of Wisconsin.

So we look at this, Jack, as a win-win situation. It's great for the sport of golf and the PGA TOUR, it's going to be great for Wisconsin, we think it's going to be great for American Family, and we're very pleased to be here today to be part of it with you. Thank you.

DAVE MARR: Well, I get to travel with all the different Champions Tour events week in and week out and the ones we're in the general communities where there used to be PGA TOUR events seem to get included in the community at a much higher level. I think Wisconsin in general is going to fall into the same category as Endicott, New York, and Tucson, Arizona, where not only is there a sponsor who's leading the effort but the sponsor is really much more of a partnership. So what we've seen so far, Jack, is that kind of a partnership and an embracing of the PGA TOUR and Champions Tour by American Family Insurance. Can you tell us your philosophy behind it?

JACK SALZWEDEL: Sure. This is something that we've been talking about with Steve for a couple years. He's been a brand ambassador, one of our first brand ambassadors for American Family. As we started talking about it and thinking about what this event could hold, there are a number of partners that we looked at and we just saw a great alignment with all of the partners.

You see the beautiful course behind us right now, University of Wisconsin's Ridge course, and our tie with the University of Wisconsin goes very deep and it's been back many, many years. So I think that this event for the University of Wisconsin is going to highlight what a great institution it is, educational institution, research institution, but also what a great athletic institution it is. So I think there's great alignment there.

The City of Madison, the commissioner mentioned the economic benefit. I mean,

we've done some conservative estimates and we think it's going to be in the tens of millions of dollars for economic benefit to the City of Madison. And the city is a great partner of American Family, so we believe that the city will benefit and the charities in and around Madison will benefit as well. The Stricker Foundation as well as the American Family Children's Hospital will be beneficiaries of this event, so the city will definitely benefit from this.

Our brand ambassador we believe will benefit greatly, and we were joking a little bit beforehand whether he could start and play this event early, but I think he's got a major win in him over the next year and a half so I don't want anything to do with that. But certainly in 2017 Steve will be a player in this event, and who wouldn't want to align their brand with somebody like Steve and Nicki Stricker. They're just tremendous people, so we believe that there's great alignment there.

And then lastly, American Family Insurance, we have great ambitious plans for growth and this is a perfect platform for us to launch from in terms of a more national presence.

So we think for all those reasons it just makes a ton of sense for us to help sponsor this, coordinate and really bring a tremendous event to Madison and to help with the PGA as well.

DAVE MARR: Well, it certainly sounds like a Wisconsin love-fest here, which is something I'm sure the Champions Tour will be doing next June as well. We always take a look at who's going to be coming out on the Champions Tour in the next few years; there's always big names, major champions and people who are certainly headliners and Steve Stricker's one of them. But Steve is someone that really everyone on the tour has been pointing at and saying he is going to be a perfect fit as far as the Champions Tour is concerned just by the way he does his business. Also, a top world-quality player but just as a decent gentleman and human being and the interaction he's going to have on the Champions Tour, he's a perfect fit. He represents Wisconsin greatly and our sport as well. Steve, talk about the foundation and the event coming here.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, thanks, Dave. Thanks for everyone being here. I think Jack stole all my lines, to tell you the truth. Just kidding.

It's a great honor for us to be here. Like Jack said, this has been a dream in development for the last couple years. To get an event and get professional golf back to Wisconsin and to partner up with American Family and be a representative of their

great company and to bring an event back here to Madison is really a dream come true. We've been talking about this for a few years and we've run it by, actually the PGA TOUR's even been in here a couple times trying to pitch their event to come in here, and finally we're able to pull this all off with the help of the university, Tim Finchem and obviously American Family Insurance. But very excited and honored to be here. I wish I could play next year. We were talking about maybe we could change my birth certificate maybe where I could be 50 a year earlier. (Laughter.)

But we're extremely happy. The bottom line is, and Jack hit on it, it's all about getting their brand name out there, which it is a great brand name. It's about charity and the economic impact here in the city of Madison, and it's about the Children's Hospital, which they have a great relationship with and so do we. So it's all about giving back and that's why I think this event is going to be so important and so exciting for the community to be a part of.

So we're happy that y'all came today and I look forward to next year, and next year's going to come awfully quick, I know. There's a lot of work to be done but excited about the direction we're all headed, so thanks again.

DAVE MARR: Very, very exciting and certainly with host, sponsor host organization you've got just about all the elements to make a fantastic event, now what you need is a venue. Again, if you look behind you. I'm a New York City boy driving in here from Chicago and back in here from my hotel this morning, I was just loving the looks of this place. It's going to be a fantastic spot and you couldn't do it without the University of Wisconsin. The director of athletics there is a man who can also strap on a headset and win a bowl game, he showed us that. Barry, your thoughts about bringing golf out here to a Champions Tour.

BARRY ALVAREZ: I was just thinking the first time Steve approached me about this was this winter at a basketball game and broached the idea and I immediately said, let's move forward and see if we can make it happen.

We have a great relationship, long-time relationship with American Family, our athletic department does, along with Steve and Nicki. I certainly am excited about partnering with them on another project bringing a pro golf tournament to Madison and to the state of Wisconsin.

I'm also excited, and all of you mentioned the course but we think we have a world-class course, one that will represent and fare very well with this tournament. We're anxious for people to see it. I know this will be very exciting to people in

Madison and the state of Wisconsin will be excited about this tournament and what it brings. Thank you.

DAVE MARR: Well, about to open it up for questions to all of you, but let me tell you one quick story that epitomizes the Champions Tour for me and what you're about to get next year.

At an event on Long Island a few years back, I saw Ben Crenshaw on the rope line with his putter out in the fairway and he was going through the grips on the putter. I walked up to him and I said, Those some friends of yours there? I was going to go on over and say hi and introduce myself. He said, No, those are just guys that wanted to know about grip pressure and wanted to get a feel for their own putting strokes. I said, Ben, you're in the middle of a golf tournament and you're giving a putting lesson just before you hit your second shot. The Champions Tour is such an inclusive wonderful group of champions, not just guys who have won majors and PGA TOUR events but champions of our game. Look forward to 2016 in June.

Any questions for any of our esteemed guests here?

Q. When the GMO left the PGA TOUR, there was always talk of something coming back to either Madison or the state of Wisconsin. Why did this work, how did we get this back on tour in Wisconsin?

TIM FINCHEM: Well, it comes back to what I said at the top, which is the combination of a great sponsor, great golf course, great host. That's what it takes, so it's as simple as that. On the PGA TOUR it's a little bit more complicated from a calendaring standpoint just because when we left Milwaukee, the schedule filled up and it's full, especially in the season we can play.

But the reason this really fits, and as Jack mentioned, this has been under discussion for a couple years and we've seen the Champions Tour, either our events, the Senior U.S. Open perform very, very well in the middle part of the United States. Now, if you draw a line from here up around to Minnesota over to Ohio, that's the most intense fan base in the country, the upper midwest. I don't know whether that's pent-up demand from the winter or whatever. It's where our highest ratings are, where when we do a tournament we get great crowds on any tour. So all those things we know, it's just that you need sponsorship and you need a great golf course and you need what's happened here and it came together and it's really due to Jack and Steve coming up with this idea.

And now the only real challenge ahead of us is to do all the little things you do to build

a good tournament. The hallmark of a good tournament is it gets better every year. It can always get better. There's not a tournament anywhere that can't get better. A lot of little things get better and bring the community in, get the business community in the area fully engaged, all those things. But Jack's people are a very solid team and we're going to have good leadership on the tournament management side, so we think this can be a really, really good, solid event.

Q. (No microphone.)

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, and Jerry and I have discussed this along with Andy North, another former PGA TOUR player, about getting something back here in town or in Wisconsin because of the lack -- you know, the GMO disappearing. So it has been an ongoing process over the years. I remember talking to Children's Hospital about an event maybe Jerry and I went to about 10 years ago to try to get something going. So there's been a process of this trying to happen and finally it just all came together. And you have to have a willing sponsor. I mean, somebody to put up the money to put on an event, and that's the American Family Insurance group. So it's important for all those cases like Jack stated before. It's about charity and it's about giving back, it's about getting American Family's name out there.

And a couple of us here in town are turning 50 here shortly, Jerry and I, so it just all fits together in a natural kind of way. And then the relationship with the UW people here, and they've been great to work with. We've got a great spot to play. And I think the demographics here fits a senior tour event. A lot of these players that will be playing here played in Milwaukee over the years, so the fans haven't been able to see those players. They were guys like Kenny Perry that would come here all the time, Fred Funk, I don't know, but there's been a list of guys. Skip Kendall is 50, he's playing out there now. So there's a lot of guys that used to play the GMO that will now be able to come back to Wisconsin and play here again.

Q. Steve and Commissioner Finchem, Steve, you can certainly talk about how this course sets up for that caliber player that turns 50. They lengthened it, did some things a couple years ago. How does this course stack up for a Champions Tour event?

STEVE STRICKER: I think it's going to be perfect. It's about in that 7,100 to 7,200 yards, which they play out on the senior tour I guess. We have some great finishing holes. We were here about a month ago looking at how the finishing holes would stack up. You have the par 5 16th that's reachable, it can be reachable. No. 17 is a great par 3 over water. You'll be able to get a lot of corporate tents around there

and hospitality areas for a great finishing last couple holes. And then 18 is a good challenge par 4 up the hill where a birdie is definitely a possibility. There's room, there's room around this golf course, and that's the nice part that excited the tour. It's a good course. It's got room to put all these people in here that hopefully are going to come and watch and be here for the event. So all of it is a perfect fit.

Q. Steve, wondering with the video looking back at your career and the talk of you turning 50 whether this feels a bit like a retirement ceremony or a new chapter to the next part of your career?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's funny, I don't feel 50. I'm not there yet anyways, but I still feel like I'm young enough to compete on the regular tour and I will still compete out there on a limited basis. But I'm excited about this next chapter, to tell you the truth. It's something that I kind of look forward to in a certain kind way that it looks a little less stressful, you still get to compete, the guys are guys that I grew up idolizing and playing against when I first came out on tour. So I hear all good things about the Champions Tour and I'm excited to be a part of it, and then very excited to help get this event going here is another special thing for all of us. So looking forward to a couple more years of regular golf and then playing some out here on the senior tour and getting my feet wet out here.

Q. Steve, how excited are you as a native of the state for how much good pro golf is going to be showcased in this state with the PGA, the U.S. Open, this event and the Ryder Cup over the next five years?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's a very exciting time for Wisconsin golf and people in Wisconsin to enjoy what professional golf is all about. You know, this gives us an opportunity right here to showcase professional golf on a yearly basis where we're going to have the Ryder Cup, the PGA, U.S. Open, those are going to be off and on every so often, a year here and then we'll maybe not see regular tour players in a couple years or something like that. But here we're going to have the opportunity to see everybody on a regular basis.

Like I was saying, I think a lot of the fans here can relate to these players that are going to come here because they spent their time down in Milwaukee watching them at the regular tour event. So I think it's a win-win for everybody and it's an exciting time. Everybody I've talked to on the American Family side, they've put in an extreme amount of work and preparation for this day and a lot of smiles on all our faces.

Q. Steve, have you and the commissioner talked about how a lot of people want to

play because you're hosting the tournament? You talked about the fact that a lot of the guys out there, the Duffy Waldorfs, that played in Milwaukee will play every week no matter what, but what's your vision for the kind of field you think a tournament like this can get?

STEVE STRICKER: I think Dave said it, I don't think they play more than two weeks at a time and they don't go up against the regular tour's majors or any of their big events. So the guys have forced breaks, and then they comeback out on the road and they play for a week or two. That's what's unique and nice about the senior tour is that the fields are very consistent and most guys play in all of them. The guys that are out there playing now, they grew up playing 25 to 30 times on tour and that's how many events there are on the Champions Tour, so they just feel the need to play and they're excited to compete and play and that's why I think they get a good strong event and turn out every week. A guy like Freddie Couples who doesn't play a lot that we would be targeting to come in here and play, and some of the guys that may not play every week, make like a Greg Norman. I don't know if he plays in much at all anymore, but guys like that. Greg used to come and play the GMO all the time. It's those other guys that we hope to try and attract and come that maybe don't play every event that would be nice to see back here in Wisconsin.

DAVE MARR: Let me just echo something the commissioner said that Steve isn't going to say. Steve is a big drawing card as far as the players are concerned. When I was saying we all look at the names that are coming out, players also can't wait for him to come out. You saw Kenny Perry, who's won the year-long points race, a bunch of majors on the Champions Tour, he specifically said, Can't wait until Steve turns 50 and to play with him again, et cetera. So I think you'll see not every player turns out every week, but more will turn out here not just because of the area and the wonderful cooperation that's been put together, but also because of your host.

Q. Outside of the notoriety that the athletic department gets, what else is in it for you guys?

BARRY ALVAREZ: I think the notoriety and the exposure of the course and what it does for the community and the state, those things are all important to us. As I said earlier, we're very proud of our course and for us to be able to showcase it with the PGA TOUR event is really special. For us to be able to be a partner with American Family and help Children's Hospital, all those things are positives, plus the economic impact of the city. All those things are positives and win-wins for us.

Q. I just wanted to clarify whoever wants to answer, is there a specific date? I

know you said June but is there a specific date at this point for the tournament, and is it under contract through a certain year?

TIM FINCHEM: Greg McLaughlin, we did three years but we don't have -- we haven't announced our next year's schedule yet but -- wait a second, I'm being cautious. The week of June 20. And you said you were going to put another million into the pot for the players, just for the rookies. (Laughter.) Since you're taking credit for the field, Jack, if somebody doesn't play, call Steve, not us.

DAVE MARR: I'm not sure if that extra million is in the press release, though.

TIM FINCHEM: So that means the 20th would be three weeks warmer than where we're sitting right now.

JACK SALZWEDEL: It's a three-year guarantee for an extra option fourth year.

Q. Barry, how does that match up with your ability to continue to host the high school championships and your possibly going after more NCAA events?

BARRY ALVAREZ: We'll take a look at all the schedules. We looked at different options. This date and time schedule worked out best for us and along with the other tournaments.

Q. Steve, you and Jerry and Andy have served as kind of the unofficial hosts when the PGA TOUR was back in Milwaukee over the years while you were playing. What did you learn from your experience of trying to play in a tournament and be competitive while kind of serving as the host as well that will benefit you when the event comes here?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I mean it's difficult playing here in Wisconsin in front of family and friends, but I'm sure it will be in a couple years too again. But like we were talking earlier, it's like a new chapter. It's a little less stressful. I'm having fun with golf more so than I did when I was grinding it out in my 30s and that, so I enjoy going to tournaments now and competing and playing. I don't see it being any different in a couple years. It will be an exciting time. It will probably be, you know, just an emotional time probably too in a couple years knowing that all this has finally come together and that's going to be next year already and that will be kind of nice where I'm not even playing next year, to tell you the truth, where I can come here and support the event and probably get to play in the pro-ams leading up to the tournament but just can't play in the tournament. So it will be nice to see it all come together and be a part

of it going forward.

Q. Tim, what makes the state of Wisconsin appealing to professional golfers?

TIM FINCHEM: Well, we talked about that a little bit. You have two or three great ambassadors here telling the players -- when you say golfers, you're talking about tour players or just golfers? With regard to tour players, you've got Jerry and Steve talking about this golf course and golf in Wisconsin to the rest of the tour, which is a big help. But I think overall and what Barry referenced is when you're on national television, the golf course and letting people know about golf in Wisconsin, Wisconsin and Michigan spend a lot of money on tourism generation. This is a great way to go about it. And given the weather pattern up here in the summer and the quality of the golf courses, anything you can do to get that word out to the 110 million Americans that watch us on a regular basis is just a very efficient way to get that word out, so that's another benefit of the tournament.

DAVE MARR: Any more questions? Okay. Well, Jack mentioned he would like to try and see if Steve could get out on the Champions Tour a year early but Steve said he wanted to maybe potentially win a major championship between here and there. You have your opportunity this August right here in your home state. Who wants to see Steve Stricker cry up in Kohler, Wisconsin, at the PGA Championship? I know I do. Again, very excited, looking forward to a terrific event next June. Press release will give the exact dates. Let's get one more taste of what the Champions Tour's all about before we conclude and have picture taking.

(Video played.)

DAVE MARR: 55 weeks, it's going to be fun. We're going to take some pictures now and then have the opportunity to go down on the putting green and putt against and get pictures taken with Steve Stricker and Bucky Badger, so stay around if you would and we'll get pictures taken.