

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: STEWART CINK**November 17, 2016**

STEWART CINK: Yeah, it's very pleasing to kind of bust that little threshold and start exploring new territory. It was a really good round out there. I was calm all day and I was just really staying into what I was doing. A round like this you kind of start getting into the score a little bit and start thinking maybe that magical number out there in the distance. My mind wandered, too. I did a pretty good job keeping myself reined back in when I needed to do work.

Q. Great ball-striking day. You missed only two fairways, but I thought your iron play was right on.

STEWART CINK: Yeah, when the wind's not blowing out here you can really take advantage of this golf course. If you're feeling in control with your approaches, then coming in from the fairways, too. But there's still a lot of places you need to play smart and somewhat defensively. I did a pretty good job out there I thought really in picking out where I could be aggressive and taking advantage of those places and it was a really fun day.

Q. Dennis Paulson's in the booth, he was describing your swing all day for TV, he said it looked free and easy, he said he hasn't seen it like that in a long time. Is there a difference?

STEWART CINK: Yeah, I think so. I mean, I do feel a little bit free and easy at the moment. We're going through a lot this year and perspective is probably kind of catching up with me a little bit, but it does feel really nice out there. I'm going to hit plenty of bad shots, too. The key is I think just being ready to accept those and move on and get back on the horse. So I've had that kind of an attitude and that frees you up right there, so I have been feeling very free and very easy.

Q. You had a lot of 10-footers for par that you made, had some long ones for birdie.

STEWART CINK: I didn't make any 10-footers for par.

Q. Okay. ShotLink's off .

STEWART CINK: I had one that I missed on the last hole, that's it.

Q. Does it get easier for you out here as each week passes?

STEWART CINK: I don't know what you mean by "it." The golf doesn't get easier because each week passes that I get a week older and the field doesn't seem to get older. I think I know what you mean, I think you're talking about Lisa. No, I mean, it's constantly hanging over us, just the nature of it. You don't know what the future brings with something like this.

I am just really encouraged by the way she's been able to fight and handle it. She's had definitely a lot of ups and downs and she feels pretty well, and she got a good report Monday, real good. It's just she's really like an inspiration for me. I wouldn't say it's easy, though.

You kind of learn how to sort of like become your new normal with this. So I guess we're kind of there, we're in the new normal and she's going to be on treatment probably for like ever. I think we would accept that at the start of this, that she would be in treatment for a long time as long as she could be stable.

Q. What would be a good way for us to put how she's doing, her status or where she's at?

STEWART CINK: Well, she just got switched over from her, I guess you would call it the phase 1 first line of treatment, first line of defense into the maintenance phase Monday. That's a good indication. That just means that she's had like the best response possible. She had nine full rounds of chemo. She had very limited side effects, which I can only say that she's just being looked after by someone bigger than us. So she's responded well.

She's still got stage 4 cancer. The cancer is sort of, it's like when the horses get out of their yard, it's hard to get them back in, can't get them back in. So she's going to be on maintenance hopefully for a long time, that's kind of the plan.

Q. How often is she able to get out?

STEWART CINK: If I'm not, she's out. I'm not going anywhere without her. I just don't want her to stay home. I don't want to be away if something were to go south. If you see me out here playing, then you can assume that that means that she's doing fairly well, at least well enough to travel because I'm not going anywhere without her. I'm not going to say that like in an ultimatum kind of way. There may be a tournament someday down the road that I play without her, but I'm not planning on going anywhere without her right now.

Q. Since we didn't walk any, how many did she walk today?

STEWART CINK: She walks 18 holes every day. She's here on the first hole and she walked 18 holes. She's walked 18 holes of my rounds every round I've played I think since she got diagnosed with cancer except two times in Memphis she only went nine and it was about a million degrees. The wig is hot.

So she's doing a great job being the best fighter that she can be and that includes getting out walking. Some days you don't feel like it, but she's still getting out there and walking. Today she feels really good, almost what you would consider like normal. She feels really good.

Q. You mentioned perspective before. If you look at your finishes going all the way

back to winning, top-15, had two top-15s. Does it help at all, I don't mean to make a comparison between the two, but does it help?

STEWART CINK: No, I think -- I really think that that is a lot more to do with other things that I've made some changes in my life and my golf life. It definitely was sort of, it grew out of our situation with Lisa where I felt like I had a chance to do some things to just kind of turn myself around. I just wasn't at the time, the last few years haven't been that great for me productivity-wise on the golf course. So I decided to make some changes and felt like if Lisa can fight, I can fight.

Q. What kind of changes?

STEWART CINK: Working with a new putting coach, trying to get a little bit of a better handle on putting. Working with a new guy that's kind of helping with my attitude a little bit, just changed things around with my priorities and the way I feel about results and stuff like that. Just trying to attack every angle.

Q. Sometimes you talk about perspective and people translate that into meaning not caring about how you play, which is probably just the opposite in terms of you're still grinding over putts?

STEWART CINK: Oh, for sure. And not being tied to the results of your play doesn't mean you don't care about where the ball goes or what you shoot. It means that you're not letting where the ball goes or what the scorecard says define who you are. I know who I am after all these years. I've read all of your stories about me, I know what you say. I believe everything you say.

No, seriously though, I know who I am, I know what I have to offer out here. Maybe to some young players I have something to offer. Maybe to somebody who watches golf with their kid I have something to offer. That's how I want to be. The golf shots don't really have that big of an effect on that so I'm going to choose to not let those define me. For years I've let those define me even though I've tried like heck to not let it happen.

Q. How long?

STEWART CINK: What's this, my 21st year? 21 years, yeah. And that's one of the most difficult things about playing golf out here is that it does naturally just tend to sort of be your definition of who you are if you don't get a hold of it first. I've let it. I've worked hard at it, but I'm just taking a different approach to it now and it's really helped me be freer and it's led to some decent finishes and I'm pretty excited about it.

Q. How much fun was that run 4 through 7?

STEWART CINK: I think it's great. That's a tough spot to be in at times in my career. I've had difficulties really keeping the accelerator down, but today I felt like it was a real

opportunity to practice my skills and stay aggressive. And on a day like today, you know that nobody else is going to really put the brakes on so you have to really keep going and take advantage of it while you can. I had a lot of fun out there working on it all.

Q. How often do you get here over the years?

STEWART CINK: To the island?

Q. Yeah, to here.

STEWART CINK: I have a coach who lives here, Dr. Mo Pickens, so I come down here and visit him maybe once a year. Come down here for other trips, maybe once or twice a year, so a couple times.

Q. This is a course you always feel comfortable on?

STEWART CINK: No, it hadn't. I've had some good rounds out here but it's not always been a comfortable golf course. I've missed the cut here, I think I have. I've had some good finishes and some bad ones. I don't think today had anything to do with the course, it was more about me feeling comfortable with myself and just free to be on the attack all day long and it turned into some really good scores.

Q. What was your best birdie during that stretch?

STEWART CINK: During the 4 through 7?

Q. 5?

STEWART CINK: 5 was just like three really good shots, a good drive, a good wedge and a good putt. It was a straightforward birdie. 4, same exact thing.

Q. That's the par 3?

STEWART CINK: That's 6. There were a lot of good shots right in that stretch. A lot of good shots.

Q. It sounds all pretty boring.

STEWART CINK: It was, it was kind of boring. We love boring, love it. I hit a lot of good approaches in that stretch of holes. And then 7 was basically a two-putt from just off the green about 50 feet.

Q. It's got you for 35 feet on 12?

STEWART CINK: 12, yeah, that was a long one for birdie.

Q. That was accurate?

STEWART CINK: Yes.

Q. How would you compare the round to some of the rounds that you shot, where would this one rank in recent years as far as --

STEWART CINK: In recent years it's probably like the best round I've shot by like four shots because I haven't had that many good rounds. I think the big difference today, I think it's my lowest score on Tour. I haven't had a lot of low, low scores, so I've never shot lower than 63 before. And it's par 70, so asterisk.

Still, I think the big difference was that I was really calm and aggressive and I was willing to accept anything happening and made bogey on the last hole, three-putt there. But I'm not kicking myself too bad about it. It was a good day overall and in the grander scheme of things it's going to be a good day from wake-up to go to sleep and golf was a little piece of that and it was good, too.

Q. Didn't look like there was a whole lot of sand under your ball on 9 in the fairway bunker.

STEWART CINK: Yeah, that was actually a great lie in the fairway bunker. Something kind of weird. I've always been a good fairway bunker player, but the last four or five bunker shots I played from the fairways, I fatted. So that crossed my mind a little bit on that shot. I thinned it just a hair, so it went too far and I had a pretty difficult putt coming back. That's how our mind works.

Q. Did you think 59 at all?

STEWART CINK: Yeah, I did a little bit actually. When I birdied 7, I thought 8's kind of a birdie hole, a pretty short par 4. So I had about a 22-footer for birdie there and I thought if I made that, then I have a chance to make birdie on the last hole. That was kind of a tough putt. I had to go over the side of a hump so it had a lot of break and it went straight down and it was a tough putt to make. It did cross my mind, that's actually the first time I've ever been that low where I had a chance to shoot that.

Q. Not to be the black cloud on your day here, Stewart, but what's the big deal about 59? Furyk shot 58. Why are we talking about 59?

STEWART CINK: Well, not many of us ever shot it.

Q. So here's my question: Is there still a 59 watch?

STEWART CINK: Yeah, there is.

Q. When there's 58 out there?

STEWART CINK: Yeah, there is.

Q. Why?

STEWART CINK: Because it's still cool to be in the 50s. I don't care if it happens once a week next year for 10 years, it's still pretty cool for someone to get there.

Q. It's kind of like us breaking 90; you put an 8 in front of it?

STEWART CINK: Yeah, you put an 8 in front of it, then it matters.