

**STEVE STRICKER**

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**Q. Winning the helmet, how does it feel?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, in 1994, I had a chance coming down the stretch, you know, I would have needed to make birdie on that back in '94, but finished second here a couple times and it's finally a great feeling to put that helmet on.

**Q. What happened with you last year down the stretch, and how much do you feel redemption this time around?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, I was fighting it though. You have those demons in your head and I knew I was fully aware of what I had to do on 18, you know, as I was playing today. I wanted to get enough of a lead where I could do something different out there. It's just a tough driving hole for me and it is for everybody. A couple guys in my group hit it in the water today. If you pull it a little bit you run through the fairway, and if you push it a little bit you hit it in the water. It's a challenging hole and somehow I just guided it out there and got it in the fairway. And I think even Gene Sauers hit it in the water, so it's just a difficult hole and I was glad to finally make par on it and walk away with the helmet.

**Q. When you see the ball going on the line that you want and you know it's going to be in the fairway, what is that feeling, is it just like a relief?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah.

**Q. Kind of exhale?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, I had to stand up there and try to hit it because I didn't know what Gene Sauers was doing ahead of me. He was only one shot back. So I was still forced to, you know, play pretty aggressively off the tee. So it all worked out finally. It's been a challenge out here. I put a little extra pressure on myself to try to win. I've been close, let one get away here last year, so it's finally really a nice feeling to finally pull one out.

**Q. Sure. You saved par on 11, 13, 16. How big was that in this whole thing?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, the one at 11 was really big. I hit a nice sand wedge in there, just didn't cover the bunker, but yeah, the one at 13, got it up and down in front of the green, great putt at 16 was huge, and then kind of played a little bit too safe at 17, which almost ended up costing me. But you know, it's just tough winning. It's tough winning anywhere on any tour. They don't give it to you. You've got to go and try to get it and fortunately I was

able to make a couple more putts than anybody else.

**Q. How satisfying was it to finally win after finishing in the top three five times in your first seven starts out here?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, it's a relief to tell you the truth. Like I said, I've been putting a little bit of extra pressure on myself to win out here. I've been close. Like you said, I've been in the top three a bunch. So that keeps building when you're not winning. So it's feels great to finally have won.

**Q. Of the thousands of holes you've played in your life, is 18 really at the highest level?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** It's one of the toughest we play. I remember when the Tour was here, it was the same thing. I think back then though we had to hit driver because the ball and the equipment didn't go as far. So you almost had to hit driver. Now you can kind of get away with 3-wood. But it's just a challenging hole and it doesn't fit my eye very well. I like to draw the ball. Everything is telling you to cut it off that tee and I don't do that very well and thus I've hit it in the water a couple times. It is a challenging one.

**Q. With the last group, all of you guys kind of being at the top of the leaderboard yesterday and today, is it almost a match play type situation or do you just kind of focus on your own game, just kind of play it shot to shot?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** You know, you're watching, at least I am, you're watching what everybody is doing, but deep down there's birdie holes everywhere out here. I tried to stay as aggressive as I could, tried not to make any mistakes. I didn't make a bogey today which I'm really proud of, and made some really good saves to do that. Just hung in there and finished it off.

**Q. Who among the Stricker clan was out here this week?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Well, my brother-in-law was on the bag, couldn't have done that without him. He did a great job.

**Q. What's his name?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Mario.

**Q. Last name?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Tiziani, T-I-Z-I-A-N-I. He's my brother-in-law, I married his sister. And I had some other relatives out here as well and some friends. So, yeah, it's a special moment for us for sure.

**Q. Were you planning to play here all along?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, I enjoy coming here. It's a neat place, it's a great town. My aunt, she's passed away, but she lived out here so I was coming out here back before I was even on tour. I'd come out and visit her, play in some of the mini tour events out here, try to qualify for the Tuscon Open. I think I even qualified for the Tuscon Open before I even got my tour card. So I've been coming out here for quite a few years and always enjoyed the area and it has a special meaning because my aunt was here.

**Q. I think Tom Lehman said the other day he wore the helmet in the drive-through at Starbucks, to the grocery store. Are you going to like wear it about town do you think when you go back home?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Geez, I don't know. Probably not but, you know, I'll cherish it forever. It means a lot. It's my first Champions Tour win and it was a battle and it always is and it means a lot.

**Q. How much does it help when you come here that there's so many Wisconsin fans who live here, plus this year on top of it almost the whole City of Madison came with the Cologuard folks?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, it means a lot. I got tremendous support here last year and this year and the University of Illinois, there was a contingent here because of Mike Small, who played in the event also and he was playing well. So a lot of Midwest people come here I think for the wintertime. So I got a lot of support in that way. So it, yeah, it means a lot. It's even -- I don't get that every week so it's nice to get that and win on top of it.

**Q. Almost feels like a kind of a home game for you?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, a little bit. Like I said, I'm connected to this area with my aunt and coming here for so many years. It's great that the Champions Tour was here. It's a perfect venue for it, it's a great town that gets behind it so everything about it makes it a first class event.

**Q. Thank you. Congratulations.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Thank you.