

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
June 13, 2021



STEVE STRICKER (-9)

Q. Steve, bogey-free 65 on Sunday. Your thoughts on the round?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, it was a good day, played well. Wasn't quite the 60 or 61 that I kind of semi joked about yesterday, but I played solid, and that was not making birdie on No. 2 with wedge in my hand for my second shot and then hitting I thought a good drive at 16 on the par 5 and ended up being in the rough there and not making birdie there, too. So two par 5s where I didn't make a birdie where the whole field pretty much is going to make birdies there.

Good round, but it could have been a little bit better, but a good way to end the tournament. Nice to see a good crowd out there today and fans back and the American Family Championship back.

Q. After all those pars in a row early, what did you do to kind of kick it into gear?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, I told Nicki as we were sitting on the sixth hole, well, we're even par after five again. I just squandered away a couple opportunities. And I said, well, let's see what we can do from this point forward today and hopefully different than the first two days.

Again, played pretty good, and I played actually pretty good all week, I just didn't get a lot out of the first couple of rounds and did some really dumb mistakes, but nice way to end it.

Q. You mentioned some issues with your putter yesterday. What did you do to straighten those out today, because obviously you putted pretty well.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, putted well. Hit it in there, had some closer opportunities today. I kept telling myself that I've been -- I feel like I'm stroking it fine and they're just not going in. Then you start to put those doubts in your head. As I started making a few more today, that confidence came back a little bit, so that was good to see.

You know, it's challenging as we get older, and I think putting is probably the most challenging, but I'll continue to work on it. But I did, I putted nicely today.

Q. Had a run on the back nine. How close were those birdies that you made and how didn't you birdie the par 5 16th?

STEVE STRICKER: Hit a nice shot there at 10 to maybe 12 feet, wedge to 12 feet. Birdied 11, made about an eight-footer. And then 13 was five, six feet; 14 was about the same, another five or six; and so was 15. So, 13, 14, 15 were all about the same kind of length

putts, five, six, seven feet, somewhere in there.

No. 16 I drove it right over the trees like I wanted and then actually the wind started taking it to the right and I was like, wow, this is going to be down there perfect. It was down there a long ways, but I was just into the thick rough and the lie was okay, but I was standing -- the ball was way below my feet, and I knew I couldn't miss it left and that's where I missed it. I missed it left in the bunker, short-sided. I hit a nice bunker shot out to about 15, 18 feet and had a ton of break and didn't make that.

Had a nice opportunity at 17, too, that I left right in the middle short. Yeah, it would have been nice to get another one or two on the way in.

Q. You mentioned yesterday just playing in front of the home crowd added some extra pressure. The way that you finished out today, just the mindset that you came into it today?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it is, it's nice. It's a tournament that I would dearly love to win. So coming in I know I'm playing well, I kind of put that extra pressure on myself and didn't handle that very well. Today was more about let's go out and see how low I can shoot, see how many birdies I can make, play a little bit smarter, which I did. That bodes well.

I've got a week coming up that I'm going to be off, then either play on the regular tour or Champions Tour next. It's a good momentum into this off-week that I can kind of continue to work on my game and keep it going in the right direction.

Q. Aside from your own performance, as tournament host, how do you assess the success of the tournament?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I just saw all the AmFam executives there as I walked off 18; Jack and Bill and Jim Buchheim, they were all there. We all hugged each other. It was just great to see it back being played again. And the people coming out with great enthusiasm, the fans showed a lot of support for everybody that I get nothing by compliments from the players. The volunteers are incredible. We just got a great group of people here that put on this event, and the tour, the players show up to play in it. They love the city. There's so many positives about the whole thing. It was finally great to be back playing here again.

Q. Jerry bogeyed his first hole of the day and now has a one-shot lead as you walked in here. What does it say about him, his love for this course, this tournament, and his ability to play U Ridge so well?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, this is his first time here, but he grew up in --

Q. Jerry Kelly.

STEVE STRICKER: Oh, Jerry. I thought you said Jim.

Q. Jerry's leading.

STEVE STRICKER: Oh, Jerry's leading. Well, it doesn't surprise me really. He plays this course well. It remind him a lot of I'm sure Maple Bluff, you know. It's got the big trees, the tree-lined fairways on the back nine especially. He drives it straight and he's a good short iron player, so it's a good combination going around here. So it wouldn't surprise me at all if he were to walk up here and win this thing again.

Q. Julius from the PGA just reminded us it's 99 days until the Ryder Cup. Is that now -- after this tournament, does that take laser focus for Steve Stricker?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, it's always got my focus and my attention. I'm always watching the tournament that's being played. I went home last night and tried to get caught up or got caught up with the guys who are playing there, how they're doing, the point lists and all that kind of stuff. Yeah, it's got my full attention all the time. Yeah, I mean, I don't know what else to say. I'm thinking about it constantly.

Q. As tournament host, do you take pride in the fact that for another year it's another strong finish, multiple guys have a chance to win this thing in the last two holes?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I think this course provides that kind of theater. It's got a lot of opportunities on the back nine, you can make a move if you need to. There's holes that you can eagle, there's holes that you can make a good run at birdies, and then if you don't play them quite smart enough, they can jump up and grab you, too. The course lends itself to I think a good finish and we're probably going to see it again today.

Q. Are you locked into John Deere and do you have any other tournaments you're for sure going to in the near future?

STEVE STRICKER: John Deere for sure. I'm going to play -- next week is off and then I'm going to play either SENIOR PLAYERS Championship or the Travelers Championship on the tour, the regular tour. 3M Championship, I think I'm going to go up and play. John Deere, and then see where I stand.