

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**June 8, 2022**



**STEVE STRICKER**

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**ALLIE LeCLAIR:** Thanks so much for joining us, Steve Stricker, at the American Family Insurance Championship. Can you go ahead and just talk about your week and what you're excited about with being here at this tournament?

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, this is a week that our family, American Family Insurance, our foundation, we all look forward to very much. It's pretty surreal when we come here, I guess, to see what's all happened the last six years or so of this event. To see the build-out, to see the support we get from not only American Family Insurance but all the sponsors and the people in the city of Madison is pretty overwhelming at times. It's very cool. It's a busy week, we're excited about it. Too bad the weather kind of stunk today, but looks good the rest of the week and we look forward to having another great championship.

**Q. How big of a factor is momentum at this point in your career? You played well, obviously won a tournament a couple weeks ago. How do you feel and how do you factor momentum into playing well this weekend?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, I feel great. It's a tough week for me. I Mean, Not only there's a lot of responsibilities, but there's a lot of expectations that I put on myself to try and play well and try to win. And then we've got to beat Jerry, right? That's the biggest thing, because he's usually right up there around the top.

Yeah, but I'm excited. I'm excited where I'm going. I'm feeling better, I'm starting to get stronger and I'm seeing some better things in my game. So I'm excited about where my game is headed and again excited for this week because of what it is and what it means to us. So hopefully, you put all those things together and get me past Friday night's concert without too many good times and then we should be all right.

**Q. You just mentioned Jerry. You helped him with his putting last weekend. How does that factor into your relationship with him and to this week's event?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, well, first of all, we're friends. We've been friend for a lot of years. I was just telling somebody else we played junior golf together back in the early '80s and that's a long time ago all of a sudden.

But we love his family. Carol's been going through some tough times and so we've been trying to help and be there for them for that. They have a boy that's a similar age to our oldest, so we've always been friends. We're starting to do a little bit more together. Went out to dinner the other night while we were on the road. We love the family, we love how they are, how they act. Great family man in Jerry and he's always been very good to us. So we

have a nice relationship.

It was great to see him play well because I know he's been struggling a little bit prior to winning last week. I think it was just mainly his putting and it was nice to see him up there on top again and get a W.

**Q. Second biggest story in golf this week is over in London.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah.

**Q. And I'm wondering what your overall thoughts are about what's going on. Seems like there's some kind of development almost by the hour with that LIV Golf.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, it does. Yeah, it's a crazy time in the world of golf, isn't it?

I really don't know what to think about it. We've talked about it, Nicki and I and Mario and my family, we've talked about it a lot and if I was put in that position, what would I do kind of thing.

Morally, I don't think I could do it, but that's me talking right now when I'm 55, right? If I was in the prime when I was playing well, got offered a crap load of money like they're getting offered, would it be different, and that's hard for me to answer that. Personally, morally, right now I'm not a big fan. It seems, you know, I hate to say it, but it seems a little bit like a member-guest, it really does. It doesn't feel right to me. There's no history there, shotgun starts.

They're playing for a lot of money and I'm not begrudging the guys that are going over there to play this tour, but for me personally, I'm having a hard time wrapping my head around it.

I've always -- I'm not a Hall of Fame guy, I'm not a guy who won any majors or anything like that, but I played and I was able to compare myself, my time on Tour with the greats of the game and what did they do, you know? Right now there isn't any of that in this LIV tour, it's all about -- it's all about money. We all need it, right, and to some degree others need it more than others. Everybody's different.

Yeah, it seems like it has some momentum. There's some more guys that have come out, so I guess we're just going to have to wait and see how it all shakes out. I'm happy where I'm at, I'm happy I'm still able to play here. The Tour has obviously provided a lot for me and my family over the course of my career, even this tournament here. I owe a lot to the Tour and what we did through the course of my career on Tour. I just don't know if I could throw that all away and go play somewhere else.

**Q. If I could just ask a follow-up, would your decision have been a lot tougher in '03, '04, '05 when you were struggling, lost your status? Would that have made it a more difficult decision if you had been thrown in that situation then?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** You mean if I was struggling with my game and I got offered a lot of money?

**Q. Yeah, like back 20 years ago.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Again, I keep trying to put myself in that different kind of position and I don't know what the answer would be, I really don't. We're all in this to make money, it's a business deal, but I also look at the other end of it as the history part of the game. I've been a part of something for close to 30 years. I've been fortunate and able to play this great tour. I wouldn't change that for anything.

I'm glad it didn't come around during the time where I could have been offered an opportunity to go over there. I don't know what I would have done, I really don't. Yeah, it's a tough question, right? I don't know if there's a right and a wrong answer, but I'm with the Tour, I'm with the PGA Tour. I fully support the Tour and what they are about, the charitable dollars. I mean, I don't know if there's any charity money going to the first event in the LIV event at all, but I know there is right here and I know there is on a weekly basis out on Tour. That's an important part of the puzzle, an important piece of what's going on, especially here. I wouldn't change it.

**Q. Steve, I know you kind of circled this date on your calendar. If nothing else, you wanted to be back for this tournament, too. What do you expect to feel just back with your home fans cheering you on this weekend?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, we're excited, always excited to be here, but it adds another level of expectation, like I said. And I haven't done very well with that in years past. I would like to think that I can handle that a little bit better and just kind of treat it like a normal event, but it's one that I really want to win badly. It's one that's got our name on it and it's one that I would love to win right here in Madison. So that's the goal, that's the objective and hopefully I can handle all that exterior stuff a little bit better than I have.

**Q. Steve, you and Jerry share so much advice back and forth. Have you ever talked about that, specifically how difficult it is to play in this event because you want to win it so badly, and he's obviously broken through and gotten past that? Is that a conversation you guys have had?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** No, we haven't, but I know he really enjoys that part of the puzzle or that piece. He really feels a lot of energy from the crowd. And so do I. Don't get me wrong, I do, too.

But I think, I don't know. No, we haven't talked about it, to answer your question, and maybe I should to get some pointers from him. There's times when you get your game going in the right direction, you can really feel that energy from the crowd and the people and they're pulling you along and then when you're not, you can almost feel it going the other way. So

it's a fine line and playing well takes care of it all is kind of what I'm thinking, but he's done very well with that.

**Q. Have you ever had a chance to step back and think how cool this is? I mean, your golf swing is on the silhouette back here for the logo and the tournament does have your name involved with it. Did you ever step back and think how cool it is for a kid from Edgerton to come up here and then to be able to do this?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, for sure, we think about it all the time. Yeah, it's something that when I sat in Jack's Salzwedel's office eight, 10 years ago to throw ideas around to see what we could do to raise money for our foundation and this is what we came up with, yeah, it's been a very rewarding thing that we do on a yearly basis. And we get to look forward to this each and every year.

Yeah, again, you don't -- like I said, it goes back to almost that LIV question. This wouldn't have been possible without the Tour, right? Giving back to charity, very important piece of why we're doing this for all these local charities here in our community. That's why we're doing it. And we've got an unbelievable sponsor in American Family Insurance and the relationship I have with them is really good. We work well together. To see the faces of the charities when we give the money in December and the children's hospital is very special to all of us, so very rewarding. Way bigger than any win that I've ever had on Tour. So this is a special week for all of us.

**Q. Jerry's been pretty much a machine on the Champions Tour, as have you, but going even back to Jerry's days on the PGA Tour, he made a million cuts, won a few times. Do you think he's been underrated maybe by a lot of people as one of the best players out here?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** I don't -- I don't know -- no, I see him as a real contender each and every week. When he's playing well, he drives it extremely straight, good iron player. He's streaky with the putter, but when he's putting well, he's very good. Good short game, good wedge player. His all-around game is very good. And I think through the course of his career he's been very, very good. I think he's won three times on the regular Tour, but he has this little bulldog mentality. He's a fighter. He's a hockey player and that's what he learned growing up and he took it to the golf game.

So I don't think he's underrated. I think we all know what he's capable of doing and we expect him to play well and he's a great competitor and a great player out here. He's definitely one of the guys to beat here this week, he's proven that.

Thank you, everybody. Have a good week.