

MEDIA DAY
May 16, 2023



JIM BUCCHEIM
STEVE STRICKER
NATE POKRASS

JIM BUCCHEIM: Well, I know I'm ready for a great AmFam Champ week and I hope that you are as well.

I want to introduce our media day participants to you at this time. I'll start with our tournament host, Steve Stricker -- congrats on your major win Sunday, Steve -- and then also tournament director Nate Pokrass.

I also want to acknowledge the members of the Steve Stricker American Family Insurance Foundation board: Steve Stricker, Nicki Stricker, Bill Westrate and Dan Kelly.

I also want to acknowledge Nikki Stafford. Nikki's president of the American Family Children's Hospital. As you know, the American Family Children's Hospital is the primary beneficiary of proceeds from the AmFam Champ. It's great to have Nikki with us representing all the doctors, nurses and staff who are doing amazing things to support kids and families every day at AFCH.

Our 2022 defending champion, Thongchai Jaidee, was not able to join us this morning, but you will hear from him in a little bit by video.

I do want to tell you American Family Insurance is incredibly proud to sponsor the event here for the seventh year in 2023, and as I say that, I want to make one more acknowledgment and that's to Jack Salzwedel, who's there in the back of the room. Jack is our former CEO and still board chair of the American Family Insurance. He is instrumental in making this tournament happen, so great to see you, Jack, and great to have you here.

And since our inaugural event in 2016 we've raised nearly \$15 million for charity donated via 700 grants to American Family Children's Hospital and other local charities that are supporting youth and healthy families. We're very grateful for the opportunity to assist these organizations that are doing impactful work in our community while we also put on an elite PGA Tour Champions event that has really strong and positive economic impact locally and also provides a really great fan experience. We continue to be humbled by the incredible community support and sponsor support that we receive year after year as well.

Also, on behalf of the tournament team and PGA TOUR Champions, I want to thank all the members of the media for being here, for your ongoing interest and for all the coverage that you provide for the championship.

I'm going to -- for the kind of format today, I'm going to ask a couple questions of Nate, we're going to hear from our champion, our 2022 champion via video, have a couple questions for Steve, then we'll announce our AmFam Championship celebrity foursome, and then we'll open it up to the group of media for your questions.

So, Nate, I'm going to start with you and just ask you to highlight what are the things that you want to highlight and call out about this year's tournament?

NATE POKRASS: Thank you, Jim. As we enter our seventh American Family Insurance Championship, we continue to focus on a fan-friendly, first-class experience for the fans that are attending the tournament. We'll continue to have all our hospitality venues built on the finishing holes -- 14, 15, 17 and 18 -- which will make for an exciting finish, and really continue to focus on fan-friendly pricing, reasonable ticket prices, kids 17 and under free, continue to focus on concession prices being extremely reasonable. We're certainly focused on the fan and want to provide an outstanding experience for them as they attend the tournament for the seventh year.

JIM BUCCHEIM: Can you share more about the tournament field? I know we don't get the field finalized until the Friday before the tournament, sometimes maybe not even until the Monday or Tuesday of tournament week, but what can you tell us about the tournament field so far?

NATE POKRASS: Yeah, we're expecting the tournament field to continue to come together and have one of the best fields throughout the entire year. We've got one of the highest nonmajor purses at \$2.4 million on that front.

We continue to hear great feedback from the players and all certainly want to attend Madison. We know health impacts many of them as it comes down to the final stretch, but all we're hearing at this stage is that we'll have a great field. At this point most of our past champions have already committed from Kirk Triplett, Scott McCarron, of course Madison's own Jerry Kelly and Thongchai Jaidee will be returning and we're certainly hopeful Fred Couples will be attending as well.

JIM BUCCHEIM: You and your team are putting on more than just a golf tournament that week. Can you talk about the other activities that are going on during tournament week?

NATE POKRASS: Yeah, we really have continued to focus on a week-long celebration here in Madison and we'll kick it off with the 5K run on the University Ridge cross-country course that will start on the Saturday before. That will of course lead into pro-ams and tournament action. Friday night June 9th, right across the street here at Breese Stevens Field, Tyler Hubbard of Florida Georgia Line will put on a great show. And as we'll discuss here in a minute, we've got an exciting celebrity foursome that we know is always a fan favorite.

JIM BUCCHEIM: Thanks, Nate. Thanks for all the work that you and your team do to put on

an amazing week of activities, both great golf and entertainment that culminates in the crowning of our 2023 champion on Sunday, June 11th.

Speaking of champions, we have a few words from our 2022 defending champion that we'll share at this time.

(Video played of Thongchai Jaidee.)

JIM BUCCHEIM: Great to have Thongchai Jaidee as our champion, the first champion from Thailand on PGA TOUR Champions, and as you can tell, a great supporter of the tournament as well.

Now we want to go to another champion, five-time major champion on PGA Tour Champions.

Steve, I'm going to start with this question, and that is when you're introduced on the first tee at University Ridge on Friday, June 9th, would you like us to say, "Welcome to Greystone Country Club and the final round of the Regions Tradition," just to get you in the frame of mind where you can stripe every drive right down the fairway and knock it close on the greens and roll 64s and 65s?

STEVE STRICKER: If you can manage that, I would take that, yeah. I've gotten some texts from players these last few days that maybe I should buy some real estate in Birmingham.

No, but it was another special week last week. Obviously look forward to the AmFam Championship.

JIM BUCCHEIM: Can you talk a little bit more about the Regions win? As I was watching on the weekend, Saturday you've got four, five holes to play, you're down four strokes. Sunday you get the trophy, you win by six strokes. Have you had -- seen that kind of turnaround and was there something that clicked on that back nine that led to 30 on the back nine and 65 the following day?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, good question. I think just the putter got going, I started making some putts. I've been hitting it very nicely the last few weeks, burning a lot of edges on the green, so finally I got some to go in and I felt a lot of momentum.

Out there you're kind of a few holes away from getting right back in the tournament at times, so I felt like on Saturday, if I could just birdie a couple holes coming in, I'd have a good chance on Sunday. Then made four really nice putts and then got off to a really hot start on Sunday.

Yeah, that stretch of seven holes, seven birdies was really the game changer and what led me to win the tournament.

JIM BUCCHEIM: Let's talk now a little bit about the AmFam Championship. How do you feel about how this tournament has developed over the seven years, and what are you hearing from some of your fellow Champions Tour competitors about this tournament?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I think it's beyond all our expectations. I know when I sat in with Jack and we dreamt of bringing tournament golf or something to our area, I don't think we ever imagined where we're at today. The amount of money that we've been able to give back to not only Children's Hospital but all these other charities in our area, it's a very special feeling. And the players feel that, too, when they come here. The fans are so supportive of all the guys that are here, they come out and turn out in larger numbers than what we normally see on a normal tournament week.

That tells you that the area, the sponsor obviously, you guys, are totally vested into this event and the players feel that and that's what makes them want to come here and play.

JIM BUCCHEIM: Thanks, Steve. I'm sure members of the media will have more questions for you in a moment, but now we want to announce this year's AmFam Championship celebrity foursome hosted by Andy North. Andy was unable to be with us today, he's actually at the PGA Championship, but we do want to thank him for his involvement in making this tournament such a success and for serving as a tournament ambassador since 2016. You'll see I think in this year's celebrity foursome that there's a bit of a theme emerging for the participants that will join Andy and that theme is "captain."

So I'll start with our first participant that's joining Andy in the foursome. He's a great friend of the AmFam Championship, popular fan favorite, he's returning in 2023, he is called The Captain, Hall of Famer, 14-time All-Star, five-time World Series champion for the New York Yankees and an American Family Insurance brand ambassador, Derek Jeter. It's great to have Derek back with us again for the AmFam Championship celebrity foursome.

We do have two new players joining us this year for the first time. Our first new player is also a captain, we're pleased to welcome 12-time PGA TOUR winner and a winner of both the Masters and The Open Championship, and this year's Ryder Cup captain, Zach Johnson.

Steve, you played with Zach, I think you've played in his charity event a few times. Any comments about your friendship with Zach and the kind of transition that you've had from you being Ryder Cup captain last time to Zach being Ryder Cup captain this year?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, very special to have Zach with us. First of all, a great guy, great friend, nice family man. Obviously he's the captain of the Ryder Cup team this year, I'm an assistant, so we'll be spending some time together. I've always enjoyed the company of Zach. And he was so gracious to say yes for him to come here and give up some of his time and to help support our cause just like he puts on an event down in his hometown of Iowa there and much the same thing. So he understands, he gives back and he's doing much the same for us here AmFam week.

JIM BUCCHEIM: I'll introduce our last player, who is not only the captain of his Olympic team, but he is considered to be one of the world's greatest athletes and is the most decorated Olympic athlete of all time with 28 medals, 23 of them gold. He also loves the game of golf. We're pleased to announce our fourth player in the celebrity foursome is Michael Phelps.

Steve, what do you think: Andy, Zach Johnson, Derek Jeter, Michael Phelps?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's quite a foursome, isn't it? Again, it's a testament to what you guys are doing here at the tournament level, what Nate and his team are doing and what we're doing as a whole to give back to our community and these people, all these celebrities feel the urge to help out and bring awareness and recognition to our tournament to help raise more charitable dollars. Super excited about where we're at with these four guys and look forward to having them out there and the fans being able to experience their golf.

JIM BUCCHEIM: I think it will be a great foursome, I'm really looking forward to it.

Before we open it up to questions, I do have some information for the members of the media here. First is remember to apply for credentials by June 3rd for access to the media center at University Ridge. You can contact Janet Masters on the media relations team if you have any questions.

You can also visit the "For Media" page on our tournament website, AmFamChampionship.com. That will have additional media information for you and a transcription of today's event.

The news release about the celebrity foursome will be posted and distributed later this afternoon, but you can pick up a hard copy of that release at the registration table if you would like.

Now we will open it up to members of the media for your questions to Steve and Nate.

Q. Steve, congrats on the win last week end. What's your confidence level at right now, just obviously being on the top of the Cup standings as well, just going into this tournament, how do you feel?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I feel great. Got a couple more tournaments before AmFam week, but this whole putter grip change was starting to feel a lot better. That's been kind of what's been holding me back a little bit of late is just not making enough putts. Changed the putter grip on there, seemed to help a little bit.

Yeah, I feel good about my game, I've been hitting it really nicely and finally made some putts the last few days of this tournament to give me the win.

Obviously look forward to AmFam week and hopefully do much the same there and play well

and make some putts. It would be nice to get out on top and be the winner of this event one time before the end of my career, so it would be a special one.

Q. Hi, Steve. Congratulations. I'm thinking about wearing a Speedo now that Michael Phelps is coming on Saturday. Is that cool with you?

STEVE STRICKER: I don't want to see that.

Q. Nobody wants to see that. June is going to be crazy with the AmFam and then the U.S. Senior Open here in the state of Wisconsin. How tough will it be for you mentally to prepare for all of that with crowds and family and such?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's a challenge, but it's also a fun time to be able to participate, play in these tournaments here not only in Madison but then again up at SentryWorld, another major championship up there.

Yeah, it's a challenge. You've got to handle all the duties that come with that, but it's also a lot of fun stuff that comes with that, too. I'm in the point in time in my career where I can kind of shrug it off. GMO-time back in the day I had a harder time with it, I think. I think now I'm trying to enjoy it more and just go with it.

So it will be much the same, try to deal with my expectations probably more than anything because I'd love to win both of those events. Yeah, I think it's just kind of managing those and trying to get into my normal process like I get into each and every week.

Q. Steve, I think a lot of people would like to know what an assistant captain for a Ryder Cup team does, so what will your duties be, and will you go over there early or will you go over there just when the event starts?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, that's a good question. It looks like we may try to get over there early for a practice round kind of deal, still trying to get that worked out. So I may be making a couple trips over there, but I'm definitely going. I was a proponent when I was the captain to get all the guys here, spend some time together for a couple days at Whistling Straits, build that chemistry, get that part out of the way so when they come back that they're ready to go, they've seen the course a little bit, they don't have to jam in practice rounds. That was a big deal for my team, so Zach is going to do the same thing. I surely want to be there to help support him and do that.

As many people as we can get to go over there early, assistant captains as well, I'll be over there. Looks like I'll be making a couple trips, which will affect my playing schedule a little bit, but it's all for a good reason, right? We haven't won over there for I think 30 years, so it's an important Ryder Cup for us.

Q. So you talk about all the stuff of trying to get in the mindset for the different events. You're also the assistant on the Ryder Cup. How do you mentally put all that

together with everything going on and juggling it? It seems like you always have your foot somewhere else at the same time.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it seems that way of late, and then family stuff, right? My daughters are both playing so I try to make sure that I spend a lot of time with them to make sure that I'm a dad, a father as well.

Yeah, it's busy. I like to be busy, I'm not a guy who just sits around and does nothing. I'm always doing something. It's just getting it all, juggling it all in the proper order, I guess, and making sure that I have time for everything that I want to do. Then when it comes down to the golf part, that I've got to make sure that that's my time that I need to try to do the things that I need to do to prepare and get ready.

That's the part that I've struggled with over the years I think on some of the local events is just because of the expectation level and you get out of your routine a little bit. Hopefully I can manage that a little bit better this year and hopefully play well at these two that are in our state.

Q. Steve, Nate mentioned seven years, you mentioned talking with Jack. Obviously you had grand visions and, like you said, it's been more than a dream to put this thing on for those seven years, but was there always part of you that was like, man, this is a lot and if we get this thing to last a few years it would be really cool, and now it's just unbelievable?

STEVE STRICKER: You know, it's -- I just show up, it's these guys, these guys do all the work. Nate has put together an unbelievable team and the support from AmFam starting with Jack and now Bill and Jim and Dan and all the people that are involved, all the media people that are here through AmFam, I mean, it takes a team effort and I'm at the bottom of the team because they're taking on the brunt of everything.

It's pretty easy for me to come in, they let me do my thing. I play golf, I come in and support them. They're the ones doing all the heavy lifting and making sure everything is done right and correctly to put on an event that we put on the last seven years.

My thanks is to them and hats off to them for what they've done and been able to do to be able to give back. And that's their company, right? They give back and they're supportive in their community. You see it everywhere in the state. Shoot, even nationwide they're everywhere I go, I see their name pop up. That's the commitment they made and I made that commitment to them and they just keep knocking it out of the ballpark.

Q. A pretty good player turns 50 in three years and has hinted that he's going to play on the Champions Tour a little bit. Have you had any preliminary arm twisting with him? Have you talked to him about it and if so, can you share what he might have said?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, I'm hoping that he's just healthy enough to be able to come play at some point, I think that's first and foremost.

I talked to Miller Brady, the commissioner of the Champions Tour, last year. I'm like, we should lower this age to 47 real quick. I texted Tiger that, it was actually last year at AmFam, and I said, how about if we lower the age to 47, will you come play this next year? And he's like, nope. He's like -- and this speaks to his mentality, he's like, everybody started at age 50, those guys who won 45 times, they started at age 50. He's like, I want to start at age 50.

So hopefully his mindset, you know, is such that he'll be able to play golf, he'll be able to come support some of these events. We'll see after this last surgery how that all plays out. Yeah, we're sure hoping that he's going to be healthy enough to be able to come here.

Q. Steve, I know it will be a couple years but I'm just wondering how you feel about AmFam eventually moving to TPC Wisconsin, a course that you designed and that's your home.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's built on the marsh. Cherokee was always tight so there's a lot of water. It's a lot different than University Ridge, but I think it's going to be another great fan experience because you can literally see across the whole golf course. And the areas that we really tried to make special were up around the clubhouse thinking that people won't have to move very far, they could come do 16, 17, 18 kind of thing. 16's a drivable par 4 right, the tee box is right by the clubhouse, 17 is the shortest par 3 with water right up next to the green but huge, going to be a huge viewing area for Nate to put all the stands and surround that just like we do at 17 here at University Ridge, and then 18 shoots right back up to the clubhouse again with a lot of area for stands and people to watch.

I think it's going to be really exciting. I hope the players like it. I'm going to try and sneak out there this week and hit a few drivers off the tees to see how it really looks and plays. Those two things don't always match up, something may look pretty but it may play awful. So I'm hoping -- it's definitely going to look pretty and I think that extra year of growth and growing in, having the TPC Wisconsin be able to have a year under their belt before we get there is going to be a good thing. I'm excited for it and yeah, looking forward to that.

Q. Steve, you mentioned earlier the support that the Madison community gives this tournament. What do you think you guys do overall that brings the support in or maybe something different that you do from other Champions Tour tournaments?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, first of all, it starts with a good sponsor. I keep saying that, but it really does. It takes a good sponsor to put on an event of this magnitude.

Then next comes in line the volunteers, you can't put on an event without volunteers. Nate was telling me we've already got 900-some volunteers, so the community is supporting of the event.

And you've got to find the community that it works. Sometimes if we go to a big city on this Champions Tour, it just doesn't work. I think this kind of market, a smaller yet supportive of golf city, it's perfect for this kind of event. It's a golf-crazed city, there's a lot of golf courses, people like to play and I think you add all that up together and it makes for a nice event, great event.

JIM BUCCHEIM: I'll just throw in it doesn't hurt when you have a host like Steve Stricker, I think that brings out the local folks. The fact that you've got another touring pro in Jerry Kelly, I think that draws a lot of support.

Then I'm going to highlight American Family Children's Hospital, the fact that we have a primary sponsor with a world-class children's hospital right here in the City of Madison, that draws a lot of both local support, and we have partners who want to participate in this event as well because they want to support the children's hospital also.

So there are some other things I think at play here, but certainly I think Steve is part of that as well.

Q. Steve, you talk about the support you get from the community, but the other thing that's very noticeable with you is the support you have from your family. You talked about it about trying to balance things. They're with you with the TPC, they're with you with your golf game, they're with you when you were the captain. How big is that to the success of your game and this tournament, et cetera?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, very much so. That's kind of what we are as a family, we're a golf family. We play a lot even when we're home, we're playing together for the most part. Yeah, so we're all supportive of each other and that just reflects in them wanting to be with me when I'm on the road and I'll do the same when they go and play. Yeah, it's special for us.

My daughter Bobbi's on the road, Nicki's with her, she's getting in a couple Epson Tour events the next couple weeks, so Nicki's down supporting her. We all can't be together all the time, but when we are, we're very supportive of each other. We get a lot of, I don't know the right word, satisfaction from that. We enjoy spending time with each other and playing the game.

JIM BUCCHEIM: Any other questions from members of the media?

Once again I want to thank you for being here today and we look forward to seeing you at the 2023 American Family Insurance Championship in June. Our formal conference as ended. Folks will be around and available for additional questions if you would like. Once again thank you for being here, look forward to seeing you in less than a month.