

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
June 9, 2023



STEVE STRICKER (-7)

Q. OK, Steve, great round today. Again, I'm sure you're aware, but you now have the most consecutive rounds of par or better in PGA TOUR history across all Tour-sanctioned events. Just what does that mean to you? You're playing so well, you're reminded of that this week. Did that weigh on you today, because you played great?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it was brought up to me the last couple weeks that I was getting close to that record. And I really hadn't thought about it, I didn't even know where I was in regards to that. Yeah, so then you're thinking about it, right?

But when I went out today, I wasn't focused on that, I was just trying to get a good round under my belt, shoot a good round, get up in contention. I saw Justin Leonard going deep, so that motivates me to get as many birdies as I can because you don't want to fall too far behind.

It really wasn't on my mind, but anytime you can pass Tiger Woods in something that, and I may text him and just remind him that I did pass him.

No, seriously, I'm proud of that. I would have rather done that on the regular Tour, but to do it out here is even special, too.

Q. Awesome. Being back in Madison, great weather, great fans. Just what was the turnout like today?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, incredible turnout. Ernie and Steven Alker playing today, they both said it, how nice the people are and how supportive they are. And the turnout we had and a wonderful day, right? It was perfect, a picture perfect day, so it was all good today out there.

Q. You were among the guys who thought the course might play a little tougher, I think yesterday you were talking about that, but when you see a guy get to 10 under and you're out there, what does that do to your approach and your mindset?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, yeah, I think the first part of the course did. I mean, 4, 5, those holes played into the wind but there's still birdies to be had out there. And on the back nine there's a lot of short irons in your hand and those opportunities. The greens are rolling so good that when the guys are getting them on there, they're making a lot of putts.

But again, when you see somebody doing that, you have the confidence that it's out there

and you can be a little bit more aggressive and try to get 'em.

Q. No. 9 looked like you played up to a number and then hit a wedge close and that's what you did a lot at Frisco. Is that something you're doing more of now in terms of taking advantage of what a lot of people believe is your strength with the wedge?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, I hit it in the bunker off the tee. If I would have hit it in a place to go for it, I would have gone for it there because there's definitely a reward to go for No. 9 and get it up there up on top. It's firm where you can roll that up there if you hit into that hill, like those guys did that I was playing with today. I didn't really hit that good of a drive. I didn't feel very good about my driver for some reason early on, I hit a couple just kind of drives to try to get them in the fairway, didn't really let them rip, and then on the back nine I started to swing at it a little bit more aggressively and get them out there.

I don't feel bad laying up to a wedge. I had 110 yards there and it was into the wind, hit just a little chip wedge and got the right distance.

But that is a strength and that's something that I'm not worried about if I do have to lay up.

Q. You've been in this position before on a Friday as far as standing here talking with you.

STEVE STRICKER: And then REO Speedwagon came to town?

Q. Yes, and things went downhill fast, right? How do you prevent that and how do you look forward to this weekend? What are you looking for?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, I'm going to go to the concert, first of all, but I already told myself there's a limit. I'm not telling you what the limit is, but there's a limit.

Q. More than one?

STEVE STRICKER: There's more than one but less than six. But no, we have friends coming. It's just a great atmosphere to be a part of and go there and see some of my friends and people and see everybody enjoying what's going on here, so it's hard not to partake in what we've got going tonight. So I'll be there, but I've learned my lesson.

Q. Steve, similar kind of vein, you've talked about the importance of starting fast here and getting a good round under your belt on a Friday. Just how good does that feel to give you some momentum going into the weekend as opposed to having to chase on the weekend?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, very much so, and it looks like you're going to have to keep the pedal down here. Well, Sunday we've got some weather coming in maybe so it will be a little bit different, but tomorrow looks like another nice day.

Yeah, it's good to get off to a good start. One round, we've got two more, but looks like you're going to have to keep it going the way the scores are. I'm excited about the start.

Q. Steve, your volunteer pool has about a thousand this year and it's always bringing a lot of people back, but 15 states represented as well.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, isn't that crazy?

Q. What could you really say about the dedication and why it means to have such a great volunteer base?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it is, it really is. Gail Perla, who runs our volunteer group, she's been doing this for a number of years, GMO and she's got it down to a pad. And everybody loves her and she does a wonderful job.

And that's what I hear from the players, everybody's so nice and welcoming and excited to be here and that just rubs off on everybody. The volunteers are the best, they have so much enthusiasm and they're so happy to help and be here. They know it's all going for great causes. It's pretty cool to see everybody's excitement level when we go around.

Q. How did Bobbi end up on the bag for Freddie when she's never looped for you on this tour?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, isn't that something? A couple weeks ago Freddie reached out to me and said, hey, would one of your girls caddie for me, and I'm like, well, I can check, but they're not too good with addition and subtraction. I know Freddie doesn't carry a book. I'm like, you may have to carry a book. He's like, I just love your girls, either one of them would be great.

So we thought Bobbi would be a good fit for him and they get -- they call him Grandpa Fred. They've gotten to know him and we've spent more and more time with him, and he's just a really nice guy, especially to my girls and me and Nicki.

I hope it was fun. I saw Bobbi in there for a split second, she had a big smile on her face, so I think it was a good day. Yeah, what an opportunity for Bobbi to go around with a Hall of Famer up close and personal and watch how these guys are playing because she's trying to do the same thing.

Q. She got called in to read two putts.

STEVE STRICKER: Oh, did she really? Did he make 'em?

Q. She didn't say that.