

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
**July 26, 2023**

**SEPP STRAKA**



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**HALEY PETERSON:** Afternoon. We would like to welcome Sepp Straka to the 3M Open.

Sepp, you're coming off an exciting week last week at The Open. Just want to start off with some comments about how you're feeling.

**SEPP STRAKA:** Yeah, last week was awesome, it was a great time. It was an incredible golf course, probably one of my favorite links courses I've played. Yeah, it was a great time. Sunday was special. Playing with Tommy with his home crowd was pretty cool to watch, and yeah, had a great time over there and thankfully also a good finish.

**HALEY PETERSON:** Long travel back, now on central time, how are you feeling, how are you adjusting?

**SEPP STRAKA:** Much better now. I went to a Twins game last night, that kind of kept me up, helped with the jet lag a little bit. Then yeah, felt much better this morning waking up.

**HALEY PETERSON:** Making your third start here after taking a break last year. What's it like to be back and what do you like about this course?

**SEPP STRAKA:** I think it's a great course. It's a lot of fun. You can make a lot of birdies out there, but there's a lot of water and a lot of trouble, so you definitely have to be pretty accurate with your play. I think it's a really well designed course and it's in incredible shape.

**HALEY PETERSON:** Good stretch of golf like we just talked about, runner-up at The Open and a win at the John Deere Classic, No. 15 in the FedExCup points. How's your game feeling?

**SEPP STRAKA:** It feels good. I'm hitting the ball pretty well, I've been putting the ball pretty well and things have been kind of coming together the last few tournaments. Yeah, hopefully I can keep that rolling.

**HALEY PETERSON:** With a win already, how does it kind of change goals for the remainder of the season?

**SEPP STRAKA:** It definitely changes a little bit, but the goal is to, you know, play as well as you can, get as high in the FedEx as you can, give yourself a chance come Atlanta. First goal is to make it to Atlanta.

**Q. Sepp, a lot of guys this week are having to make up some ground just to get into**



**the FedExCup. As you just mentioned, you're already in there, but how does that then influence how you approach these next two events?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** I think obviously the results that you want out of the events changes, but I think the approach to them doesn't really change, you've just got to prepare to play the golf course and prepare to compete. So yeah, I don't think the approach of actually playing the course or playing the tournament changes at all, but obviously the results you're looking for does change.

**Q. Does it take any of the pressure off knowing you don't have to worry about that component?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** For sure, that definitely helps. You know, you don't want to think about situations like that adding pressure, but they always do. And I've been in that situation plenty of times and I know it is a little bit harder to kind of keep your mind on focusing on the tournament and your preparations for the tournament instead of just trying to play a good tournament. That definitely helps having that pressure off.

**Q. I realize this is a long way off, but it's a year from today that the Olympics will start. Have you thought at all about what it would mean to you to be able to once again represent your country in the Olympics?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** Yeah, for sure. Paris I think is going to be incredible for the Olympic venue. I have not played that course but I've heard it's an incredible golf course and really looking forward to kind of preparing for that one.

**Q. Looking ahead just a couple months with the Ryder Cup coming up, have you let your mind wander to that at all, the chance to possibly be a part of the European team?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** Yeah, you definitely think about it. I've been thinking about it for a while now, but you just can't really let it affect your play. You still have to play just good golf and hopefully you either qualify outright or get picked. Yeah, my goal is to just play some good golf up until then and hopefully I can make that team.

**Q. Especially after the last couple of tournaments with the win and then runner-up at The Open, have you had any conversations with Luke or any other European member of the team talking about possibly what could be the next steps for you?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** Yeah, he was out there last week, saw him during the practice round and talked to him for a little bit, but mostly just small talk. He texted me after the week and he's been in touch. Yeah, Luke's a great guy and obviously would love to play for him, but yeah, just got to play some good golf until then and kind of make that happen.

**Q. You mentioned you're in a comfortable position. I'm just curious your thought**



**process of playing this week and why play instead of take some rest?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** I made the decision to play when was it -- before the John Deere and my "maybe" was going to be Wyndham; I might either take Wyndham off or continue to play if I needed to rack up some points. Then I won John Deere and I decided to just take Wyndham off. You know, I get that week off, but my game's in a good shape, I feel like it's good to stay competitive going into the Playoffs. I'll have next week off to kind of recharge the batteries, but hopefully this will help keep me sharp for the Playoffs.

**Q. Anything particular about here or this course about why you decided to play this week?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** It's a really good course, I love it. It's in great shape, too. I like courses where you have to be very accurate. I feel like it rewards good play, good shots. I mean, the greens are so good you can make putts from anywhere. I think it's a great venue and it will be a good week.

**Q. A lot of heat out there and then we got some storms overnight. What does the course look like and what did the weather do to the course?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** I mean, I didn't even realize, I was out. The jet lag hit me pretty good last night. No, I was out, I didn't even realize it stormed until I woke up. The course, you couldn't tell either. It's in great shape, the fairways are perfect. It's a little bit soft, but not even to the point where you'd really even really think about it. Yeah, no, it's in incredible shape.

**Q. I remember talking to you at BMW last year and you were really looking forward to your first time at East Lake. Seems like probably going to be your second year at East Lake this year. Just wondering has your expectation or the way that you look at yourself or your career changed at all over the last 18 months?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** I feel like expectations change a little bit, but not really. You still just try to play good golf. There's a lot of good tournaments that you just want to contend in and the goal is always to try to put yourself on the back nine with a chance. So yeah, it hasn't really changed too much. I still just try to improve my golf game on a weekly, monthly, yearly basis. That part hasn't really changed at all?

**Q. Just going to pivot a little bit, fellow Georgia Bulldog here, just want to know what you think Georgia's record's going to be this year.**

**SEPP STRAKA:** 15-0.

**Q. Love to hear it.**

**SEPP STRAKA:** Got to have high expectations there, too. Looking like we'll have a pretty good squad again, I hope the offense clicks like it did last year.



**Q. This may have been asked already, but last week at The Open I think you got within maybe four or three through about 14 maybe. Were you -- how were you thinking at that point? Were you thinking if I could just sneak one more in there you might pressure Brian a little bit?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** You want to think that, but it was playing tough. The rain was all day, constant. It was really hard to kind of force the issue because you were standing there with a lot of 4-irons, 5-irons into par 4s and it's hard to really be aggressive with that especially when it's raining.

Yeah, I felt like I did everything I could on Sunday to give myself a chance, the only thing is Brian needed to not have a good day. I was so impressed with what he did on Sunday in those conditions. I mean, everything was set up for him to come back to the field and he was relentless and just kept making putts, kept hitting good shots and really never gave us any sort of hope or chance. I felt like I did what I needed to do, but Brian did not cooperate.

**Q. Is there a reason why you haven't played in your usual Tuesday games in a while with J.T. Poston and Patton Kizzire?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** In the --

**Q. Tuesday games?**

**SEPP STRAKA:** Oh, the Tuesday games. This week they were on -- I did play with Patton Tuesday, yeah. Is there a reason why I do play with them?

**Q. Because J.T. was asking why you haven't played lately. I talked to him.**

**SEPP STRAKA:** Yeah, J.T.'s been -- he's been escaping me a little bit. I think he might be scared, I don't know. I never get the Monday text with him. I played with Patton this Tuesday and no J.T. to be found. Yeah, we'll have to try to reconvene on Tuesday of Memphis maybe.

**HALEY PETERSON:** Thank you, Sepp, and we wish you the best of luck this week.

**SEPP STRAKA:** Thank you.

