

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
August 24, 2023

STEVE STRICKER



CONNOR STANGE: Steve, thank you for joining us here at the Ally Challenge, the defending champion. Just to start, how does it feel to be back here at Warwick Hills?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's always fun to come back. You know, I've had a lot of time off the last few weeks, so this has been on my mind to come back. Have good memories coming back, it was a great tournament for myself and Nicki last year here. It's exciting to be back here again.

CONNOR STANGE: Last time we saw you on PGA TOUR Champions you were hoisting the trophy at Firestone. How have you spent the last three weeks?

STEVE STRICKER: It's actually been longer than that I feel like. I feel like I've been away for a long time.

But it's been good, I've done a lot of different things. Did some fishing, did some caddying for one of my girls, watched some golf with the other girls. I've been busy, staying busy, doing some fun things and doing some golf things.

Q. Kaulig is a golf course that's a lot like this one, tree-lined. I was down there and got to play. You won that, you're defending champion here. Do you like the old-fashioned country club tree-lined courses? Does that play well to your game?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah. I think, yeah, I enjoy these. We don't get to play a lot of these old-school golf courses and especially golf courses that we played on during the regular Tour. It's kind of extra special to be able to come back and play again at a tournament that we played, you know, years and years ago on. Same with Firestone, very similar situation.

Yeah, I enjoy it. I haven't been out here yet this year. I heard it's in great shape and look forward to getting out there for nine holes this afternoon.

Q. If I can ask one more. You're already halfway to the Champions Tour for major victories, you're just about there in just like, what, three years or so. Is that the ultimate goal is to have that -- to have the most wins for majors? Is that part of your main goal or is that just a subset that you just want to have some golfing excellence for the next 10 years?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, 10 years, I like that attitude, 10 years. It seems like we're running out of time out here.

Yeah, to continue to play as long as you can. I'm just trying to take advantage of good play. You don't know how long you're going to be able to play well without injury or anything else, so I'm enjoying the time.

Yeah, the major wins are definitely on my mind, to try to sneak as many of those as I can, but those are hard. Yeah, it's just to continue to do what I've been doing and not really look too far ahead, but just kind of stay in the present and just kind of continue to try to play well each and every week I come out.

Q. Yeah. Bernhard was here about an hour ago and he's got that fountain of youth thing going. I mean, 10 years, he makes it sound like he's going to play until they drag him off the golf course. Is that kind of how you feel as well? When you see him have a drink, do you kind of make sure you drink what he's drinking?

STEVE STRICKER: I told him a year or so ago, I said, I want to grow up like you when I get older, or I want to be like you when I get older.

He is an amazing guy, and he continues to play some amazing golf. He won the Senior Open this year, the U.S. Senior Open up in Wisconsin. Just keeps doing some incredible things, so it's fun to watch. Yeah, you look up to him for sure, I do. First of all, a great family man, a great man and continues to play some great golf.

Q. What do you like about the pro-ams? You were telling me a few weeks ago that you like this course, this area, it's got that small-town feel. When you get to be side by side with some of the amateur players who enjoy watching you, get a good chance to see some of the legends of the game on the course with them, what do you like about these types of events?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's just a great opportunity to meet -- I think I'm playing with some Ally people this week, the sponsors of the event. It's great to be able to play with them and show our thanks to them for putting on an event.

Yeah, so you meet four new friends each week and you never know when those relationships develop over the long haul. Yeah, I don't mind them, I look forward to them and I look forward to today.

Q. Will Nicki or Izzi be on your bag this week as caddie?

STEVE STRICKER: No. Unfortunately, neither of them could make it. I've got an old-time, one of my old-time caddies, Jimmy Johnson, who caddied for me back 15 years ago or so, 10 to 15 years ago. Looking forward to that, too. Haven't been out with him for a while.

Q. What's it like to have a family member, loved one on the bag for big tournaments?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's always fun to have family on the bag, and they enjoy doing it.

Nicki, she wears a lot of hats in our family, so she's wearing a different hat this week. I always enjoy having her out. And then my brother-in-law's done a lot of caddying for me, Mario, who's playing this week. And then Izzi, she's caddied for me one time.

Yeah, it's a lot of fun to have family on the bag. I feel comfortable having them out there and we usually have a pretty good time.

Q. What's your mindset coming into the tournament this year as defending champion?

STEVE STRICKER: The same as any other year going into any other event really and that's just to worry about what I need to do to play well and try to get my game in shape. I've had some time off, so I'm probably a little bit rusty come the first tee tomorrow. Just try to go practice, get the lay of the land, the course conditions a little bit, try to get ready to play well tomorrow.

Q. How do you achieve a good balance, you know, between still golfing and then taking maybe more time off than you might have, than originally during the PGA TOUR?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I've always had that good balance. I feel like I've never played a ton of golf. I've always done a lot of things at home with our family, so I've always maintained my good balance.

Q. A few people have talked about nostalgia from the Buick Open days. What do you remember, the lasting memory walking onto this course when the Buick Open was, you know, a year-round event, what do you remember about that?

STEVE STRICKER: It's the same as, you know, what we're coming to this week, just that -- and I've said it over and over again, it's just that great small-town feel, and the people of the community get involved and get behind it. I correlate this event to the GMO in Milwaukee, same kind of thing. We played it in a park area and it just kind of had that small-town feel.

Yeah, so it's much the same, and it's cool to see the community rally behind it, get behind it. The people come out and support it. It's fun to be here.

CONNOR STANGE: And the last one I had was just TPC Wisconsin opened a few weeks ago. How has everything been going with that?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's going well. It still needs to grow in a little bit, there's some spots here and there, but for the most part it's pretty good, a lot of good feedback. Still I think there's some tweaks that we need to do to it to make it a little bit nicer, more playable, but all in all, it's really good.