

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
June 20, 2019



STEVE STRICKER

CHRIS RICHARDS: Good afternoon, everyone. I would like to welcome tournament host Steve Stricker.

Steve, this is the fourth year of the American Family Insurance Championship. How proud are you of the event and what it's become?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's quite a thrill really to see how it's taken shape and progressed in the short period of time that we've had it. You know, it seems to get a little bit bigger and better every year, no different than this year.

We have a couple of really big-time celebrities coming our way in Jack Nicklaus and Toby Keith, Brett Favre playing along with Andy. So it's just got a great field again this year. Guys, the players really seem to support our event and say a lot of positive things about it.

A couple of new things around the golf course, too. We've expanded a few things and made some things bigger, especially on 17 again. Kind of seems like a little party zone down there, which makes it fun for everybody. Yeah, so there's a lot of good things happening and we're excited to do it again this year. It's the week that I look forward to the most, I think.

CHRIS RICHARDS: How rewarding is it for you to build all this in your community with your family, friends, everyone that means so much to you?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it means a lot. It's very special. I mean, American Family Insurance is an unbelievable sponsor. I've been very fortunate to pair up with them to do this and to raise money for all these charities that we've been able to give to over the last three years. That's the real special part.

You know, at week's end, after it's all said and done, the money raised here goes to some very needy places and causes, one of them being the American Family Children's Hospital, which we just met a boy up there that's 2 years old -- 4 years old, but at the age of 2 went through a kidney transplant already. So we've got an unbelievable facility right in our backyard that we're supporting and it makes us feel really good that we're doing that.

CHRIS RICHARDS: I would like to open it up to questions now.

Q. After playing here twice, what have you learned? You've competed but haven't been able to pull this off yet. What have you learned from playing here twice that you maybe put to use with how to manage your time and make it all work and still do what

you want to do on the course when that time comes?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's a challenge. I was just trying to practice putt a little bit and it's a challenge to get in my time that I normally am accustomed to as a regular event, but it all comes with the territory and I expect that. I learned not to maybe party so hard on Friday night of concert night. I learned that lesson last year, and so hopefully I can apply that to Toby Keith this year, but that will be hard because he is a friend of mine and he puts on an unbelievable show.

Yeah, I've got to have golf at the forefront once we start tomorrow. That's my goal is to kind of block all this out once I hit that opening tee shot tomorrow and try to do what I know how to do.

Q. Steve, a similar question. You and Jerry have played in Wisconsin 41 times going back to the GMO, the major championships, the AmFam. Neither one of you guys have won. Why is it so hard to point to a tournament, especially in your home state, and come out and win?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I think the expectations that you put on yourself. You want to win, you want to play well, so you put that little extra added pressure on yourself. You have more people following you around than normal, friends, familiar faces that you're seeing all the time. So it all kind of adds to the pressure, I think, and it makes it a little bit harder to play. One of these years one of us will pop this off, I think, and it will be a special time when one of us do.

CHRIS RICHARDS: What else have we got for Steve?

STEVE STRICKER: That's it already? Sweet.

Q. Going back to GMO '98, I think you lost to Sluman by two, that was your real close call. What do you remember about that tournament? Anything in particular?

STEVE STRICKER: The GMO itself?

Q. (No microphone.)

STEVE STRICKER: Oh, I don't remember too much about it. The GMO itself was always a special week. Again, playing in front of your home state, home fans, a lot of family and friends, that was always a really neat experience. Probably the most nerve wracking week of the year really because of all the expectations on how well you want to play. So that part I never really looked forward to, you know, the extra added pressure. But once you get into it and if you're playing well, then you can really feed off it and have a good time with it. That's kind of what you hope to do here is get off to good starts. Playing well, you can feed off that energy and it helps you sometimes as well.

Q. Steve, last time we saw you here you were mulling equipment changes, kind of thinking about your game and where it is, so I guess an update there on how you feel and how you're playing coming into this event?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, still mulling equipment changes. I think I played about four different sets of clubs this year so far and I've actually gone back in time. I've been looking for something new, but I actually went back to an old set, a 2006 set of Titleist 755s that there's a shaft in there that I really like. So I'm trying to find more of those shafts. They don't make those, of course, anymore either.

I've got three of those sets of shafts at home that I've put in some different heads. So after this week or after probably next week I'll mess around some more. I've got some new clubs to hit with that same shaft in there, but still trying to find what I really like. It's been a challenge, but I got a good set in here. I played them at the Memorial. Probably hit it the best I've hit it all year really with the irons, so that was exciting. That's why they're in here again this week.

Q. Steve, what's your schedule look like the next few weeks after you get past this?

STEVE STRICKER: Planning to go play the U.S. Senior Open next week, and then it looks like a week off, and then either John Deere or the SENIOR PLAYERS Championship I think is opposite the Deere. Kind of leaning towards the Deere just because it's a fun event. I've been there, had some success there over the years. I always enjoy going there. You can drive. It's just a neat area. It reminds me of the GMO really back when we were playing the GMO at Brown Deer. It's got that hometown feel, and again, I enjoy going there.

Q. Steve, Toby Keith recently said he's never met Jack Nicklaus, he's excited about that, but he said that you probably want him to be on his best behavior around Jack. Are you at all worried that Toby won't be on his best behavior?

STEVE STRICKER: No, not at all. I've played with him a bunch and in the AT&T tournament over the years. He's always on his best behavior. He loves to play the game. He owns his own golf course down in Oklahoma and he gets up and plays every day when he's home. He's got golf etiquette, he knows what he's doing.

I wish I was a fan really or playing in the group like I did the first year because that would be a fun group to play with with Jack and Favre and Toby. It should be a lot of fun for everybody who's going to come out and watch.

CHRIS RICHARDS: All right. If that's all we've got, thank you very much, Steve, and good luck this week.

STEVE STRICKER: Thank you.