

**STEVE STRICKER (-5 through 17)**

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**Q. Ten of 14 fairways, which is really good around this place. Fifteen of 17 greens, and a 9-iron from 140 left into 18 and you're five under. Kind of assess your round. It's been pretty flawless by my eye.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Thanks. Yeah, it was a good start. Birdied the first couple out of the chute and then made a one at No. 7 today, which anytime you do that, you know things are going well. But all the way around I've done some really good things, hit a lot of good putts, made a couple. So yeah, hopefully get back out there, finish it off.

**Q. A lot of good results here in the WGC-Bridgestone on the regular tour. What has this place kind of done for you coming back to this as far as the memories and understanding how well to play this place?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, exactly. It's a great place. It's a great old-school golf course and it's in wonderful shape. It's as good as I've ever seen it.

You just have to do what it tells you to do. It's right in front of you. You have to drive it in the fairways, and if you don't, you've got to get it in a spot where you can get it up and down. But driving in the fairways is key and the par 3s are key here, too. There's some good length to the par 3s, and knocking it on the greens and kind of keep plodding yourself along, keep plodding. That's what I've been doing, and staying away from any bogeys.

**Q. Well, I noticed that the play has been pretty solid over the last month I would say. After Japan, Scott had an 800-some-odd thousand dollar lead in the Schwab Cup standings. You go second place and then a win in the U.S. Senior Open. You've now cut that in half. We saw you committed late to this tournament when you dual committed to both here and the John Deere. Was that kind of the impetus of wanting to play here, you were getting a little closer and maybe potentially wanting to take a run at the Schwab Cup title?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** I think it was more winning the U.S. Senior Open, winning the Regions Tradition earlier in the year and this being another major, and being at this venue here where I've had some success over the years, put all that together. It was a tough choice, tough decision because John Deere is a place where I've had a lot of success at and it feels like home and I get a lot of support there.

So I wish they were different weeks so I could play them both, but I decided to come here. I'm happy I'm here and I'm not second guessing my decision at all. Hopefully, just keep

playing the way I'm playing, see what happens.

**Q. Did you get any advice? Did you talk to anybody about which direction potentially you were going to go and pick anybody's brain?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Not really. You know, I'm pretty stone headed, so if I would have listened to anybody, I probably would have done what I wanted to do anyways. You know, like I said, it was a tough decision, but knowing what's here and this tournament that I've played here in years past, it really wasn't that hard when it came down to it.

**Q. The level of golf out here that's played on the PGA TOUR Champions, has anything surprised you being out here?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** You have to play well. I mean, everybody can play. They're here for a reason and they've had past successes on the regular tour and that's why they're here still playing.

You have to take care of yourself, just like the regular tour. You've got to get in your own little space and practice, and you can't come out here and fake it around. The courses that we've played, some of them have been really good, Oak Hill and here, the course, the Warren course at Notre Dame, those are legit golf courses and you have to play well to score well. That's what's exciting. To come out here, we're playing some top courses and it's fun to be out here.

**Q. Matt Wolff won last week. You're the next Ryder Cup captain up north. What do you see for his future as far as would you like to have him obviously on the team? Would he be an interesting pick for you potentially if he's not on the team?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Who wouldn't want a guy like that on the team who hits it long, straight, and makes putt, right? I was so impressed with how those two guys played down the stretch. They're trying to win for the first time, and we played there a Champions Tour event, so I know some of those shots that they had to hit down the stretch and they made that look very easy. The shot at the par-3 17 where they both hit it in there, they hit great putts. It was very impressive. And then to hit the shot at 18, he pretty much flagged it and then made the putt from the fringe.

Yeah, I'm watching all the time. You never know who that next great player's going to be and who's going to be a part of that team, you know, come 14, 15 months from now.

**Q. I know it's a different level, but the college kids are playing a lot of match play now, a lot of teams want more match play tournaments because that's what the national championship is decided by. Would that weigh into your decision looking at the kids' match play records?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, no doubt. I mean, maybe he'll make this Presidents Cup team

this year. If he gets on a roll, a guy could win two or three more times. It seems like he's got a ton of confidence, and usually kids when they come out of school, when they come out of college, they don't have any scars. They've played some great college golf and they've got a lot of -- they've had a lot of success in college. Then they come out and they prove themselves right away out here. They're going around the golf courses for the first time. If we played a course here or there, we may remember we hit it out of bounds here or whatever. They don't have any of that, no scar tissue at all. So it's cool to see the aggressiveness, how they play, and the confidence level which they have while they're playing is really impressive.

**Q. Mike Small, let's talk about your alma mater, Illinois. What's that team going to look like this year potentially starting in the fall?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Well, I'm sure it's going to be good. He's always got something brewing down there and he's done a wonderful job at the U of I. I'm so happy for him. He's a great guy, a friend. It's cool that a university actually takes pride in a golf program. You don't see that at every university. I know the athletic director down there, golf is important. It's not that way everywhere, so it's cool to see. And they provide that support and the monies for him to be successful and he's a great guy. He's doing a great job.