

STEVE STRICKER

THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the Champions Tour. It's good to have you back here. Can you just talk us through a little bit about what you did during the break to start off?

STEVE STRICKER: I played a lot of golf during the quarantine. The kids have been playing. Nicki has been playing. We have all been playing a lot of golf. And then once we started back up, I have been playing a lot on the regular Tour and trying to see some of the guys out there.

Went through the whole Ryder Cup process of trying to figure out if we were going to play or not, and finally they made the decision there. And so I have been kind of been able to concentrate on playing golf a little bit more lately.

It's nice to be back here. A special spot, Firestone Country Club, for the players, the SENIOR PLAYERS Championship. So excited to be here.

THE MODERATOR: Let's talk a little bit about the time that you have spent on Tour since you have been back. You had a great finish at the memorial tournament. Did it take a while to get into that groove and do you feel like you're in a good spot now?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's hard. It's a weird, weird deal we're going through, trying to play golf with nobody around. And I'm struggling finding the excitement level at times. There is no question. So you got to try to find different ways of trying to motivate yourself and -- but it is, it's a weird time. And golf seems so unimportant in the whole scheme of things. So you got to try to find ways to excite yourself out there and to get fired up to play. And it's coming around for me a little slower than what I had anticipated, but I'm still excited to be playing. We're lucky to be playing and fortunate to be playing.

THE MODERATOR: How about your time here at Firestone? Last year was your first time here, second time now. Sixth place finish last year.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah.

THE MODERATOR: What do you remember about it?

STEVE STRICKER: I remember having a chance to win and having a good start to the tournament and then kind of fading. And then I didn't play golf. I was kind of struggling

with my hip at the time. And then did something to my elbow, so I didn't play a lot after that, actually all the way until this year. So I played nine holes yesterday here and it's in great shape. It's always in great shape. And always look forward to coming here. I played some practice rounds with some guys last week at the PGA Championship, and they asked me where I was going next, I told them I'm coming here, and they were all jealous. So everybody knows what a special place this is. And for us on the Champions Tour to be playing for the SENIOR PLAYERS and a spot on THE PLAYERS Championship field, there's a lot of motivation there for us to play well and try to come out on top.

Q. I was going to ask you about the decision to come here when you have been mostly on the regular Tour. Is this a no-brainer and something you will always probably do just because of the course and THE PLAYERS Championship?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, for sure. And that carrot at the end. The winner gets the spot in THE PLAYERS Championship field, so it's a major out here on this Tour and one that guys are fighting to win and would love to win, and I'm no different. So, yeah. And the spot we're playing. I have come here over the years on WGC events and stuff like that, so it's always one that you look forward to coming back to.

Q. When you were playing golf with the family, did somebody shoot a low round, one of your kids, or something cool happen, you know, like --

STEVE STRICKER: No holes-in-ones or anything like that, but they have gotten better. So that's exciting to see. My oldest has progressed. And my youngest is still kind of up and down a little bit, but they are both excited to play. They play a lot now, and they have gotten the bug.

Q. How old are they now?

STEVE STRICKER: 21 and 14.

Q. What was it like sharing play with Collin on Tuesday? We saw you and Davis play with Collin on Tuesday and then he went on to win.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah. It's great. Never really spent too much time with him. Talked to him on the phone, trying to set up a practice round, and finally was able to get out there and play with him, and just a great young kid, great demeanor, very pleasant to be around. And has a ton of talent and a lot of game. So it might have shocked the public a little bit that he won, but I think when players -- I don't think it shocked any of the players, seeing him win. He's just got a great game. And I think even more so, he's got a head on him beyond his years. He's really intelligent when it comes to the game of golf. He doesn't seem to play a lot of dumb shots. He plays very calculated, and that's what you needed last week at the PGA, and he played awesome.

THE MODERATOR: Just a question from Rob Hernandez just on that. When you played with him on Tuesday and how you've seen him, have you taken anything from his game and tried to implement it into yours?

STEVE STRICKER: Well, obviously, if I was 30 years younger, it would be a little bit easier to do some of the things. But he's not overly long, but he's got enough length, but he's just very accurate. He hits the same shot over and over, and he's got a great short game. Which if you're not going to have that power game, he's going to have to have a great short game, great putting, and just manage his game, you know, to the -- to the fullest, and that's what he does, and that's what he does very well.

Q. Doing a story for PGATour.com. Just is there a part of somebody's game on PGA Tour Champions that you were like, man, I would really love to have this guy's driving prowess or this guy's putting? Is there somebody that you would love to have his iron game or something like that?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I mean, there's always guys that you look up to out here. You look at Freddie's effortless swing and tempo. Like Retief's power. He can get the ball moving out there pretty far. Just Bernhard Langer's ability to score and get it done. I mean, you can go down the list. There's a bunch of guys out here that you look up to certain parts their games and want to -- and want to emulate or be like. So, but those few comes to mind right off the top of my head. But I would say Freddie's just effortless ability to hit it and to look good doing it. And plus he's a friend of mine, and it's fun to watch him.

Q. Is there anything else you did during the lockdown, that -- like some people are into puzzles or cooking, or you guys do anything else fun?

STEVE STRICKER: I got into Fortnite. Stupid game. And I don't -- I don't know where that came from, but it -- it's kind of consumed some of my time, even lately. I bring it now with me out on the road and pass the time. But I'm trying to wean myself off that game. During the quarantine, when it first happened, I was playing quite a bit. I had nothing else to do, right? We play golf and then I play Fortnite. And the kids started playing with me too. And Nicki tried to, but she got frustrated with it and ended that pretty quickly. But yeah, I still get into that. The kids have stopped playing. They know better. And I continue on.

Q. Do you know any of the dances?

STEVE STRICKER: I got a couple dances when I do something well. I will throw it at the guys.

Q. Do you want to show us?

STEVE STRICKER: No, no chance.

Q. Are you used to the COVID protocols now, or is this still a little weird?

STEVE STRICKER: What do you mean?

Q. Just like the things that you have to do when you get to the course and you can't go out to eat and all that.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, we're doing well. I mean, my brother-in-law, Mario, caddying for me, and we kind of kept this tight little second page. And we're getting tested all the time.

And last week at the PGA, you couldn't eat inside anywhere. So that -- we were always outside eating. We took a lot to go away from the restaurants. We are doing the same thing here so far. And yeah, we are just trying to be as smart as we can about it. We don't want to get it. We don't want to give it to anybody, and especially bring it back home to our families, or anything like that. So, yeah, it's -- got to do what you got to do. You got to do your part and that's what we're trying to do.

Q. Has Mario just been your caddie just since you came back, or --

STEVE STRICKER: He has been off and on, even over the last few years. He came last year as well. So, yeah, but it's -- he's looking for things to do, too, and it's worked out great.

THE MODERATOR: Another question from Rob Hernandez. Since March, a lot of guys have turned 50. Phil, Weir. Weir is out here this year. Do you feel like -- do you ever see a day where all the big names are out here that are 50?

STEVE STRICKER: I think it's hard, because guys are taking care of themselves so much more, and they want to continue to play on the regular Tour as long as they can. I would love to see the age go like to 48 or 45 even. 48 seems to be kind of a better number in my mind. But that will always be hard to pass, because there's guys that would have to give up -- they would be out here and then have to watch guys come out earlier than what they did. But it's -- I don't know, it's got -- it's a tough question, because it's -- I don't think everybody will always come out here. You're always going to have guys like Phil that can still play at a high level on the regular Tour that are going to continue to play on the regular Tour as long as they can.

THE MODERATOR: And one more question from him. What do you ultimately want to get out of your Champions Tour career now, between now and the '21 Ryder Cup? Do you have goals in mind for that?

STEVE STRICKER: For the Champions Tour, is that what you said?

THE MODERATOR: Yeah.

STEVE STRICKER: Just to come out here and play as well as I can when I do come out here. I still have aspirations of staying out there on the regular Tour for a while. I was thinking my time out there was going to be done in September, but pushing the Ryder Cup back, I feel like I need to stay out there some more and just playing like I did last week with Collin Morikawa and Bryson DeChambeau a few weeks ago. It's just being out there and being present. Obviously I want to play well while I'm there and then come back here occasionally and play well here, too. So unfortunate that in one regard that I won't be here full-time next year, I will still be back and forth a little bit because of the Ryder Cup. But it is what it is, and I look forward to both of them.

THE MODERATOR: Awesome, thank you.

STEVE STRICKER: Thank you.