

Sanford International: Steve Stricker – Friday Post

Steve, three under to start the tournament. How pleased are you with your round today?

Yeah, it was a good start. Tough conditions, usually play in some sort of wind here, so we get used to it over the years, and that's what makes this course challenging and difficult at times, so it was no different today. It firmed up quite a bit. It was tough to get the ball close at times even when you had short irons in your hands. It was a battle, and it makes for a long, tough day when conditions are like this.

You birdied your first two holes and then birdied 15 and 16 later. What specifically were you pleased with in your game today?

I was super stiff when I started. My back was not very good, and then as I got going in the round, probably in the middle of the round I started to feel like it loosened up a little bit, and I got a little more freedom in my swing, hit some nice shots coming in, and that's kind of what excited me the most. I got off to a good start, but I was struggling there to start with my body, but happy the way it felt coming in.

Patience?

Yeah, you got to have patience on a day like today, and it helped to make those two birdies early on. You get off to a good start and you feel like you have something to play with there if something were to go wrong, and it was a solid day, and I feel good going around here. I enjoy the course, the tournament, and it was a good opening – good start.

You're going through your round and you look up at the scoreboard and you see Billy Andrade at 7 under and you wonder where he's playing?

I said that going down 17 to the guys in our group, 'That's a helluva round today,' 7-under, a 4-shot lead – when you can beat the field or anybody else by four shots in a round, you know you did something special, and that's one heckuva round.

With your familiarity with the course, does that contribute to your ability to hang in there on a day like today?

Yeah, I've played here a lot of years and had success here, so even when things aren't going right, I still have that confidence knowing that I can finish strong coming in or make some birdies when I have to, but yes, it's a nice feeling place for me, and I enjoy going around here.