

U.S. Open Championship 2017

Thursday, June 15, 2017

Steve Stricker

Flash Interview



Q. Can you talk about the first couple of holes?

STEVE STRICKER: It was a great start. It was the start I was looking at to get off to play the first couple of holes the way I envisioned. And then really I didn't hit that good a drive at 3. I left myself way back there. I tried to hit a 3-wood off a little bit downhill lie and caught it a little bit on the bottom and I didn't get it up high enough to get it up over the ridge. It caught the ridge and shot it right into the long grass. Made a good bogey. And it felt a little unsettled for the next couple of holes.

And then really from about 6 on I felt pretty comfortable and hit some better shots. Had a couple of birdie opportunities that I didn't make. Probably should have shot the score, probably one or two shots better. I had a couple of opportunities that I should have made, one at 18 and then I had another opportunity or two on the backside, there.

But I played a little more solid on the back, just didn't get anything going.

Q. Can you talk us through your emotions on the third tee, you got the start you wanted, the galleries were buzzing, did you have to settle yourself down?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I was excited to get out there. I was waiting a long time to get out there. Like I said, it was the start I wanted and just fell apart pretty quickly there. But, you know, all in all, it's 1-over. It's not great, but I need a good one tomorrow to get back in there. But it's out there. If you hit the type of shots that a guy can hit there's some opportunities here.

We had a great day to play. There wasn't a lot of wind. It died down to almost nothing coming in. So it was -- if you're hitting it well, you can make some birdies.

Q. Did the USGA maybe err a little bit on the side of caution with the setup? There are a lot of low scores, they didn't know what to expect?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I would imagine if the wind came up. I thought they were talking a little bit higher winds today than what we got. The greens really never got too firm. The fairways are fairly soft. The wind stayed down. And when you get all those combinations in play, these guys are good, they're going to shoot some good scores. And they cut back on some of the fescue and widened some of the areas

even more. And if you miss a fairway you're going to pay a price. But the fairways are pretty generous.

Q. Can you describe the ovation you got on the first tee, and how many times you probably nodded to the crowd today? It seemed like every approach, every 50 yards someone was yelling something to you.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it was pretty cool. Great receptions almost every green I walked up on. Every tee, in between the greens and the tees, I got a lot of support out there today. And it was a lot of fun. Definitely keeps you motivated to play well, you know, with a lot of people cheering you on. I saw a lot of familiar faces and friends. It was great -- it was a great feeling today to go around and play in front of everybody. And they showed me a tremendous amount of support.

Q. What were you thinking when you saw Rickie's score and there was a couple of guys right behind him?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, that's the start I wanted to get off to was get off and get into the red numbers and shoot a good 2-, 3-, 4-under round today. And I knew it was out there, although I watched some of Rickie's and it looked like he played great this morning.

So they gave us an idea. This afternoon group -- the morning group gave us an idea of what we needed to do and that's a help sometimes. I just didn't take advantage of it and didn't shoot a good one. But hopefully I can do that tomorrow.

Q. Roberto has had an interesting four days, what are your thoughts on the way he played given the circumstances?

STEVE STRICKER: I thought he played great. He started off a little shaky, but righted the ship nicely, and he played some really solid golf, especially on the back nine. Great kid, too, I was talking all around with him and he's a great kid and I wish him the best. He's fun to play with.

Q. (Inaudible.)

STEVE STRICKER: Well, I've got to get it under par. I'm 1-over now and I've got to get it in the red. The more the merrier, I guess. But like I said, it's out there, and hopefully it continues tomorrow.

It would be good for us if the wind stays down. The greens were a little choppy this afternoon with all the play that was on there, but it should be perfect conditions tomorrow morning, so you've got to try to take advantage of it.