

# U.S. Open Championship 2017

Saturday, June 17, 2017

## Steve Stricker

### Flash Interview



**Q. One birdie away. Can you talk about the end of your round and going into Sunday?**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I played 3-wood off the tee to try to stay out of those bunkers and ended up putting it in one of them. From there, you're behind the eight-ball. I hit a nice shot in there with a 6-iron. I had probably 190 yards to the hole. That putt was really fast. I thought it was going to be fast, but it just kept going and going and going.

Yeah, a little disappointing the way I finished there on 18. Really a solid day, though, all the way around. I made some good saves when I had to. Made some good putts, but it would have been nice to get a birdie look at 18 instead of making a bogey.

**Q. What does this do for you going into Sunday, the way you've finished the day? You've had some really strong Sundays this season.**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's good to get a good round under my belt. I hadn't broken par here, so it's nice to have done that.

Tomorrow, from what I understand, is going to be a lot windier and probably more difficult. So who knows. I mean, these guys today are going to go out, and somebody's going to probably distance themselves a little bit or shoot a good round or two or three guys may. It's definitely there. The conditions are soft enough where if a guy's getting some shorter irons into their hands than what I'm having, they can be a little bit more aggressive. So I imagine there is going to still be a few good scores out there this afternoon.

**Q. What do you think you're capable of shooting tomorrow?**

STEVE STRICKER: It depends on the weather, I guess. It's tough. This is a tough course for me. It's long. If I'm not smacking it my Sunday best on some of those tee balls, then I'm back there pretty far. If I do hit it well, I'm all right. But there's a couple today where I kind of puffed them out there, and I'm back there a couple extra clubs, and I can't be doing that.

So I've got to work on that driver a little bit more and see if I can't hit it a little bit more consistently with some length. But it's a tough course. I made five birdies today, which that's a lot of birdies around here for me. Just a couple of mistakes.

But tomorrow, who knows. I don't know what to expect tomorrow. If it gets to be blowing 15 to 25, a 2- or 3-under round will be pretty good probably.

**Q. Other than 18, are you happy with the way today went?**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, very much so. It was a good day again. Couple mental mistakes in there. No. 10, Nicki and I didn't pay attention, and we were on the very back tee, and I thought we weren't. I hit, which I thought was a good one that ended up in the rough. We ended up making par, but a couple mistakes like that that didn't end up hurting us. I made a couple good saves today.

But, all in all, even with the bogey on the last, it's probably what I should have shot. The way I rolled some putts in there at the end which was finally good to see.

**Q. What you saw out there, what did they do to try to protect the course, given all the weather last night? They had to keep the scores from really going up.**

STEVE STRICKER: I think they lengthened it a little bit, and then some of the pin locations were, I think on a little bit more severe hills.

**Q. Can you give us an example?**

STEVE STRICKER: 18 was a perfect example there. Every one you had to be -- every putt you kind of had to be a little bit cautious. They put it on the back of 12. If you hit it short there, I thought I hit it to about a foot, my putt, and it just kept rolling out, and rolling out and rolling out.

So they did that on a number of holes where they put them on top of knobs. No. 4 is that way. No. 9 is that way. So you still have to hit some quality shots in there to give yourself some good looks.

**Q. When you hear that Brooks yesterday said the longest club he had in was a 7-iron, what goes --**

STEVE STRICKER: That hurts (laughing). That was the shortest club I had in probably yesterday.

**Q. Looking ahead to tomorrow, usually on the back nine on Sunday at a U.S. Open, you're kind of hanging on. But given the way the last six holes in**



**particular got a couple par 5s, got maybe a drivable par 4. Do you expect it might be a little bit different this Sunday, maybe a few more fireworks?**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I think so. The wind is supposed to come out of the west/northwest, I think, if I remember right. So those holes, 16, 17, 18 will be playing downwind. The par 5 will be into the wind, 15 will be into the wind. But I think it's going to add some excitement, really. You get some of these guys that are going to bomb it out there and have a shortish iron in their hand. They can be a little bit more aggressive.

Yeah, I think it's going to add some excitement, really. Instead of a guy hitting it in the rough and hacking it out and struggling to make a par kind of thing.

If he can control his emotions, the fairways are wide enough where he should be able to hit it and take control of it if a guy needs to or wants to.

**Q. What will it mean to have Father's Day on Sunday at the U.S. Open in your home state?**

STEVE STRICKER: Well, it's been just an unbelievable week. I hadn't really thought about tomorrow being Father's Day yet. Just having Nicki on the bag and the kids are with me, we've been doing that a lot this year. So it's been a fun year. I've played a lot, but they've been with me all along. It's gone by extremely fast. We're home again next week with the Am Fam Championship, so a lot of good things.

But it's become more of a family thing for us, I think. They like to see me play. I still enjoy playing. They're telling me to go play and then they come along. So it's all been good.

Tomorrow will be fun and special, just going around here and being a part of this first U.S. Open here in Wisconsin. It will just be cool in itself.

**Q. You've said a number of times recently that you feel you can still play with these guys. You're under par after three rounds of the U.S. Open, have you shown anything to yourself and other people, do you think?**

STEVE STRICKER: It's what I believe in myself. I expect to be where I'm at or better. I still feel like I've got some game. It's coming a little harder, it seems like, on a regular basis. But I still feel like I do a lot of good things to compete out here.

This is, you know, being the Presidents Cup captain at the end of the year, I feel like this is where I need to be. This year for sure as the year goes on, to be around the players a little bit more, just seeing Rickie there, Justin Thomas, guys that are going to be on that team. Played with Dustin Johnson in the practice round. Stuff

like that, I think it's important for me still to be out here yet. That's kind of the way I'm looking at it.

I still expect to play well and compete at a high level out here. I'm still trying to win out here, are and I feel like I still can. It may be a long shot, but I still feel like I can.

**Q. What do you think the aftermath of the Open here in Wisconsin. Will there be any effect in the coming years?**

STEVE STRICKER: In terms of what kind of effect?

**Q. Growing the game, getting people involved and growing the business?**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it can't hurt. It's brought a bunch of people here. I mean, it's brought -- I don't know, I'm lost for the word, I guess. But it's showcased our state. It's showcased the game of golf. It definitely can't hurt. I hope that it will be back again. I think we've got a good test here. The weather didn't cooperate, and maybe a few other things need to be tweaked to make it a really tough U.S. Open course. But I still think it's holding its own.

But I think as far as the game goes, that's always a challenge to grow the game, I think. But it surely can't hurt.

Everywhere I go these players are saying I can't believe how cool a state this is. We're out in the middle of nowhere, but how pretty it is and how nice the people are. So I've heard nothing but good things from the players and the fans being here.

**Q. Are you that guy now, is that what inspired that stretch there on the back nine?**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, and I just started making a couple putts. Those are the holes you've got to try to take advantage of. The par 5 there, 14, the short little drivable one, they moved it up for us today. I had it in my head that I was just going to hit a 6-iron and a sand wedge if they played that up tee. I didn't want to bring in any trouble and just tried to make my birdie that way. I did that.

And had a decent look at it at 16 that I didn't make. Then kind of stole one at 17, driver and a 6-iron to maybe 25 feet or something. That's one you don't expect to make. But it was a nice little stretch, nice little run.

Yeah, I was trying all the way around to make birdies (laughing).

**Q. So 17 is where you stole one?**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, yeah, at 17 I stole one. But if I can make four or five birdies around here, six

maybe, that would be a great day. But it's tough. It's long, believe me. I was tired today, too. I don't know about anybody else, but I was tired.

**Q. I know yesterday you said you felt a little bit of pressure being around these fans because there are so many people following you, expecting so much out of you. When you get that three out of four hole stretch making birdies like that, how much are you feeding off of this?**

STEVE STRICKER: I've been feeding off of them all week. I really haven't felt the pressure like I used to in the early days when I used to come and play in Wisconsin. I feel way more relaxed. I feel like I don't have anything to prove anymore. I'm just out here to have fun and try to play well.

Don't get me wrong, I'm a little more nervous and I want to play well, but I've taken on a different attitude about it. I enjoy it a lot more. So it's been fun. It's been -- the ovation I got going up 18 is unbelievable. The support all the way around has been tremendous. So it's been a great week in that sense of things.

**Q. Since you are home, Steve, are you able to do anything or are you sticking to your routine? Seeing anyone or doing anything?**

STEVE STRICKER: No, we rented a house, a friend's house not 15 minutes from here, so we haven't been going home. We've been staying down here trying to make it feel like any other tournament. He's in a great spot. The house is on a little lake, so we've gotten away from everything. Trying to rest, get ready for tomorrow.

**Q. Are you looking at where the cutoff for Shinnecock is for next year?**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I don't know. How many get in? Eight? I'm not sure. How many? Ten. Yeah, that doesn't -- bogey at the last doesn't make me feel very good. I wish I could have birdied that and had a good one tomorrow. But it is what it is. I'm just going to have to come out and do my best.

Trying not to -- World Ranking takes care of themselves, so the more I can play and better I can play, all that stuff kind of takes care of themselves. But, yeah, I'll try to get up there as high as I can.

**Q. What do you think it does for the game to have these last two rounds with these names at the top of the leaderboard that people aren't used to seeing?**

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, there are so many good players. And it doesn't surprise me that any of them are up there at the top. It's just at any given week these guys can play well. Whether they stay up there

for the duration is another thing, and that's a challenge for everybody.

Doesn't matter who you are. Even if you're Tiger Woods, Rory McIlroy, Jason Day, it's a challenge, even if you are up there and to try to finish it off. So for these guys that are going out late today and late tomorrow, it's still a tough challenge to stay up there. That's the fun part about watching. That's what I'm going to do this afternoon is watch and see how they handle it.

But a guy like Brooks Koepka, he's played great, played great at the last Ryder Cup. He's got a tremendous amount of talent. Guys like that or Rickie, they've been up there. They're used to that. It will be fun to see how they handle it though.

**Q. As Presidents Cup captain, are you looking at more names because of what's happened the last couple of days?**

STEVE STRICKER: I'm still looking at top 20 in the standings, and I see what they do from there. But there are still three majors left. This one and two more where the points are -- there's a lot of them. There's a lot of important points left.

So, yeah, I'm watching all the time. I'm watching every week and seeing what these guys are doing, and see what kind of player will be good for our team.