

STEVE STRICKER (-5)

Q. Your first round back in a while. Take us through it a little bit.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it was a little up and down, not going to kid you. It was some good shots, some wayward shots that I got away with. Putted nicely. My short game, I scrambled well, I should say. Yeah, it was tough. I just don't have my legs yet I think is what I'm really feeling, but I managed to get it around there. I'll try to go hit a couple balls and see if I can work on a few things, but it was a good start. I'm glad that's over with and I can kind of move on.

Q. (No microphone.)

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah. I just, I put in a good solid three days before coming here to try to get my game going in the right direction and I think I'm feeling that a little bit, too. Just a little bit fatigued in that department. So rest for me at this point is still the key.

But again, there was some shots there, and I didn't commit to very many shots, that was the hardest part, too. I didn't feel very comfortable over it, didn't really commit at times. And when you don't commit, typically you hit some bad shots, and I did but I got away with them and live to fight another day kind of thing. It was good to get out there finally, though.

Q. Overall, pleased?

STEVE STRICKER: Oh, yeah, overall, very pleased. Some of the things I did, hit a couple nice shots, struggled with the driver, which I really haven't been at home or in Florida, but today I just felt like I didn't have the speed and just -- but hit a good one on 18, so hopefully I can take that and run with that tomorrow.

Q. We've talked in the past about you being an emotional player. You come up on 18, you look at the board, tied for the lead, you haven't played in months, is that kind of emotional after all you've done?

STEVE STRICKER: Not really on 18, it was more emotional right away at the start. Getting some hugs from players that I hadn't seen for six months, Freddie and Mark on the first tee saying how nice it was for me to be back. You get all this outpouring of support from people. And then John Cook asks you a question right after you first your first tee ball to go on air and it kind of hits home kind of what I went through for a period of six months. But again, I'm glad I'm out here and feeling better.

Q. Obviously circumstances are different, but do you take anything from Tiger, all

he's been through coming back, shooting under par the first day at Augusta? He had been away a long time, played really well the first day back.

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, I didn't really think about, you know. It's just different circumstances altogether. Yeah, yeah, I mean Tiger's a different animal altogether. He does some remarkable things.

I was more concerned about my ability just to have enough strength and stamina to get around today. That was my focus. I was dragging, I'm not going to kid. I was dragging and probably led to a few of the bad shots, but at some point I've got to keep doing this and that's how I'm going to build up the strength and the stamina going forward, so I've just got to get out here and go through it.

Q. I talked to Freddie on the 18 green. (Inaudible) he said, "Unbelievable, but I expect it."

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, and that's nice of him to say. Usually I don't go to tournaments if I'm not ready. I came here not really being that ready and it showed at times, but I also come here with a lot of expectations into playing well. And I've been putting up some decent scores in Orlando when I do play, but my mindset is still to come here and compete. Even though I didn't have it at times today, the ability to scramble and to gut it out was still there, which is good to see and happy to see it.

Q. What was it like to be out here kind of free? You don't have to worry about anybody else, how they're playing, what form they're in, who's paired with who, who's doing what, you're just on Steve. Was that kind of freeing for you?

STEVE STRICKER: You know, a lot of the pressure was really off me today I feel like just because I hadn't been out here for so long and I didn't put a lot of pressure on myself to perform and shoot a good round. That helped today, too. I just kind of went with the flow and didn't expect a lot and just kept putting my head down and trying to hit a shot. So I kind of downplayed all this in my own mind to just kind of go out and have fun with it. I'm thankful to be here, I'm lucky to be here and I'm happy to be back out here.

Q. Steve, was there any point today or a certain hole where it hit you like, hey, I've got a good round going, I feel well? You said there was a little stamina issue, but you said like I've got something going? Did anything hit you at a certain point?

STEVE STRICKER: Just making the turn and I got away with a bad tee ball at 9, ended up making par there and making the turn at a couple under. Then birdieing 10 and I'm like okay, we're off to a good start here. And I knew we had some par 5s that were gettable on the back side and a couple short holes. I just didn't want to give any shots back is where I was at out there at some points today. So it was really good to get this one up and down on 18. And that was a shot there, I just didn't commit to it, just didn't start it out to the right like I normally do, but got away with it and it was a good way to end.

Q. And having your wife on the bag and I think your daughters were here, what was that like for you?

STEVE STRICKER: Yeah, it's been six months since I've played, they wanted to be here my first one back. And we've spent a lot of time together, I've been helping them with their games and it's kind of a family affair for us. Then they're going to be home the next couple weeks if I decide to go play, so they wanted to be here, which is nice. We're having a good time, it's a nice spot and we're enjoying it.

Q. Is that more emotions, the fact that that's not in the norm? More emotions for you, everybody together and everything?

STEVE STRICKER: Oh, that's in the norm. They're with me most tournaments. They enjoy coming out still to watch dad play, which is kind of cool.