
84 LUMBER CLASSIC
Nemacolin Woodlands Resort
Mystic Rock Golf Course
Farmington, Pa

September 26, 2004
Final-round leader quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH STEWART CINK

THE MODERATOR: All right, we welcome Steward Cink, whose 7-under 65 in the final round today, puts you in as runner-up for the 84 Lumber Classic. A heck of a run to even give it a shot today.

STEWART CINK: It was. Unfortunately, I wasted too many shots earlier in the week coming off the Ryder Cup. Just such a relaxed week up here, I find myself having a tough time concentrating early on.

You know, I wasted a few shots. But I did play really well this weekend. I don't think I can play much better than I did today and made a few good putts and if a couple more had fallen it may have been a different story.

Q. It's your third Top-5 finish in last three starts, probably there is only one player better than take, that's Vijay, who has won his last three, but talk about your excellent play over your last couple of starts?

STEWART CINK: Well, thanks. I have played very well with the exception of the Ryder Cup. That is a glaring result, the loss to the Europeans. But I have played well in my stroke play tournaments. There is no question about it. As good as I played in my whole career. It's a lot of fun to know, teeing up on Thursday, that I'm going to be in contention if I just stay out of my own way.

My swing is good shape. My mind is in good shape. My putting is in pretty good shape. It's a lot of fun playing golf right now.

Q. Stewart, your however many strokes you are behind going into today, do you take the approach you are just going to fire at pins and go, or just play and see what happens?

STEWART CINK: No, I don't take the approach to fire at pins not with these concrete greens. You can't. You will you just end up shooting way over par. You have to really be strategic here. Hard greens really work backward from the green all the way back to the tee. You must be in the fairway. Anybody coming into the rough had no chance of getting the ball close without just being lucky.

So it tests your game in more ways than just trying to hit the ball the right distance with your iron shot. Because you just have to put it int play, and you have to be smart.

And I did a great job the last couple of days, especially this weekend, you know, picking my spots, being aggressive, and I gave myself some very makeable putts.

Q. Is it frustrating to be trying to chase down Vijay, it seemed like every time you made progress against him he would make a birdie and you would go back?

STEWART CINK: I really didn't notice that because there is so few scoreboards on the front nine. There is one I remember seeing and it was not operating correctly. I didn't know where I stood. I had gotten it to -- well, I made a lot of birdies in a row. I don't know at what point I was at what score. I realize I gotten close to where the lead may be after about 9 or 10 holes. But I really didn't have any clue if Vijay was having a great day or a bad day or whatever. I assumed he was having just an okay day because he is Vijay Singh. He usually plays okay.

Q. Can you talk about that, I think it was five birdies in a row?

STEWART CINK: Yes, I got on a good roll. I hit it close. Actually, I didn't hit it very close at all on my birdies. I made good putts on all five in a row, 7 through 11. And then I hit it really close on a couple of holes after that. I didn't make any of them. So it's the game, it's crazy. But I was really relaxed out there. A lot of shots today fell into -- the golf course unfolded right in front of me in a way that I thought I could be very aggressive. And I felt very comfortable really from this morning on. And it translated into a good round and a nice score.

Q. You must have been have drained coming in here, when did you begin to feel like yourself?

STEWART CINK: Actually, I wasn't drained coming in here. I was drained Monday and Tuesday. And I didn't get here until Wednesday morning. So I wasn't drained coming in here at all. I was pretty refreshed. I used Monday and Tuesday to sort of rest. I actually took three naps Monday, that's pretty unusual for me. That beats my yearly total usually. So I didn't feel drained at all. I was ready to play. I always like playing the week after big tournaments. In fact, all four of my wins have come the week after Majors. I consider the Ryder Cup to be a Major because you prepare for it like that. You know, I almost pulled it off this week to. I always seem to play well the week after. I just need to move my schedule a week the other way so I can pique right at that Major time.

Q. You said you had a great relaxing week, did that have anything to do with the amenities or just the whole layout of this facility?

A. It does. It really reminds me where I grew up in North Alabama, rolling hills. I always enjoy this time of year, the Fall. So I felt pretty at home here. It's sort of a laid back atmosphere, out in the country, it just fits me perfectly. So that was a start, feeling

relaxed from that. I didn't really take advantage of all of the amenities. Maybe next time I will.

Q. Assuming Vijay 2-putted from eight feet and wins the tournament, he will have won three in a row, he will have knocked Tiger off his No. 1 in the world, and he will have made more money than Tiger did in 2000 setting that record. Can you put it in prospective, does this year feel for you what he done, what Tiger did in 2000, how do the players look at him and this year?

A. To me, no, it doesn't feel the same because Tiger had the three Major wins that year. Right, true. So to me that defined his year, and to me that's still the best year anybody ever had. Unfortunately, for Vijay he doesn't have any more Major tournaments to win. Although there are some big ones, and he will probably win a few more, I wouldn't be surprised at all. I think Vijay's year, his two years, really, you have to wrap up 2003 into 2004, and make it a combination of hot play. It's been phenomenal. But I really think Tiger's three Majors in one year and four in a row is still eclipsing anything that's happened in golf in the last 20 or 30 years.

Q. Do you guys talk about this?

JUSTIN ROSE: No.

Q. Not like in 2000?

STEWART CINK: Well, we didn't exactly sit around and talk about it in 2000 either. If you are comparing it to 2000, yes, it's the talk of the lockerroom because I've heard it mentioned a few times. Like today, Pat Perez mentioned to me on 17 or 18, when I was in the midst of making a charge, he said too bad it's Vijay you have to chase. Just a year or two or three ago it would have been too bad it's Tiger you have to chase, because Vijay is just not making very many mistakes right now. He's not letting anybody else in.

Q. Given all of the changes they made with the course, the field, the facility here, can you talk about this event, what your opinion is of this event?

STEWART CINK: Well, I think it's a great event. I didn't play last year, although I can't comment on the changes to the course. The course now it a fine test. It's got some really good variety, challenging -- everything -- it's a first class venue. As far as the way they have gone out and really used hospitality and amenities and service to

attract the players, I think it's going to be impossible for the other tournaments not to, sort of, step up their game. This tournament has sort of become Vijay's (inaudible.)

So all of the other tournaments have to come out to do something else to attract the field, especially the ones right around there. We have a charter going to Ireland and back. I think there is at least a dozen or two players that came here just because of that offer.

Q. Will they need that kind of offer to come back?

STEWART CINK: I don't think so. I think players are enjoying the course. Everyone knows that the greens are new, they are so hard, they will become more playable over time. It will be a good event in the fall, I believe. It's a nice place. It's a trickle down effect from the top.

Mr. Hardy really had his heart and soul behind this place, and it shows. He wants us to be premiere here and I think he will.

Q. Let's go through your card if we can.

STEWART CINK: Oh yes, 5, I finally figured out to play the fifth hole, is to not hit the green, and I chipped in. That's not a very tough par-5 there at all. I just really botched it and made a lot of pars. I will tell you I chipped in, that was sort of a kick start for me.

7, I hit a great 6-iron there. Exactly the shot I needed to hit it. It landed a yard on the green and it rolled about 28 yards to about eight feet and made that.

My putter was really feeling good. I could see the line, and I could see the ball falling on the front edge.

8, up and down from the left bunker, really awkward lie made about an 18-footer there.

9, I hit, let's see, I hit an 8-iron to about 20 feet. I made that.

10, I hit an L-wedge in there, a tough pin to really be to aggressive with, and I hit it 15 feet right of the hole and made that.

11, I hit an L-wedge in there, my third shot about ten feet and made that. None of those putts even came close to the sides. There were all just in the center. It was so fun. Then I started hitting it really close.

12, I hit it about ten feet straight, ver easy putt. It didn't sniff the hole.

13, I hit a tough putt. It was only five or six feet and made that. Took three down from the edge down on 14 where I was -- I had to putt through about 20 feet of fringe and 20 feet of green and missed about a five-footer for par there.

I made a good par save on 15 from about six feet. And a good up and down from about 80 feet on 16 from a really bad lie just off the green, chipped it down to about two feet.

And hit a good iron shot, a good 9-iron on 17 to about 15 feet there. That was a big putt for me because it was a tough read, and I really wanted to make it, but I resisted the urge to get into the future and think about results and I just stayed in my game plan and made a nice stroke.

I gave myself a chance on 18 with that bunker shot. It was not exactly how I planned it. It was low. I got a good bounce. Sometimes you work hard, you get good breaks.

And the putt on 18 I thought it was in all the way. It looked like it may have hit something or wiggled right of a way through it, and never really took the break after that. It was a good effort, and I would play it the same way again. But I settled for par.

Q. What about your chances next week, you have been playing really well for an extended period of time now?

STEWART CINK: Well, I like my chances. I'll go in next week with a lot of confidence. I got my wife and my kids going. It will be a nice relaxing week for me. I don't know. I played pretty well the last Royal Golf Championship so maybe I can carry on from that.

Q. Can you win two of those in a row?

STEWART CINK: Yes, why not. I need to show up Thursday and Friday though because this week really, I showed up and I really didn't -- I gave it my all, but I didn't -- I just seemed to just go through the motions out there. I guess that's the we best way to put it. I ended up making the cut by a shot or two. You can't do that and expect to beat guys like Vijay Singh, Tiger Woods. They will hammer you if you do that. Second, is a great finish definitely. I played really well this weekend, but I have a lesson to be learned from this week and hopefully I can apply that in future tournaments.

Q. In the final press conference of the Ryder Cup you didn't say a whole lot, a week later, do you have any perspective now that you didn't have then on what happened?

STEWART CINK: No, not really. The perspective sort of unfolded right in front of me, just like it did all of you. The reason I didn't say anything is because nobody asked me anything. There was about eight of us on the team that nobody asked anything. That's okay. I understand everybody want questions for Tiger, Phil, Davis and the captain. It was a tough loss. I think it's a lot tougher to lose by that margin than it would have been than to come close and barely lose at the end like we did the last time.

I definitely don't think that going and reaccessing how to choose the team, making it a one year system, I don't think that's the answer because you almost always end up with the same players and if you substitute any out it's two or three. The players are all so good. It's not that. It's getting everybody to feel like they have nothing to lose. If I could play the way I played today in the Ryder Cup -- I didn't play this way last week. I just didn't. I wish I would have, but I didn't. And I think there is 11 other guys that wore American uniforms last week that would say the same thing. We just didn't play loose, free relaxed golf like I did I today. So I wish I had the answer to that. Somewhere it's locked inside the brains of all of the 12 American players. And we have to figure it out because the European team, they've got it. They played relax. They don't seem to care if they lose. They play like they have nothing to lose. Thanks.