



August 8, 2007



Southern Hills Country Club

Hole #	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Out	Total
Yardage	464	488	451	372	653	200	384	245	374	3,631	366	173	458	537	223	413	507	358	465	3,500	7,131
Par	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	3	4	35	4	3	4	5	3	4	4	4	4	35	70
Score																					

An Interview With:

STEWART CINK

KELLY ELBIN: Ladies and gentlemen, Stewart Cink joining us at the 89th PGA Championship at Southern Hills Country Club. Stewart's making his 11th appearance in the PGA Championship. His best finish was a tie for 3rd in 1999 at Medinah Country Club, back in 2001 Stewart was 3rd here at Southern Hills in the U.S. Open. Welcome back. Some thoughts, remembrances of 2001 versus what you've seen in the practice rounds here?

STEWART CINK: The golf course itself looks similar to how it did then. It's the kind of a course, you don't have to change a lot of things; the trees are here; the greens have obviously been resurfaced since then, but I don't think there's much change to those.

And in fact, I think they've resurfaced those before the U.S. Open, as well. We're playing on similar greens. The fairways a bit narrower anywhere from two to five yards per hole. And, I don't know, looks like a few holes have been lengthened, but we're hitting the balls further, too. It should be a similar type of scoring event, I think.

KELLY ELBIN: Open up for questions, please.

Q. How do you like the 18th?

STEWART CINK: I liked it before.

Q. I didn't mean to be [] is your lish about it?

STEWART CINK: They made it a lot more fair because the ball that used to come off the top tier rolled down the fairway now they've added a shelf where the ball stays on the green. For that type of a hole that's a lot better than it used to be.

And the same with 9. They did the same thing on 9. The two greens have been improved quite a bit.

Q. I understand that you may know who the new assistant picks were for Paul Azinger for the Ryder Cup team. Your thoughts about Olin, Raymond and Dave Stockton and what you think they bring to the Ryder Cup team?

STEWART CINK: Well, let me address Floyd and Stockton first. I don't know everything about the Ryder Cup and the history, but I think those two guys won Ryder Cups as captains; is that correct?

So they bring a winning mentality and we lost the last three. So they bring something that we haven't been a part of for the last three Ryder Cups; that's winning. They've been there. So they obviously are two guys who have done a lot in golf and captained Ryder Cup teams in the past and won those rider cups. So, great picks.

Olin Browne is everybody knows, everybody has a lot of respect. The players know him. Similar age to a lot of the players that are going to be on the team. So that's -- it's always a

good benefit to have a guy like Olin Browne around, too.

Q. Retief said he may be staying in the same house that you rented in 2001 this year. You're not having to stay in the same hotel rooms he was in that week, are you?

STEWART CINK: I'm not in a hotel room, so no. But the house he's staying in, if he's staying in the one I stayed in last time, it's a fantastic place, probably the best house we've rented. Great pool. Everything was great there.

Q. Do you feel like you've grown a lot in the six years since that experience happened here, and what did it teach you in the long run that maybe has helped you out?

STEWART CINK: Well, a lot of people have -- and I've been very willing to talk about it since it happened, six years down the road now and I'm still talking about it.

I don't think it taught me a lesson. I missed the putt on the last hole, that looked like it was meaningless, until Retief missed his putt; then it was very meaningful.

I would say it taught me the lesson that it's not over until it's over. But I already knew that lesson. It was not like I was careless on the putt. I just missed it.

If anything I got out of that lesson is I have what it takes to contend in a major at a course like Southern Hills, and I haven't really had a great record in a major since then.

But when the time comes and I get close again on a Sunday, I'll know that, hey, I did it once before and I can get there. I can get to the 72nd hole, and all I need to do now is just finish it off.

Q. The first time you walked back up on the green at 18, did you have to fight any flashbacks of that Sunday?

STEWART CINK: No, I didn't have to fight any. I wouldn't fight them. Because I wouldn't call it flashbacks. To me flashback has a negative connotation. It's not like I've shut anything out of my memory. I remember everything.

But the first thing I was noticing was the green and seeing how it changed, because I heard about what they did to it and to see if it's different, and it is.

And then other than that, I just kind of prepared for it like it's any other hole, because you gotta play them all.

Q. Stewart, the last Alabama native to win a major was Larry Nelson in this championship 20 years ago and Hubert Green won this course U.S. Open 30 years ago. Does that inspire you in any way or that just useless trivia?

STEWART CINK: I didn't need to know that (Laughter).

Q. Did those guys have any influence on your career early? I know they're from different generations.

STEWART CINK: Well, they are. They're from a little earlier generation, especially Hubert, little earlier than when I was old enough to really pay much attention to golf. That was probably more at the time that I was fighting my dad for the control of the television. Because I wanted to watch cartoons when I was about that age (smiling), Larry Nelson I remember being I guess he won the PGA at Palm Beach; is that right?

KELLY ELBIN: '87.

STEWART CINK: Won in a playoff over Lanny Wadkins. So I remember that one. '87 I guess I was 14 years old. I got to a point where I wanted to watch golf on TV. But I didn't really -- I wouldn't say those guys had an influence on my career. They were both a little too early for me. I wasn't really serious about golf at that time.

So I was more in the Tom Kite generation. He was the guy that I really looked up to and sort of patterned my, not my swing or the way I, you know, because we're different sizes, but the way I approached tournament golf.

KELLY ELBIN: Stewart's correct. Larry Nelson won the 1987 PGA Championship at PGA National in a playoff over Lanny Wadkins.

Q. Going back to 18 in 2001, can you go into just a little bit more detail about some of your memories and just the sound of the crowd and what you remember from just sort of the emotion that went through the gallery, and also maybe just what you were thinking standing over that putt, if you just approached it like any other putt or maybe if there was a little bit of a different feeling for you?

STEWART CINK: No, it was different because I just lost the U.S. Open. I mean -- the putt before that is the one that meant the most. The 15-footer I needed to make for par because Retief was inside of that for birdie, and we were tied. So that putt slid by the hole and that was over.

It was hard to collect my thoughts and to concentrate, but I didn't hurry. I just went through my routine and everything. And the putt was like this (demonstrating) it was tiny, a tiny tap-in and I just missed it. The crowd reaction, I don't remember exactly; it was obvious they were surprised I didn't make it, because they expect us to roll those in in our sleep.

But I didn't make it. And I think they were sort of just looking forward to Retief's putt to see what the winner was going to do on that hole, because I was out of it at that point. And my miss was really just sort of a bizarre little twist that happened there that no one really thought much about until Retief did what he did.

And then all of a sudden, I think everybody sort of went, wait a minute now, that means that Cink's putt would have gotten him into a playoff but he missed it.

It was a really strange way that everything finished up there. I wish it would have finished differently, but it didn't. And it's just one of those kind of things that the longer you play golf, you end up in strange situations.

And I played a long time now and I've been in some strange ones. And that was probably, considering it was the focal point of the golf universe at the moment, it was definitely the top of the list.

Q. You've been a stand-up guy in revisiting this issue, every time somebody asks about it. You see it happen in other sports where an athlete will say I've talked about that plenty I'm not talking about it anymore. Do you ever consider just saying, you know, I'm going to embargo that question; I've done it before I'm not going to revisit the issue again?

STEWART CINK: You have to remember that it's been six years since it happened. And this is the first tournament since we've played -- first tournament at Southern Hills since then. So it's not like I get asked this question every day. It's just been a lead-up to the Southern Hills PGA.

I don't mind talking about it. I would never consider just shutting people down and saying forget it; I've already said what I'm going to say. What would be the point of that, except to look like a jerk. I mean, it's not something I'm afraid of talking about. It's not like I can hide from it. I'm not proud of it.

But I'm not going to ever say, forget it, we're not talking about it.

Q. Just wondering, you hired a sports psychologist of sorts time after that. How much did what happened here have to do with that, of hiring that gentleman, and you do still speak to him, do you not?

STEWART CINK: I still do. And he's not a sports psychologist, first. If I ever called him that, he'd probably jump through the phone and kill me.

The finish here -- and you know golf has a way of applying a little bit of shame if you miss a short putt or **flub** a chip or hit one OB; shame is a part of golf. And without getting too much into detail, that was just -- the Southern Hills finish, that was a brick in the wall, so to speak. It was just another little thing. It was a stepping stone to where I realized I needed to deal with some of this stuff.

It's not the only reason. It's not like I went to him and said, "Help me get over this." It was just another little setback for me that I wanted to get around. I mean, there were other ones that weren't quite as high profile as this. But to me they made just as much impact along the way. Just little failures, you know? And golf is such a game of how you deal with all kinds of failures. Because unless you're Tiger Woods, you lose a lot. The players are so good these days, you can't win that often, not many can.

So it was a part of the symptoms that I needed to address, and I decided to go about doing that by basically looking in the mirror and seeing inside myself and seeing why I tick or the way I work. And I learned a lot since then. I've learned how to handle myself a little bit better. And it's been really a positive experience for me. Not that that was a positive experience -- that was not a positive. But since then, working with Preston Waddington, it's been a positive experience for me. Not just in sports, in golf, but my whole life. I've learned a lot about myself and my own history, so to speak.

Q. You mentioned Tom Kite and being an inspiration in some ways for you. Took him a long time before he got that major victory that everybody thought he deserved to get. And this year there have been three first-time major winners already. Do you see a lot of opportunity to add your name to that list this week, or would that be a nice sort of karmic kind of conclusion?

STEWART CINK: First-time major winner this year? Yeah, I definitely see myself as a guy that could step into that role and be the next first-time major winner, sure.

I've been through the fire out here and I've played in all sorts of situations that require a lot of -- you know, a lot of poise, and I feel like I have a lot of it.

I don't think that there's necessarily going to be a first-time winner of a major this tournament, just because three have already done it this year. That has nothing to do with it. But every time I see a Zach Johnson or an Angel Cabrera or a Padraig Harrington win their first major or even going back a few years to David Toms, Phil Mickelson, Tom Kite, it leads me to believe, why not me? The list keeps growing of who has majors, and there's always room for one more.

Q. To follow up on that before I move on, do you think karma owes you something? Do you think karma could be on your side this time?

STEWART CINK: I don't really believe much in karma. My beliefs are in other areas, but not in karma, really, no.

Besides, they dug up the green that did that to me, right? It doesn't exist anymore (Laughter).

Q. Do you think that -- I've heard that on that 18th hole, it was the shot before the putt that you had some problems with, too. Do you look back on anything else from 18 that gives you the issues that you think about?

STEWART CINK: Issues? The issues, if you're talking about an issue, I lost the tournament because I didn't hit the green from the fairway. You hit in this bermudarough, you're not going to make par every time. I had a 5-iron to the green and I hit it a little bit left.

And I didn't get my chip very close, about 15 feet. And so those two shots are really where I

cost myself a tournament. Do I have issues with those? Not really. I mean, I would say that when you say, do I have an issue, that means that I've had trouble down the road because of those shots now.

I mean, that was just -- it's not exactly an easy shot from the fairway there, uphill 5-iron, left-to-right wind, hit a little to the left. The two shots that cost me the tournament I think were the two shots, the fairway and the chip. But as far as issues, no, not really. I just -- I didn't play the best shots in that situation. And hopefully I'll get a chance to repeat the same scenario this time and I'll redeem myself.

Q. Stan Awtrey picks you to win the tournament, and everybody else that I've talked to who isn't picking Tiger seems to be picking your name, which surprise me somewhat. How does that sit with you? Do you feel --

STEWART CINK: How does what sit with me, that you're surprised? (Laughter).

Q. No, I'm easily surprised. No. How does that sit with you? Do you like going off being a favorite?

STEWART CINK: Yeah, because being a favorite indicates what you've done in the past. And I think I have the type of game that can play this kind of course well. You have to be solid here. You're going to hit the ball in the trees sometimes. And you have to figure out a way to get out of it. You're going to have to rely on your putting a good bit here, because not everybody is going to hit 15 greens around.

And I have that kind of mentality where I'll hang in there. I won't ever fold the tent. If I shoot 82 both rounds, I'll try my rear end off doing it.

Q. I also pick you as the winner.

STEWART CINK: That's better. Perfect. (Laughter).

KELLY ELBIN: You have Furman Bisher's blessing.

Q. Can you describe your week at Carnoustie and what that does for you going into this week?

STEWART CINK: I don't think it has a lot to do with this week. Usually you think that Carnoustie would be like the toughest of the year. But so far when you look at the majors, Carnoustie

has been the easiest setup of the year, because we had all these over-par scores. And this week I think also could end up being an over-par type of situation because the rough is so deep.

So Carnoustie, it was a good experience for me, and really meaningful for my career because I had never played that well in the Open. And to go over there and go to a place where I shot 20-over for two rounds in '99 and come back and finish top 10 and had a snip at the lead on Sunday afternoon meant a lot to me.

But as far as taking that sort of game to here, it's almost impossible to even compare the two, because over there you're playing in the cold. I wore my rain suit three out of four days just because of how cold it was. And here you're just -- you're almost praying for a little bit of wind to keep from dying; the heat is so bad. You hit your ball at least 10, 15 percent farther here than there just because of the temperatures. The style of play is not even close to the same.

So I won't really go back to Carnoustie and draw from that much, at all. I'll draw from other things. But Carnoustie, I'm proud of it, but I don't think it has a lot to do with this tournament.

KELLY ELBIN: For the record Stewart tied for 6th at the Open Championship two weeks ago.

Stewart Cink, thank you very much.

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