

Travelers Championship

Thursday, June 22, 2017

Brett Stegmaier

Quick Quotes

Q. On 9, the par 3, you hit a wide shot and caught the cart path?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, I got lucky, was a great lie into the wind. Was probably a 35-yard shot. Hit it right over the ShotLink tower. Yeah, just in-between clubs on the tee and got up in the wind and hit the cart path, too. I felt like I stole one or two there after the tee shot, so that was nice.

Q. This has to be a special day for you, long way from finishing, but to shoot the season-low round with family and friend, you grew up 30 miles from here. This has to be special?

BRETT STEGMAIER: This is my fourth time playing, came in with really low expectations today. I think that certainly helps play a good round, stress-free. So long way to go, but definitely nice to get off to a good start.

It's one I want to think about the most other than a major but tried not to think about that. Tried to practice good coming up here and have a stress-free round tomorrow.

Q. Your dad was walking outside the ropes, he was talking to people. He was having probably more fun than you were because you had a little more pressure?

BRETT STEGMAIER: I'm sure he was pretty nervous. I certainly felt it coming in because it's been a while since I've played well. It was nice to somewhat finish off good.

Q. Six birdies over seven holes. When you put together a stretch like that, what's happening out there?

BRETT STEGMAIER: I wasn't thinking too much. I wasn't hitting it any more solid than a 72 I would have shot earlier in the year. Just hitting them a little closer and putting well. Drove it okay. I drove it kind of poorly coming in and probably fortunate to only make one bogey. It was nice to somewhat finish off a really good round.

Q. You had to be happy with your putting today. How did you get to 6-under?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Been working hard on chipping and putting. A lot of mental stuff, just looking at the hole and going -- not thinking too much. It's been showing the last few weeks but today it certainly



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showed a little bit more.

Q. This season, you could probably use some momentum. What do you take away from this opening round?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Just another step in the right direction. Just more proof that what I'm doing is working, starting to come together. You know, not going to over blow it. It's just one round. So got a long way to go. Try to get a good night's sleep tonight, come out, warm up good and have a stress-free round tomorrow.

Q. A lot of players enjoy playing this course, TPC River Highlands. How does this course work out for you?

BRETT STEGMAIER: I really like it. I don't have a whole lot of success on it, which is kind of weird. Probably just put too much pressure on myself coming here. This year was pretty low key, not expecting much and I think the results have shown that that's probably the best way to go.

Q. That stretch where you had seven birdies in nine holes, is that about as well as you've played this year?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Probably. I didn't even realize. I knew I made four in a row. I really wasn't thinking too much, which is obviously the key, which is what I've been working on a lot with my mental coach, just taking the thinking out of it, doing the process really well and once I get over it, just go. It's been showing lately. I've had a little bit more success the last couple weeks, and today obviously it worked out really well.

Q. You talked about the double-edged sword of having support here but trying to play well in front of those people. Did you learn something from last year and apply it this year?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, I had a pretty poor attitude coming here last year. You want to play well in front of the people that care about you obviously. This year, I certainly didn't expect to play poorly but almost like, I don't care how I play. I think you could ask anybody out here; if they take that approach, it usually works out in their favor. It's just hard to do because you always want to aim high, but expecting very little usually works out pretty good.

Q. This is one of the best fields this tournament has seen. What's it going to take to win?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Three good rounds. But I'm only thinking about my warmup tomorrow. Just do that well and go from there. There's so much that can only. It's only one day. Got a long way to go.

Q. You said you were waiting to play a good round here. How does it feel after?

BRETT STEGMAIER: It feels great. It's been a rough year obviously. Just nice to take another step in the right direction. It's been coming together the last couple months even though the results haven't really shown it. To shoot a really low round is a big confidence boost.

Q. Is this your first under par round around here?

BRETT STEGMAIER: I think it is.

Q. Can you talk about your memories of this place and what are your greatest memories of coming here as a kid?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Greatest memory is probably watching Notah Begay make a 30-footer to win in 2000 I think. That was a moment where I thought, wow, I need to play in this tournament and play on TOUR. To be here now, it's almost a little surreal.

Just being on TOUR, I realize it's not the greatest thing in the world because it's still a job. You've still got to grind. There's low points. But with the right perspective, to be here now, talking to you guys, is pretty cool.

Q. How long have you had a mental coach?

BRETT STEGMAIER: For about three months.

Q. How has that gone?

BRETT STEGMAIER: It's gone well. Because I mean, when I played poorly, it was pretty tough. I was pretty hard on myself and people around me probably. Probably wasn't fair to them. So it's nice to kind of -- I feel a lot better off the golf course. It's taken a little while for the results to show on the golf course, but obviously today is another step in the right direction.

Q. His name is?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Paul Doolan.

Q. Any family members here this week?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Parents, sister, brother-in-law, bunch of my parents's friends. I don't have a whole lot of connections here anymore because I've been gone for probably 15 years. But certainly people yell out "Madison, Connecticut" from the crowd which is pretty cool.

Q. Is this an indication how close you've actually been --

BRETT STEGMAIER: You see all the time guys who miss five cuts in a row and win. And it doesn't come out of nowhere. It's such a fine line between playing well and playing poorly. It's kind of weird. There's so many examples in golf, especially on TOUR, of that happening.

Q. You almost left the TOUR. Can you talk about what propels you to keep on going?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Just the fact that I've always wanted to do this and never really wanted to sit at a desk and work for a living, even though once you get out here, you realize this is work. It's not just all fun.

But yeah, I mean, the fact that the money is so good, it's just like, it's hard to let go of that, because there's such a big pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

Q. A couple years ago, did you seriously consider leaving?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Before I got on the Web, probably, just because I ran out of money and wasn't enjoying it. But was fortunate to finally get through Q-School. Always seemed to play well when I really, really needed it, which is what I'm hoping I can do to finish off this year, since I'm pretty far behind the 8-ball. But got a good stretch of tournaments left where I can make some noise.

Q. What was your mind-set when you saw the field, and how do you play without thinking about all the other guys that are in the field?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Yeah, I mean, I don't pay too much attention to it. It's nice the fact that it's my home event and a bunch of the top players have decided to play. Let's you know how good the tournament is. But I just do my job. I don't worry about who is ahead of me or who I have to beat to win or play well.

Q. Can you talk about your best shots?

BRETT STEGMAIER: Probably the bunker shot on 13 wasn't a good spot to be and landed it right where I wanted to.