

BORING BEFORE BRILLIANCE: STEVE STRICKER

[INTENSE MUSIC PLAYING]

STEVE STRICKER: This is a challenge to make a par with a wedge from 308 yards. Do I get to use my putter? No? So I got to putt with a wedge. So a wedge, wedge, lob wedge, and another lob wedge for four. We got our work cut out for us. Shot number one. My short game has always been my strength. I'm definitely more conservative in the risk/reward area.

NIKKI STRICKER: He doesn't take many chances, and I can remember, first started caddying for him, and I was just like, "If you could get there on a par 5, well, dude, you got to go. You got to hit it."

STEVE: Everybody wants me to go for it, but that's not my game. I've got 170 left. There we have it. Probably going to have 60 or 70 yards left. Sometimes when I do go for it and I mess up, I'm kicking myself all the way to the green, you know? It's like, why didn't I just lay up?

DENNIS TIZIANA: When you wind up from 100 yards and you can hit it inside of 10 feet all the time, I mean, why do you want to do something different?

STEVE: I've got 55 yards left. That could be good. So the pressure's on to make this putt. My game is pretty boring. I don't do anything very flashy. I'm a conservative person off the course, and I'm good with that. Putting with a lob wedge. So we got a lot of things going against us. Yeah. There's a four.

-Whoo.

-One take.

[Chuckles]

There we go.

[INTENSE MUSIC PLAYING]

[TITLE CARD: PNC BANK PRESENTS BORING BEFORE BRILLIANCE. STEVE STRICKER]

STEVE: I won twice in 1996.

ANNOUNCERS: There you go.

-Yes, sir.

-So --

-Congratulations.

-I'll tell you right now, you're going to hear a lot from this kid right here.

STEVE: Coming out in '97, I played with arguably the best player in the world,

and I soon found out that I didn't have the skill-set that this guy had.

ANNOUNCER: Just looks colossal from here.

-Watch out.

STEVE: He's hitting his 3-wood past my driver.

ANNOUNCER: Speed this young man has through the ball.

NIKKI: Coming out of that tournament, and it was like deer in the headlights. I mean, the words came out of his mouth. He's like, "I can't compete with that. Like, I can't hit shots like that."

STEVE: Immediately, you start to try to change your game to try to emulate that aggressive approach. It affected my game, it affected my confidence, and in 2003, '04, and '05, I lost my card. I really hit rock bottom at that time.

DENNIS: A lot of these players that play good for a while but then left, they had a fallback. Where was his fallback? I mean, it was all or nothing.

STEVE: I'm like, I can either go try to do something else for a living or suck it up and go back to the kind of player I am, and that's relying on my short game. When I was playing poorly, especially at the start of 2005, spent a lot of time looking into this mirror. I took this opportunity to -- to hit a lot of balls during the wintertime, continually work on this part at the top of my swing. I didn't venture much further than hitting some 8-irons. There it is. I would just hit shot after shot after shot. It got pretty boring, and it's so repetitive, but I kept looking at the bigger picture, and then I saw some really good signs in my game.

NIKKI: Yeah, floodgates opened.

ANNOUNCER: With a birdie, there's your champion.

[CHEERS AND APPLAUSE]

INTERVIEWER: You've battled back from the depths of not being able to find your golf game. Everybody in the golf world's proud of you.

STEVE: [Crying] Thanks, Peter.

[Sniffles]

It was hard, but you know what? It was a lot of fun, too. Never knew if I was gonna win again, you know, but [sniffles] tell you what, this is sweet. If someone calls me boring or my game boring, it's not a negative to me at all. It's proved to work for me, and boring can transition very quickly into brilliant.

ANNOUNCER: Looking good. Oh, my goodness. Steve Stricker.

ANNOUNCER: But he's sort of a stoic guy, modest, humble... ...but there are moments when that just won't do.

DENNIS: The business of not winning a major, I guess that I know some of the people that have won majors. What -- What's the big deal? You played good for a week. This guy's played good for 25 years.
That's where the brilliance is.

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