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| **Historic Rounds for Steve Stricker and Defending Champion David Toms at U.S. Senior Open Championship** |
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| June 27-30, 2019, Warren Golf Course at Notre Dame, South Bend, Ind.[mediacenter.usga.org](https://nam05.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ficm-tracking.meltwater.com%2Flink.php%3FDynEngagement%3Dtrue%26H%3D5eXH0qSKdBRphS6WO4YlQwwSTi8wtQOqejFjZKiddbCzZ5Bbl4XDYdx2K96fexlgIO7gMBnqKMgw%252Bhk%252F%252BHcamcdn8491FYD1x%252FdCOxFXQ0cg0jrsfnNeJT19k7h1W0W9%26G%3D0%26R%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fnam05.safelinks.protection.outlook.com%252F%253Furl%253Dhttp%25253A%25252F%25252Ficm-tracking.meltwater.com%25252Flink.php%25253FDynEngagement%25253Dtrue%252526H%25253DbtYXC68syxmDVppbhVzFoYHdeMNV9070xvOlf%2525252FNdDQ0wXj6aidRhm0w6DZoGITpCcLkftf8fVbwMeVq7YUOJ%2525252FmnmWvvTYk9qS%2525252FHstTyNu5DyViKpQpAwWHtGmNj933kV%252526G%25253D0%252526R%25253Dhttps%2525253A%2525252F%2525252Fnam05.safelinks.protection.outlook.com%2525252F%2525253Furl%2525253Dhttp%252525253A%252525252F%252525252Ficm-tracking.meltwater.com%252525252Flink.php%252525253FDynEngagement%252525253Dtrue%2525252526H%252525253DAqX%25252525252Fyxxn%25252525252FCsKfNEzXNs%25252525252BvxKe7ZZW379%25252525252BIapVVCHkcj06tGRioNXHyfncDrdOWtx%25252525252Br0W1J4QLTGtbmyE4F7AZ2n8It7KEBxN%25252525252FCdm9mJlwE68TzozwkLFxVh7nnDmVKF8e%2525252526G%252525253D0%2525252526R%252525253Dhttp%25252525253A%25252525252F%25252525252Fmediacenter.usga.org%25252525252Fus-womens-amateur%2525252526I%252525253D20190530032742.000002d318f6%252525252540mail6-60-usnbn1%2525252526X%252525253DMHwxMDQ2NzU4OjVjZWY0ZGFkZGZhZGJiZjVhOGFlOGZmYzsxfDEwNDY3NTk6dHJ1ZTs%25252525253D%2525252526S%252525253D-wl7Lfzw6R078grqnkBzKAhz-_Rh5pxal6osU8RqYVk%25252526data%2525253D02%252525257C01%252525257CBDePasquale%2525252540USGA.org%252525257C78e72703bae847c6c7f608d6e4af299a%252525257C17abf7083a064391bdbd06808d1b9f81%252525257C0%252525257C0%252525257C636947838303744122%25252526sdata%2525253D15SAuU5V1rjvw1FsrdDXhoyUUOZ%252525252BEAedxTMqVl6wjtw%252525253D%25252526reserved%2525253D0%252526I%25253D20190606150115.0000048d49d6%25252540mail6-114-ussnn1%252526X%25253DMHwxMDQ2NzU4OjVjZjkyYTgxZGZhZGJiZjVhOGFlOWJmMDsxfDEwNDY3NTk6dHJ1ZTs%2525253D%252526S%25253DG15OQMvyd8t6YXgiu65qpg12S9Yt5UD1OAwolskz4mc%2526data%253D02%25257C01%25257CBDePasquale%25) | [ussenioropen.com](https://nam05.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ficm-tracking.meltwater.com%2Flink.php%3FDynEngagement%3Dtrue%26H%3D5eXH0qSKdBRphS6WO4YlQwwSTi8wtQOqejFjZKiddbCzZ5Bbl4XDYdx2K96fexlgIO7gMBnqKMgw%252Bhk%252F%252BHcamcdn8491FYD1x%252FdCOxFXQ0cg0jrsfnNeJT19k7h1W0W9%26G%3D0%26R%3Dhttp%253A%252F%252Fwww.ussenioropen.com%26I%3D20190628005101.00000442a861%2540mail6-43-usnbn1%26X%3DMHwxMDQ2NzU4OjVkMTU2M2Y0YjA1ZjM5NTQ1MjYyMmU3NDs%253D%26S%3DAMZ0I6Qp4YmEQHPmi0F8_xAIyPuH-d0PW7Bj0BXy2-Q&data=02%7C01%7CJALTSTADTER%40usga.org%7C4c59b0fbbc0c437baa1608d6fb638ac0%7C17abf7083a064391bdbd06808d1b9f81%7C0%7C0%7C636972802301646776&sdata=ozwzY3QeYYM4XNUCw%2FCnBxhuN56Ss359plCHbjs8GfE%3D&reserved=0) | @usga\_pr (media Twitter) |@usga (Twitter and Instagram) | USGA (Facebook) | #USSeniorOpen |
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| **What Happened**  Before the competitors stepped on the grounds of the Warren Course at Notre Dame for this week’s U.S. Senior Open Championship, they had to register inside the locker room of one of the country’s iconic athletic venues. With the Notre Dame fight song blaring through speakers, each player walked down the steps to the football field, passing by the yellow sign telling them to “Play Like a Champion Today.”  Perhaps that was a harbinger for Thursday’s opening round.  Thanks to an overnight storm that dropped more than an inch of rain on the Bill Coore/Ben Crenshaw design – part of the 3 inches that have fallen just in the last week and a half – a soft course morphed into an attack zone for the game’s best 50-and-over golfers.  Defending champion David Toms and U.S. Senior Open rookie Steve Stricker led the scoring assault on the Warren Course like Joe Montana leading the Fighting Irish on a last-minute come-from-behind victory at nearby Notre Dame Stadium.  Toms registered 10 birdies – a single-round championship record – and Stricker posted seven birdies and an eagle en route to 8-under-par 62s on the 6,891-yard layout. The 62s matched the championship record held by Loren Roberts, Kirk Triplett and Brandt Jobe. Stricker, who had four consecutive birdies from No. 8, saw his bid for a 61 slide just right of the hole on No. 18. No player has ever shot a 61 in a regular or senior major championship.  They are two strokes clear of Triplett and Jerry Kelly, who defeated fellow Wisconsin native Stricker in a playoff in last week’s American Family Insurance Championship in their hometown of Madison. Three strokes back at 5 under par are three-time major winner Vijay Singh, Duffy Waldorf and Toru Suzuki, whose round included holing a 133-yard approach shot for an eagle 2 on the 401-yard, par-4 15th hole.  Toms became the first defending champion to hold or share the 18-hole lead, and his first-round score bettered the mark by a defender by six strokes.  “Today was all about getting off to a good start,” said Toms, who has yet to win in 2019 on the PGA Tour Champions, despite five top-10s, including a tie for second in the Regions Tradition. “Obviously 62 is a bonus, but when you're defending champion, you just want to get out there, play golf and try to be in the golf tournament after the first day and not shoot yourself out of it. I'm in a good spot, and it's a long week. We all know that. It's four rounds this week instead of three, and so that's the difference.”  Coming off the disappointing playoff loss to Kelly last week, Stricker only played nine holes on the Warren Course over the past two days to keep himself fresh and energized. Considered one of the nicest guys in professional golf, Stricker, 52, admitted to being “cranky” after missing a putt on the final hole of regulation that would have won him his fifth PGA Tour Champions title and second of 2019.  “Whenever you have that opportunity to win a golf tournament and you don't make the putt or hit the shot that you're supposed to, it bugs you,” said Stricker, who is competing in his first U.S. Senior Open. “I didn't sleep very well Sunday night [or] Monday night. Slept a little bit better Tuesday night. But it was eating at me.”  Toms, 52, settled into a proper mindset after overly aggressive play led to two birdies and two bogeys over his first five holes. The softer conditions forced Toms into hitting mid-irons into many of the par 4s, but his hot putter converted a plethora of 12- to 15-foot birdie attempts. Toms’ four consecutive birdies to close the round all came from 12 feet and beyond, and his second-nine 29 was just one stroke off the championship record.  “I've used conventional grip, I've used claw,” said Toms, who totaled 24 putts. “I've done a little bit of everything here lately. Not that I've been putting bad, I just didn't feel like I was making enough to be competitive as I wanted to be. I went conventional yesterday in the practice round, and it felt good. I did it all day today, and it felt good. I'll try to stick with it, maybe, at least for tomorrow, and see if we can roll in a few more.”  **Notable**  Prior to the start of Thursday’s first round, each player received a Notre Dame football jersey with their names on the back adorned with the No. 19 for the 2019 U.S. Senior Open.  The 42 sub-par rounds broke the previous mark of 40 set in 2017 at Salem Country Club in Peabody, Mass.  Two-time U.S. Open champion **Retief Goosen**, competing in his first U.S. Senior Open, was in a group at 4-under 66.  **David Toms** is vying to be the fourth back-to-back winner of the U.S. Senior Open, joining **Miller Barber, Gary Player** and **Allen Doyle.**  **Tom Watson**, the 1982 U.S. Open champion who turns 70 on Sept. 4, shot his age (1-under 69). He is the fourth player to achieve that feat, joining **Hale Irwin** (three times), **Jerry Barber** (three times) and **Bob Charles.** Irwin and Watson are the only players to shoot their age while in their 60s, the former carding a 66 in 2011 at the Inverness Club.  **Sean Knapp**, the 2017 U.S. Senior Amateur champion, and **Mike McCoy**, the 2013 U.S. Mid-Amateur champion, each posted 1-over 71s to lead the 23 amateurs in the field. McCoy is looking to join **Marvin “Vinny” Giles** and **Tim Jackson** as the only players earn low-amateur honors three times in the U.S. Senior Open.  **Gary Nicklaus**, the son of four-time U.S. Open champion **Jack Nicklaus**, shot a 2-under 68 with his famous father watching from outside the ropes.  **Darren Clarke** was assessed a two-stroke penalty on the 10th hole when his caddie Bradley Whittle, on the request from Clarke, moved a pole containing a permanent bird house that was in his intended line of play. By having his caddie bend the pole to the right, Clarke improved his line of play in breach of [**Rule 8.1a (Improving the Line of Play**](https://nam05.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=http%3A%2F%2Ficm-tracking.meltwater.com%2Flink.php%3FDynEngagement%3Dtrue%26H%3D5eXH0qSKdBRphS6WO4YlQwwSTi8wtQOqejFjZKiddbCzZ5Bbl4XDYdx2K96fexlgIO7gMBnqKMgw%252Bhk%252F%252BHcamcdn8491FYD1x%252FdCOxFXQ0cg0jrsfnNeJT19k7h1W0W9%26G%3D0%26R%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.usga.org%252Fcontent%252Fusga%252Fhome-page%252Frules%252Frules-2019%252Frules-of-golf%252Frules-and-interpretations.html%2523%2521ruletype%253Dpe%2526section%253Drule%2526rulenum%253D8%2526subrulenum%253D1%26I%3D20190628005101.00000442a861%2540mail6-43-usnbn1%26X%3DMHwxMDQ2NzU4OjVkMTU2M2Y0YjA1ZjM5NTQ1MjYyMmU3NDs%253D%26S%3DwAC7nRxvqLQMgw6ri15pD9sXNXrI8fRH-988DuRqBbI&data=02%7C01%7CJALTSTADTER%40usga.org%7C4c59b0fbbc0c437baa1608d6fb638ac0%7C17abf7083a064391bdbd06808d1b9f81%7C0%7C0%7C636972802301646776&sdata=xiYhDlJuXj7K45do4KkU%2FzMZPO1RH1kmLPM7ZXGyNCM%3D&reserved=0)). Clarke signed for a 3-over 73.  Amateur **Todd Burgan,** of Knoxville, Tenn., who was set to play in his first U.S. Senior Open, withdrew prior to his starting time on Thursday due to a back issue. He was replaced by alternate **Lance Ten Broeck**,. This was the sixth U.S. Senior Open start for Ten Broeck, 63, a Chicago native.  **Scott Hoch** and **Paul Trittler** withdrew during the round. Hoch suffered an elbow injury and Trittler had flu-like symptons.  **Quotable**  “When I walked to the first tee at 2 o'clock and I saw 8 under was leading, I was going, ‘Wow, that's quite a score.’ I didn't think that was possible. But that's how it is almost week after week. There's always a handful of guys, somebody gets hot and they shoot low numbers.” – **Bernhard Langer**  “She's caddied for me quite a bit this year. We've traveled as a family quite a bit, and she's been on the bag quite a few times. I think she's getting tired, though. I think she's ready for the year to be done. But we have a good time together. We have a lot of fun out there, and she felt the pain last week as much as I did when I missed that putt.” – **Steve Stricker** on having his wife, Nicki, on the bag  “Just the way the community embraces the university, and maybe it starts with the sports programs, but it's much deeper than that. Everybody is kind of proud of the people that go there, and I'm certainly proud of my son for having gone there. He got a great education, and I know he'll be coming to South Bend for the rest of his life for all kinds of events. It's a neat community, and I'm happy to be just a little tiny part of it.” – **Kirk Triplett** on the support from the Notre Dame and South Bend community  “I'm sure it's softer than the USGA wants it, but I didn't have mud on a single ball today. I didn't have a single ball plug. You know, the golf course, I heard that they got over an inch of rain again last night. I mean, it's pretty amazing, actually, how nice the golf course played.” – Indiana native **Chris Smith** on course conditions  “One of my favorite [Bill] Coore/[Ben] Crenshaw golf courses, and then you consider that it's a university public facility, it's absolutely amazing. Very, very happy to be here. And the university, everything that they've done so far is fantastic, and what a great experience to be here.” – **Jeff Sluman**  “I'm not going to hit a ball. I'm going to go find some KT Tape.” – Two-time U.S. Senior Open champion **Kenny Perry** on his post-round plans after shooting a 3-under 67  “It's always a hoot shooting your age, especially in the U.S. Senior Open. That's pretty cool. You know, I was very happy about that.” – **Tom Watson**  “The conditions are perfect for scoring. The rough is playable. There's four or five holes that are long that you get by and you make your pars on, and if you can do that, you're going to have a lot of opportunities for birdies.” – **Chris DiMarco**  ### |