



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: BERNHARD LANGER & TOM LEHMAN
Wednesday, April 25, 2013

DAVE SENKO: We would like to welcome Bernhard Langer and Tom Lehman, previous winners here in this event. Maybe if you could just get us started, just talk about this event, how much fun it is for you guys. We don't have that many team events, but you've had some success here. Maybe just talk about playing together again.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, for me team events are always very special because I was never an amateur so I never had team golf growing up. I just was a caddie, turned pro and there were no team events in professional golf in my younger years. So the first team event I ever played was the World Cup when I represented Germany and then the Ryder Cup and that was pretty much it, and now this tournament.

I just love having a partner, being part of a team and sharing thoughts and having fun together and encouraging each other. It's a lot more fun than playing for yourself and playing alone, so I've always enjoyed team events. It's an honor and a pleasure to be with Tom, spend some time together on the golf course.

TOM LEHMAN: Absolutely. I mean, I grew up playing team sports and so you miss that when you play golf. You miss the camaraderie that you feel having other guys around you. In this event, having a partner, forming a team, it kind of gives you that camaraderie, that sense of esprit de corps.

Then the course sets up in a way that allows you to get aggressive and try to make a lot of birdies. So it's a perfect scenario having a team event with a course that will give up some birdies if you play well. It's definitely a highlight week of the year, something I look forward to a great deal as well.

DAVE SENKO: Both coming off great weeks, Bernhard, your second win last week, and Tom, tied for 2nd.

Bernhard, just talk about your year so far, two wins, two 2s and a 3rd in six starts?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, I've had a phenomenal start this year, maybe the best start ever in my career, just played some very consistent golf and was able to put a couple of Ws on there. Had one or two other chances to win maybe one more, but it's difficult to win out here, there's a lot of competition. All it takes is a couple of bad shots or bad putts at the wrong time or a bad break and it's not going to happen. So I'm very

blessed and very fortunate to have gotten off to a good start, especially after the surgery I had in 2011, I think, and took me pretty much all year to get over that. So I'm very pleased with the way I've been playing lately.

DAVE SENKO: Tom, coming off last week, how's your game right now?

TOM LEHMAN: Well, yeah, I actually played extremely well last week and didn't get a lot of love on the greens. I think Saturday's round may be the best round I played in who knows, at least this year, maybe several years. Tee to green it was just unbelievable and putted very poorly. I needed a good round on Sunday to get myself back in the picture a little bit. My year has been a bit slow, but I started off slow last year as well and I feel as though it's on the upswing and my game feels good, swing feels good, attitude is good.

My expectation level's high, and like Bernhard said, the competition level is extremely good so I think we all push each other. Bernhard's raised the bar this year so everybody knows where they have to pick it up. The only deal this week is if I really pick it up and win, so does my partner, so I can't pick up any ground on you.

BERNHARD LANGER: It's a win-win deal.

TOM LEHMAN: It's a win-win.

Q. You're the favorites of the tournament this year. How do you address playing as favorites for this tournament?

BERNHARD LANGER: I would say on paper we look very strong but golf is not played on paper. In this type of format really anybody has a chance. And I say anybody because there's a lot of players out there that make five or six birdies a day but they make five or six bogeys or double or triple bogey, and then at the end of the day they might have shot a 2-under, but in this event if they make five, six birdies and they sandwich it correctly, they might shoot 12-under. Just about anybody out there, I think, has a really good chance of winning this title as long as they play together well. And you can make six birdies each. If you make them on the same holes, it's no good. 6-under's not going to do any good, but if you make them on different holes, that's 12-under and that's really good.

TOM LEHMAN: That's right. The thing that's always separated the guys who are finishing the best versus the guys who aren't is not the number of birdies you make, it's the number of mistakes that you don't make. So the guys who are winning are making very few mistakes. The guys who are finishing down the list are making a whole bunch.

What Bernhard said is really right, everybody out here can make a lot of birdies, so therefore every team has a great opportunity if they can team well and cover each other's mistakes.

Q. Bernhard, this is actually for you and your status as a Hall of Fame member, Freddy and Monty are going in in a couple of weeks and there's been a bit of controversy about that because neither one of them won a major. I think Raymond Floyd was especially vocal about this in the past six months or so. Do you agree --

BERNHARD LANGER: Freddy's won a major.

Q. Freddy, I'm sorry. But only 15 tournaments, that's what they're kind of fixated on. He has won less than O'Meara or Davis Love. Do you think they're both deserving and what is it about Monty's record either as European Tour Order of Merit or his Ryder Cup record do you think was most important to his career?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, everything is important in your career. He's won seven money titles, which is very impressive, and he played great in the Ryder Cup. That's why you're talking Hall of Fame. There's a little different criteria. I don't think Ryder Cup really plays that a big of a part in that. I agree with Raymond Floyd to the extent that I don't understand why Mark O'Meara isn't in the Hall of Fame because I voted for Mark O'Meara the last two or three years. He has the better record or he has two majors and more tournament victories, right, than either of those two. I'm not saying Couples or Monte shouldn't be in, but I'm saying Mark O'Meara should be in. But it's by votes, and I don't know how many people vote on it. Whoever gets the most votes gets in, right?

To me, it would be a shame if Mark O'Meara wouldn't get in real soon because he certainly deserves with his record. He's won two majors and probably 18 or 20 regular Tour events. That's more than the two gentlemen we're talking about right now, right?

Q. You guys have played together, is it five straight years? Did you miss the year when you had your surgery, 2011?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yes.

Q. After 2011, is it natural for you two to get back together, you wanted to get back as quick as possible?

TOM LEHMAN: Absolutely, Bernhard asked me to play the very first year we won, I think we finished third the next year, then he was injured. To me, it's a really solid team and I enjoy his partnership. I played with Corey the year that Bernhard couldn't play and I enjoyed playing with him a lot as well, but this is the team, it's always been the team and hopefully it always will be the team and I look forward to this every year.

Q. What's the demeanor out there? Do you two talk a lot with each other, share reads? What's kind of the way you go about things?

TOM LEHMAN: I think it's important that you play your own game, that you don't get out of your own rhythm, out of your own routine. You don't want to do things differently

than you normally do that's proven to be successful the way each of us goes about our business. But I think there is an element at times of looking at a putt, asking about the wind, the club. We're pretty close with club selection in terms of how far we hit it, so that's obviously helpful.

I think more than anything I think there's a demeanor and a perspective or an attitude that can rub off, there's maybe an aura as a team out there, which I really appreciate. To me, what really Bernhard brings to the table is this ability to have things in complete perspective. You work hard, you train hard, you're prepared hard, you come ready to play and then you play, and whatever you take you get. If it's an win, it's a win. If it's a 3rd, it's a 3rd. Maybe we just didn't have it this week and we'll get them next year. That's just a good attitude. That's the way you play the game is you give it all you've got in training and practice and the competition and just accept what you get.

Q. Bernhard, talk about working hard. Rocco was in here earlier and he said everything's great about this Tour except you. He said he saw you working all day yesterday and the day before. Where do you get that drive after all these years to keep working like you're 25?

BERNHARD LANGER: I never had a problem with working hard. I grew up in -- my parents grew up through the war, end of the war, and they had nothing. I was a little kid and I watched my parents work 16 hour days, and many times seven days a week. Whether it's from them, I have no idea, but I don't mind work. I enjoy the game of golf. The more I prepare, the better I'm prepared and ready to play, the more I can expect. If I would just show up on Friday morning or Thursday and just play, I wouldn't expect a whole lot because I didn't put anything into it. I'm no more talented or gifted than any of these other guys out there, so I figure if I want to be the best, I need to work to some extent and that's been my philosophy all my life. I work a lot, I expect a lot out of me and it's worked for the most part. And I love competing and I like to compete, I never played for 30th spot. I never have and I never will. When my time is here to finish 50th and 60th and 40th every week, it's time to pack up.

Q. Were you watching the Masters, the final round on TV? I wanted to preface that, Bernhard, by you make the par putt on 4 and you birdied three out of four and you one-putted the first four greens on Sunday. What's going through your mind at that point?

And then Tom, did you believe as you were watching TV that this guy's in it and he's got a chance?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, I had a wonderful start. My mindset was all week to be in contention. I went there, the last few years I went there with the mindset of hopefully making the cut and that's a terrible mindset. I thought about it and I said why are you coming in here trying to make the cut when you're really playing some really good golf the last few years and you should be coming in here thinking you have a chance to win and being on the leaderboard. So that was my mindset. I want to be on the leaderboard, I want to be in contention come Sunday, and not just making the cut and

playing four rounds. Fortunately enough I played well, I putted decent and got off to a hot start on Sunday, and I was trying to make birdies.

My son told me I need to shoot 7-under if I want to win so I got off to a good start. I was 3-under after 5 and there was an opportunity and a chance to maybe pull it off and it just didn't happen. I got some really bad breaks had about four terrible breaks which cost me six shots and I didn't adjust on when it started range, it greens got really slow and it went from about a 14 to a 10 on the stimpmeter and maybe it was my experience on Augusta greens just knowing this is a really fast putt and it wasn't fast anymore, it was just slow and I left putts short and three-putted and just threw me totally out of rhythm. So that was that. It lasted for about 62 holes or whatever, and then I had a sad finish.

Q. Tom, when Bernhard was on the leaderboard, what were your thoughts?

TOM LEHMAN: We were in church at the time and my phone was in my pocket and I felt it vibrate and it was a friend saying, hey, your buddy's at it again. I looked at the thing in the middle of the sermon and there's Bernhard Langer birdied the first three holes.

My thoughts were, as you know over the last year or two especially, Bernhard's had some amazing rounds on Sunday to win tournaments. I think 62 at Minneapolis is that right? 63 at SAS, some really low rounds to win. I was expecting 3-under to continue and talking to him afterwards he told me about a couple double bogeys he made where he hit beautiful golf shots and just got no love out of it at all. It wasn't that far away. I guess I wasn't surprised to see him start out well. I was fully expecting to see a low round. But I think it proves also again once again to me the quality of the play out here. I think people tend to want to overlook guys of this age, to say they've been there, done that, they're over the hill, too old to compete, but time and time again there's guys who are our age who go play in big events who have great weeks and are in contention. So I'm still convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that Bernhard or Freddy or myself or a lot of guys out here on a full time schedule on the PGA TOUR, I think we would not only compete well but have chances to win.

BERNHARD LANGER: I thought it would be a great idea actually to maybe approach the major championships in the world and often to include the leading money winner on this Tour, maybe the Schwab Cup champion in the field. Let's face it, they would have two guys that are very accomplished players, maybe Hall of Famers, they're certainly major champion winners, they've got a great pedigree of golf or whatever you want to call it and it wouldn't be a shabby inclusion into the field, I would think, to give up two spots to the leading two players on this Tour. Maybe something to consider.

MARK WILLIAMS: On the subject of the Masters, I have a Twitter question from a fan. Did you let yourself think about a green jacket and what would that have felt like to have won one compared to the first two?

BERNHARD LANGER: No, I never went that far. I've learned over the years to not get ahead of yourself because that's the worst thing you can do as an athlete. I've done that the very first time I led a golf tournament, I was leading the Irish Open and I was thinking, oh, how much money are you going to make, what are you going to do with it, what are you going to say at the prize giving, and three holes later I wasn't leading anymore. So that was a very expensive but a good lesson, and ever since then I'm trying to avoid those thoughts. I know there's a lot of golf to be played and try to stay in the present and not in the future, not get ahead of myself. So I didn't have any of those thoughts, I was just playing every hole and just playing as good as I could.

MARK WILLIAMS: If you two weren't paired together and you could choose who your partner would be in this competition, either living or not, who would you choose?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, I would choose Ben Hogan because I never had the pleasure to play Ben Hogan. I actually never met him. I played with many of the greats. I had the pleasure of seeing Gene Sarazen and Arnie and Jack and Tiger and Byron Nelson, but never had the pleasure of playing or meeting Ben Hogan.

TOM LEHMAN: I would have to say, we'll keep it to Ft. Worth, that would be Byron Nelson. That would be a fun match.

MARK WILLIAMS: Can I just ask two more questions from the fans? Bernhard, what do you think of most when you're putting, aim distance-wise, and do you use any sort of putting aid?

BERNHARD LANGER: I use the line on the ball for aim because when I don't have the line, my eyes are not very good. Because we're not looking straight down the line, we're looking sideways and I have a tendency to aim left, so that line on the ball helps me a little bit. And I have a line on the putter so when I line these two up, it gives me good visual, plus it gives me the knowledge when I stand over the putt, I'm aligned good now so all I now have to focus on is proper speed. So when I putt, I'm really thinking of making a stroke that has the right speed for the line I picked. Before I had those lines on the putter and the ball, I was often concerned, oh, are you lining correctly or not, and then I was thinking about lining up and forgot to hit it or something like that.

MARK WILLIAMS: One more for you: If you find your timing and/or your rhythm a little out of question on the golf course, what do you do to get it back? Is there something that you sort of refer to in the heat of the moment?

TOM LEHMAN: I tend to not get that way very often, although I used to. I think I used to get that way because I would hit so many drivers on the practice tee. I think everybody learns their own little way. Some guys, they love to hit drivers and long irons on the practice range. I find when I do that, I start swinging harder and harder and harder and my rhythm gets off.

When I practice, I hit 90 percent of my shots with wedges or maybe a 9-iron at the most, mostly sand wedges or pitching wedges, to find the rhythm of my swing. I feel if I can hit a wedge solid, I'm going to hit my driver solid. If my rhythm is good with my wedge, it's going to be good with my driver. I very seldom struggle on the course with my rhythm. But if I do there's just a few things. First thing is relaxing your arms, your shoulders, your hands, so I try to take a very, very soft grip on the club and really relax my arms so I don't take it away, snatch it away right off the bat. The first two feet away from the ball is usually where you mess it up. If you get it moving smoothly away from the ball, chances are you're going to have a more successful shot.

DAVE SENKO: Okay, thank you.