

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: BERNHARD LANGER
Wednesday, June 25, 2014

PHIL STAMBAUGH: We have Bernhard Langer joining us this morning in the interview room. Bernhard, currently the Charles Schwab leader, 240 points ahead of Jay Haas. You come into this event, our third major championship of the year, having a good record at Fox Chapel with two consecutive finishes here in the Top 10 and actually five consecutive Top 10 finishes in this event dating back to 2008. Talk about coming to Fox Chapel this week.

BERNHARD LANGER: It's great to be back. Played here last year. It's a phenomenal test of golf, a very difficult golf course with the greens the way they are. They seemed pretty fast earlier this week and probably the rain might have slowed them down slightly but I think the forecast looks good so hopefully things will dry out as it goes along.

But we have a very strong field, pretty much everybody's here, most players, and as you mentioned already, the third major of the year with two more coming the next two tournaments we're playing in. So this is a key part of the season as it relates to the Schwab Cup standings.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Old style golf course, you played an old style golf course last week and had your string of Top 10s broken at 20 in a row, I believe. You were obviously aware of the streak. Now that it's over does that take some pressure off at all?

BERNHARD LANGER: No, not really, I wasn't taking off that streak when I'm playing golf, I'm just trying to do the best I can every day and every shot. I really wasn't playing poorly, I was playing pretty good actually, just hit a couple in the water at the wrong time that cost me and then some of the putts lipped out instead of lipping in and that's often the case. If I had been three shots better I would have been in the Top 10. So it's very little, but that's golf. You get some good breaks and you get some bad ones.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: We'll open it up for questions. Just please raise your hand.

Q. Talk a little bit about how you feel now at the midpoint of the season, how's your health, how do you feel at this point?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, my health is pretty decent for my age. We're going to have aches and pains here and there but overall I'm not complaining. I felt good about my body, felt pretty good about my golf game. It's just a long year so you've got to pace yourself and take some breaks here and there and refresh yourself and

come out hungry again.

Q. What do you do to pace yourself and stay in good shape?

BERNHARD LANGER: I take weeks off and, you know, work out at home and just do things away from golf, put the clubs away for a few days and then start practicing afterwards again just to -- as I said, I've been doing this for almost 40 years now so it's a long time. You get stale here and there so you've -- you need the breaks, you need to get away from the game. I've been trying to do that the last few years and I think it's worked out pretty good.

Q. When you say you get away, what are some of the things you like to do when you do get away from golf other than putting the clubs away?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, what I do at home, first of all I check in with the family. We have four kids and try and get involved in their lives more at home than when I'm on the road and spend some quality time with my wife. I do usually work out every day and I enjoy, you know, bicycle riding, going for walks, walk with the dog and sometimes walk on the beach. Enjoy watching sports on TV. I'm usually involved in one or two Bible studies and I generally go to church Wednesday night and Sunday. Those are the kind of things that I enjoy doing.

There's other things I don't enjoy doing, paying the bills and going through the mail like everybody else has to, and fixing things around the house.

Q. Are you a World Cup soccer fan?

BERNHARD LANGER: I am very much so, so yeah, it's going to be fun having a week off next week and watch some of the games hopefully.

Q. Kind of elaborate on that, being German, and Juergen with the U.S. soccer team, talk a little bit about the job that he's done so far and what are your feelings tomorrow about tomorrow's big match?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, Juergen, you know, I like Juergen a lot. He's played for my team by Munich when he was a player and then he was the captain of the German squad a few years ago in the World Cup, and I think overall he's done a great job. I don't know exactly what he's done with the U.S. team. They're certainly playing attractive soccer right now. I was impressed the way they came back from 1-0 down the other day on Sunday, that was really impressive. Just the way they play, it's fun to watch and refreshing, and I don't know if that's all Juergen's doing or whatever, I can't compare too much, but they've certainly come a long way from where they've been years ago. And they needed to. I mean, America's a great country, great nation, love the people. So hopefully soccer will catch on and the more Latinos that move into America, they're all into soccer. The rest of the world is into

soccer. Only America is lagging behind really. Sooner or later it will catch on.

Q. And tomorrow?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, the common sense would be that they're going to draw the game. The difficulty is how you draw even 0-0 because if they both do that, they're both through. So neither one has anything to lose if they draw the game. But if they play 0-0 and nobody has a shot on goal it's going to be a very boring, awkward game. I don't know what's going to happen. It will be interesting to see whether that's the tactics or whether they actually have a real game and try and win it. I think Germany has the upper hand just because they have a better goal difference, so even if Germany loses we probably still go through unless we lose really badly. If the USA loses and Ghana wins, then they could be out. If Portugal wins they might still go through. There's a lot of possibilities and we'll just have to wait and see what happens on the pitch, on the field.

Q. One more question kind of relating to that. Obviously you've been really involved with the Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup and on that level in terms of playing for your country. Being captain for that type of thing, what does that mean to you as an athlete?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, I think to me I was only Ryder Cup captain once. I'm not involved in the Presidents Cup because I'm European and we're not part of that, but I've represented the Ryder Cup 10 times as a player and represented the European Tour and I think it's the greatest honor and I'm sure the soccer players feel the same way. It's the greatest tournament there is for them, it's the highlight of their careers to play in the World Cup. And for someone like the coaches, whether it's Klinsmann or anybody else, it's going to be a thrill to be put in charge of the best players and trying to unite them into a team and get the best possible talent out of them whatever they have.

Q. Bernhard, I apologize, did anybody ask you about Martin Kaymer? I'm curious your impressions of what he did and just your relationship with him. He referenced you several times at the Open last week.

BERNHARD LANGER: What he's done is phenomenal. He went through the tours like this earlier on in his career just bypassed every tour by winning two or three times with very, very low numbers, 62, 63, sometimes a 61. So you could tell there's someone special coming along and he never stopped, he just kept going, reaching to be No. 1 in the world for a short period of time, winning his major at a very young age. And then he decided to change his swing to become a better player. He was never comfortable with a draw or hook and he wanted to be able to draw and hook the ball if he had to like around Augusta or really at any tournament anywhere you play in the world, you've got to face some shots where you have to have that shot.

Took him a little longer than he thought it would, took him a year and a half to two years almost and lost his confidence slightly, I think, when results are not as good and you get criticized, especially by the German media for, you know, why is he changing his swing? He was No. 1 in the world, he's been playing good. Why, why, why. They don't understand. We have our own golf and we are out here every day to try and improve to get better because we know the other guys are going to get better and we don't want to stand still and being laughed at at some point in time. So I told him two years ago when he shared with me he's going to try and improve his game by trying to draw the ball, I said I think you're right. If you want to be a world class player you've got to have all the shots, otherwise you're not going to be in the long run.

Anyways, took him a little longer. He's done with that now, he made it very clear he's not taking technique anymore, he's not caught between swings and swing thoughts and it shows. He's back to where he was two years ago playing incredible golf and what he's done at the PLAYERS Championship and the U.S. Open is still amazing because he led from the start until the end. That's enormous pressure, you know, some sleepless nights more or less, and just difficult to do. It's hard to protect the lead at times and to play with a large lead, and the way he's done it really speaks for itself.

Q. One more question, Bernhard. Were you aware, I'm sure you were, your Top 10 streak, did that mean a lot to you?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, I got reminded of it. I wasn't so much aware of it. I mean, I knew I was playing very consistent, very top golf week after week after week. I personally didn't know how many weeks it was but every time I do the media thing I'm made aware of it. So, yeah, it was a fun stretch of tournaments. It just showed, you know, how consistently well I played for almost a full year now. I was close, I've been Top 10 last week, I shared that earlier, just a couple things didn't go my way, but that's all right. There will be more in the future.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Bernhard, good luck this week.

BERNHARD LANGER: Thank you.