

FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: BERNHARD LANGER

Sunday, June 29, 2014

DAVE SENKO: Congratulations to the winner of the 2014 Constellation SENIOR PLAYERS, Bernhard Langer. You win your third different major and for the first time a player other than from the United States has won both the PLAYERS and the SENIOR PLAYERS Championship in the same year. You earn 810 Charles Schwab Cup points which gives you a commanding lead in the season-long race. Probably took a little longer than you wanted to take today, but just sort of general comments about the overall day and then we'll go through the round.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, for me it was a bit of a roller coaster day. I got off to almost a dream start, had a birdie putt on 1 that didn't go in but then birdied 2 and 3, so I looked very comfortable and solid at that point. Missed the fairway on 4 and had a horrible lie, so I made bogey, which is no big deal. And then birdied number, what was that, 6, the par-3, which was a great birdie.

Then the trouble started on 8. I decided to lay up and not go for the green. Hit a good 5-iron and figured I hit a really good sand iron in there, pretty much what I thought was correct, and it landed on the back edge of the green. Instead of spinning this way, which it normally does, it took a hop and ended up in the rough and had a gnarly lie and made bogey from there.

But rebounded pretty good with a birdie on 9, and when that shower came and it was pretty nasty, I was soaking wet just hitting one shot without an umbrella but was able to birdie it. And then three-putted 10 from quite a ways. And the big problem was on 12. I hit a really good tee shot, had 80 yards to the hole and I hit about 86 and took one hop and into the back bunker plugged. So I had absolutely nothing, just trying to get it out. Got it out but a little bit too far in the rough, a very difficult lie again, chipped it by and two-putted, lipped out for double bogey. So the two holes where I had a sand iron and a lob wedge, No. 7 and No. 12, I'm 3-over par from the middle of the fairway. That was really digging myself a hole.

But I never gave up. I knew I was still in the lead or thereabouts and tried to finish strong. My goal was to make two or three birdies coming home the last few holes. Coaxed one in on No. 17, quite a long putt that crossed with a big break, probably four-foot break and it might have been as much as 50, 60 feet away. So that was a bonus. And then 18, I just misjudged the third shot a little bit so I had an uphill putt from probably 20 feet to win, but it broke to the left.

And we all know what happened in the playoff. I was this close from losing the tournament when Jeff Sluman had a birdie putt and he only needed about half a turn to go in and it just came up short. Then second time around I hit it pretty close with my third shot and had about a five-foot putt to win.

DAVE SENKO: Reflect on your 21st career victory, third of the year.

BERNHARD LANGER: It's been an amazing year, really fantastic year. I had a wonderful start winning the first tournament of the year in Hawaii and then lots of 2nd and 3rd and Top 5s and then winning another one. Just playing really, really good golf. It was especially fun winning another major. I've come close on a number of occasions in the past and couldn't pull it off. Most notably the Senior British Open last year was one that I will not forget. But it's great to be back in the winner's circle amongst the majors. I'm really looking forward to playing against Martin Kaymer next year in the PLAYERS Championship in Ponte Vedre because this will get me there and he will defend and I will try and make his life a bit difficult.

DAVE SENKO: We'll just Open It up for questions.

Q. Bernhard, talk about the two long birdie putts, the one at 6 and you described the one at 7. How long was the one at 6?

BERNHARD LANGER: Six was probably about 45 feet, something like that I think, maybe 40 feet across the green. That was absolutely perfect. It was tracking. I hit a 5-iron there just a little bit to the right so it was pin high right and went right in the middle.

And then 17 was a huge break, as I said, probably four feet right to left. In the end it was downhill as well. Very fortunate to make that one. It looked good all the way but you never know until it drops. Poa annua greens late in the afternoon, anything can happen. And they were soft after the rain, so that was a real bonus and a thrill to see that one drop and tie Jeff at that point. Now it just depended on who was going to birdie 18.

Q. What did you hit in on 17?

BERNHARD LANGER: That was a 4-iron.

Q. Can you take us through your approach on 18 the second time around when you were in the rough there? That was an incredible shot.

BERNHARD LANGER: It was. I was a little bit fortunate but at first I wasn't happy that I hit it in the rough, but as I walked up there I thought maybe hitting in the rough isn't all that bad because now you're not going to have all that much spin because my other two shots landed somewhere around there and just spun off.

So I looked at the lie and it was sitting down a little bit but not horrible. Figured it was just a matter of making good contact, make sure you clear the bunker because you don't want to come up short and plug it in the bunker. Came out maybe, you know, a

yard or two shorter than I wanted to, but because it came out of the rough it didn't have any backspin or very little and it rolled up nicely to about five or six feet just short left of the hole, which was inside left putt or left edge putt. I was very happy to see it end up there.

Q. With Martin Kaymer winning the PLAYERS Championship, what did that mean saying that he looks up to you, what does that mean having you winning Constellation here and him winning the PLAYERS there?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, it's really neat. First of all, there's not many German players on any tour in the professional golfing world, there's only a handful at that. That the two of us would win this tournament the same year is pretty unique.

We're good friends, we've played many practice rounds together, we talk and text. And I admire him for what he's achieved at his young age and I think he's looked up to me over the years as he grew up and we've become very close friends for many reasons. It will be a neat experience to probably play a practice round with him at the PLAYERS Championship and at the Masters again.

Q. Bernhard, can you talk about the win, what it was like to see Jeff Sluman not make any mistakes, no bogeys in his round and see him kind of climb up the leaderboard as everybody else had their share and what it was like to kind of chase him from behind after leading all day?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, I said that yesterday because you guys thought it was all between Kenny Perry and me, and it started off that way. But I said if we don't play our best, somebody 4- or 5-behind can make a run at it and Slu did. We know he's a great player. He's just won a tournament a couple weeks ago with Fred Funk and he's been a consistent contender the last few months and he's capable of producing very low scores. He certainly put the foot on the pedal and scored a great score, which made us chase after him. It's not easy to make birdies coming down these last few holes.

Q. He said that he heard the roar when you made your putt at 17. What does that do when you hear something like that, when the crowd kind of gives you some indication something's going on behind you especially when he has the chance right there to kind of win the whole thing?

BERNHARD LANGER: You know something spectacular happened, you know somebody made a putt or holed a bunker shot or something like that. He just didn't know who it was I suppose at the time. But looking back, whoever it was, we would have tied him. If Russ Cochran had made it, he would have tied him. I would have tied him. Kenny Perry wouldn't have at that point but he knew he had to birdie 18 to make sure he stays in front. I don't know if he came close or not.

Q. When you and Kenny made the turn and you guys were tied, did you anticipate it would be sort of a shootout? Kenny talked about how the rain sort of messed up his flow a little bit, kind of changed the fairways, talked about the pitch that he had at 12. Did it really turn out the way you thought it would be when you made the turn?

BERNHARD LANGER: It looked like Kenny would be there. I didn't expect Kenny to go away because I played with him the first two rounds, he played very solid, drives the ball very well, and his putter was actually better today than he was putting the first two days. He made a lot of good putts early on. Then he holed a bunker shot on No. 9, which was incredible. It was plugged, it came out like it was plugged. So it looked like everything was going his way until No. 12, when he kind of chunked his lob wedge or whatever he was hitting in there and then he ended in the rough on the next hole. So it produced a bunch of bogeys all of a sudden, which he didn't seem to do earlier in the day. I didn't think he would go away as he did. Obviously maybe the rain bothered him or something else. Sometimes we lose a little concentration or we lose our rhythm for various reasons.

Q. (No microphone.)

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, it's no fun in the rain. It was heavy rain. I had to hit a 7-iron on 9. You can't wait 10 minutes and say I'm going to wait until the rain goes by. I had one practice swing and hit the ball, and I looked at my caddie and said I'm soaking wet just now, 20 seconds in the rain or 30 and everything was dripping. But that's life. I didn't want to put a jacket on and I don't like playing in rain gear, so I just persevered being wet.

Q. With the rain like you said and having a round that's a great day and then that putt almost going in, where are you at mentally when you see oh, I have another chance at this?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, that's the roller coaster round I was talking about. Mentally I was up and down. I had a great start and made some bogeys and I made a birdie, then I made another bogey, then I made double bogey, then I made birdie. I was like this is not Bernhard Langer usually, usually a bit more steady. But it comes in all shapes, I guess. I just made two errors on those two short par-4s that cost me dearly. Otherwise I actually played very solid golf again. There were some tough pins stuck in the back of the green, and with as soft as they were, if you fly it in there it just spins 10, 15 yards off so you're pushing it to the limit, that makes it difficult. But mentally it was good for me to never give up. I knew I was one in front and I was tied for most of the day and then I was one behind. I just told myself you can birdie the last two, my goal was to birdie the last two. But then when I was 55 feet away on 17, it didn't look like a birdie putt but it dropped. And 18 should have been a lot easier but it wasn't.

Q. Talk a little bit about winning today and what it does for you in terms of the Schwab Cup and the rest of the season. Looks like you're in really great shape as far as the points race.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, winning is always fun and increasing my lead in the Schwab Cup race. Winning a major after a couple of close ones gives me a lot of confidence and belief in my game. It consolidates the yellow jersey, what I call it, so my goal is to keep the yellow jersey all year. I won the first tournament, my caddie got the Charles Schwab Cup bib. We call it the bib, it's yellow. My goal is to keep it until the last tournament and win the Schwab Cup. But it's still a long ways to go, we're only halfway there, but so far so good and increased my lead this week, which is nice, and we'll see what the rest of the season holds.

DAVE SENKO: Bernhard, congratulations again.

BERNHARD LANGER: Thank you. Thank you all for being here and coming to this tournament and for the long hours you put in for us. Appreciate it.