

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: BERNHARD LANGER
Thursday, August 27, 2015



PHIL STAMBAUGH: Bernhard, thanks for joining us this morning and birthday greetings to you. Coming back to a place very special to you with a win last year, it was win number 23 of your career, a very exciting. Time. You're coming in pretty much your game's at a high level with three straight runner-ups and you've been among the top three in the last five tournaments. Some thoughts about coming back to En-Joie.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, it's always a thrill coming back here, it's a very special place. Last year was pretty unique with my daughter caddying for me and our first win together with her on the bag. She won't be able to come back this year to defend as a caddie because she had two back operations since and she will not be carrying any bags for a long time with her back. So my oldest son was able to take a couple days off work and he's here to work for me this weekend, so that should be just as special. I'm looking forward to having him back. He hasn't caddied for me in five years and we've done fairly well in the past together, but it's just great to have him out here and spend a few days together with him. Don't see much of him, he works in New York.

Otherwise, just coming back to this tournament and this golf course is a real pleasure. Got to know some of the people that run the tournament and organize it and they're extremely helpful, friendly, just phenomenal people. The Dick's Sporting Goods people are fantastic, and what a great sponsor they have been to us. This golf course here with all the history of the B.C. Open going way back and now continuing with the Dick's Sporting Goods Open, it's great. It's a highlight of the year and it's great being back. Even the forecast is fantastic, so what else request we ask for, right?

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Bernhard, with your three runner-ups, you've put yourself in position now you could conceivably with a win take the lead in the Schwab Cup race. Last year you were comfortably ahead and you extended your lead here. Just some thoughts about that.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, it's a thrill to be back in the hunt for the Schwab Cup. Been very blessed to play some good golf the last few years. To have a chance, an opportunity to, if I do play well, to finish the year out strong, I have a chance to win the Schwab Cup. It will probably come down to a three-man race, at least that's what it looks like at the moment. It probably will not be decided until the actual Schwab tournament, the very last one of the season, so it's always exciting when you have a few people in there to have an opportunity to win. Should be a good few weeks coming up jockeying for a better position. Obviously I'm trying to close the gap or get in front, but I'm sure Monty and Jeff are trying to do the same thing so we'll see how it all turns out.

Q. Bernhard, Sunday final hole, 18th green, you have a chance for a chip-in for a 57 or a tap-in for another victory, which one would you choose and why?

BERNHARD LANGER: Wow, that's a very good question. Well, they both would mean a lot. Probably go for the chip-in 57 because it's never been done before as far as I'm concerned, and I have a feeling if I chip in for 57 I would win the tournament as well. I would probably get both. (Laughs.)

Q. You just mentioned you're one of the guys that's chasing for the Schwab Cup championship. Do you guys look at this with an opportunity with Monty not being here this weekend as a great opportunity to catch up as you mentioned?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, every week is an opportunity to improve the position you're in, and obviously if those players that are in the race with you are not there, it makes it that much more an opportunity to close the gap or to even get in front if that's the case. I'm probably going to miss Pebble Beach, though. I'm going to miss out on a tournament as well, so the other guys will have an opportunity to get further ahead of me at that point. It all evens out somewhere at the end of the year. The good thing is we've got about, what, five tournaments to go, or six, and I don't think it will be decided before the last tournament. It's just a matter of trying to improve your spot or get further behind.

Q. You've won everywhere. What was it like winning here last year and what's it going to take to do it again?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, it was very unique last year, very special because my daughter was with me and I hadn't won here on this golf course before. What it takes is a lot of good golf. You've got to drive the ball very well, keep it on the short grass. Some of the these fairways are only about 12 to 20 yards wide in the landing areas, and it's not just rough, you're usually stuck behind trees and branches. So it's key to keep it in the short grass, that gives you opportunities to attack the pins or get on the green. If you're coming out of the trees or out of the rough, it's very unlikely you're even going to get it on the green most of the time, so it makes it a challenging golf course, especially off the tee.

Q. Speaking of a chance to defend, what have you seen from the course so far this week and how do you think it's going to play to your game?

BERNHARD LANGER: The course looks phenomenal, probably better than ever. Conditions are fantastic. The tee boxes, the fairways and the greens are in as good of shape as I've seen them in the years I've come here, which makes it wonderful to play on and more fun.

Again, the key is to play good golf. I just have to be on top of my game, got to drive the ball well to give myself opportunities and you've still got to make some putts obviously.

Q. Have you won with your son on the bag?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, we've won several times. He's actually got a great record on the bag.

Q. What's the most recent?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, he hasn't caddied in five years, but we won the 3M Championship, may have been his last time he caddied. We won the U.S. Senior Open in Sahalee, which was a tough one against Fred Couples in his hometown. We won the World Cup together, which was the biggest check he's ever received. What was it, the one in Florida, the Ginn Championship. So we've won a bunch of tournaments together and he hasn't caddied that much. People ask me all the time, Oh, this is your son caddying for you? No, this is my regular caddie. My son hasn't caddied that much for me.

Q. One big golf question for you. Off world ranking, Martin and Marcel are leading (inaudible) seven people. Is competing in the Olympics even on your competitive radar, and if so, I know you won the World Cup, a lot of that stuff, but how is the Olympic spirit of golf different than the Ryder Cup or whatever?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, personally I would love to be representing Germany in the Olympics, but I have no chance. I'm not ranked in the world rankings. Well, I am ranked but I don't play any tournaments that count for it. I play the Masters and that's it, and maybe the PLAYERS Championship. I'm ranked 200-something or 300, I don't even know. So in a way it's a shame because I think my game is still good enough to be competitive out there, but it is the way it is. I had my opportunities when I was younger and we weren't in the Olympics then. But it's a wonderful thing, I think, that golf is back in the Olympics. I can't imagine anybody not wanting to play for a gold medal or silver medal or just representing your country in the Olympics must be very, very unique. Not a lot of people can do that. I personally would love to do it, but it came too late for me.

Q. Bringing your son back to caddie, was that a bit of a competitive edge trying to get a win back over his sister since she won here last year?

BERNHARD LANGER: Nothing to do with that at all, no. He's working, he's got a full-time job, and it just turned out that he said, you know, this would be convenient since he works in New York. So it's a short drive over here and he can just take today and tomorrow off so it's not too much vacation time. It's just more of a convenience than anything else.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Bernhard, thank you very much. Good luck this week.

BERNHARD LANGER: Thank you, appreciate it.