

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**July 29, 2020**



**BERNHARD LANGER**

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**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Bernhard, welcome back to the Ally Challenge and also welcome back to the PGA Tour Champions. How's it feel to be back on Tour after all these months off?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** It's awesome. It's been the longest break I ever had in my 44 years of professional golf. Yeah, very unprecedented times, but I think everybody's doing the best they can, what we know about the virus and how to go about it. We're just excited to finally get started. Thrilled that Ally and Warwick Hills made the decision to get going. And the PGA Champions is in constant contact with the PGA TOUR, obviously, and the health organizations and all that. I think they've come up with a very good plan. And let's hope we're all doing our part of it and nobody's going to get sick while we're here.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** You were playing really good golf, as normal, early in the season and then our season had to take a break. How have you been able to make sure your game stayed at that level without competing?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, it was difficult. The timing of this was not good for me personally. I'm getting older, so I'm aging out basically. And I had a bit of momentum going. I played really good golf the first five tournaments of the season and was looking forward to building on that momentum and then it just got shut down.

Then I live in South Florida, Boca Raton, where everything was shut down for I think it was about six weeks. I live on a golf course and I couldn't go practice or play, so that was really weird, but that's what it was in our county. So I did a couple of trips to Naples, because some courses were open in Naples. I just drove over there for a long weekend with friends. It's probably the least I've practiced and played golf for summertime the last five months. Excited to get moving again and see if there's anything left in the tank.

**Q. You're one of the oldest guys in the field, yet you're leading the money List. You're still competitive every week. What do you attribute that to? Is it your fitness level, is it your practice routine?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** It's a lot of things. I don't know if you have enough time for that. We could write a book about it. But it's like a puzzle. I have good genes, I work out, I eat fairly decent, but that by itself doesn't do it. There's many people who do that and maybe better than me. It's the technique of your golf swing, it's the mental part of it, it's the short game, it's putting, it's chipping, it's bunker game, all of that. A lot of it is technique. And if a lot of guys have good technique, then it comes down to the mental part.

But it's also a private life. How's your private life? Is there peace or is there a lot of tumult?

Are you going through major drama with relationships or is it kind of quiet there? I have a great team around me, a wonderful caddie, a great manager, good family, so all that kind of stuff helps to just focus on what I need to focus when I'm out here.

And I've learned over the years what's good for me, and I try to do that by taking time off and taking time away from golf for a few days, put the clubs away and do other things. Maybe practice a little bit less now than I did in my 20s and 30s, but I still think I'm one of the harder workers out here and always have been.

**Q. Have you thought about how much longer you want to play?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, nowadays it's more and more on my mind as I'm getting to that age group where there's not too many around anymore. I always said, as long as I'm healthy and enjoy the game and somewhat successful, if those three things are present, there's no reason to stop. But if your health goes, you can't do what you want to do, you can't do it the way you want to do it, if I'm out here finishing 40th every week, then I'll probably think about quitting, too, because that's not what I want to do. I want to be in contention and to have a chance to win. If I finish 40th, 50th week after week, I don't think I'm going to be out here that much longer.

But I had some very good years lately and don't see why that would happen real soon, so I still think I'll be here for a few more years unless something drastic changes.

**Q. How strange is it to go through a tournament without the fans here?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, I've played actually two tournaments on the PGA TOUR. I played Colonial and Hilton Head, the first two, so I got a dose of that. It's very weird, to tell you the truth. You hit a shot into an elevated green and you have no idea, is it two feet or is it 20 feet or 200 feet? You really don't know at times when you have no feedback. But it was fun.

An incident at Hilton Head, I was paired with Vijay Singh and Ernie Els, the three of us. Hilton Head, there were a lot of housing along the edges of the fairways and people were out with their chairs and watching us and cheering us on. So we're down there by the first fairway and we're all sort of in the same area and people are cheering us on. Hi, Bernie, hi, Ernie, Vijay, good luck. I yelled back, yeah, you think you're watching the wrong Tour, like the Champions Tour out here, three guys over 50. Anyways, we're having fun. Make the best of it, right?

**Q. What about this course here? Is it a good course to chip off the rust, being off this long, for some of these guys and you guys to get out here and play?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** It's a challenge. You have to drive the ball very well here. There's some very narrow holes, a couple of holes that are wide open, but some you've really got to drive it well. So if you have the driver going and the putter, you're going to do well. Some of

the greens are very slopy and severe, so it's really, you've got to have your game under control. Otherwise, you're not going to do well. It's a course you can go low if you bring your A game, but if your B or C game shows up, you're going to be over par in a hurry.

**Q. What about the fans at 17? Certainly you didn't need them to tell you how far you are away from the hole because you can see it. At the same time, that atmosphere, this place, how much is that going to be missed by the field?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Oh, we're going to miss it. That was always a very exciting hole, electric atmosphere and the people got into it. It was great to be in that arena. We're definitely going to miss it. Hopefully we'll have it back next year.

**Q. The lack of grandstands, does that mess with your depth perception or your aiming on like 17 and 18?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, the course looks very different without grandstands. I played 18 yesterday. I go, this green looks different from what it used to be. But we don't go by that, we all play by yardage. In the old days, you didn't have lasers and yardages, you just kind of looked and, oh, it looks like a 6-iron, give me a 6-iron. Now, we look at, okay, it's a hundred and whatever, 75, takes a 6-iron. So we play by yardages. So that's not going to mess us up big time, I don't think.

**Q. The process of the PGA TOUR and having to go through the temperature checks and having to go through that whole process, what have you seen has been the most difficult part?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, the most difficult part is probably just arriving earlier, because you're going to be tested. The first thing we do when we arrive from the airport is test. Then you have to wait a couple hours at least to see, are you allowed to come to the club or not. Everything takes a little more time.

The days get a little longer, and we probably -- or I feel I have to arrive a little bit sooner just to allow for that loss of two or three hours, let's put it that way. And it's always awkward. You get here and get tested. Well, if I'm positive, what am I going to do? Quarantine for two weeks? So you're on pins and needles waiting that you get a negative in a sense.

**Q. I know you played in the two events on the regular tour, but what's it like this week being around your peers, the guys you played with for years? I mean, is there a lot of needling going on, a lot of catching up?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, it's awesome. It's great to be back and to have that fellowship again and the friendships and the camaraderie that we really enjoy out here.

We had a neat thing going. As some of you might know, I'm a Christian, so I attend Bible studies. We had one every week on Tour, so we had a Zoom call every day actually. We

said, well, why just do one a week? We're at home, got nothing to do, basically, or not much to do, let's do it every week. So we've been on Zoom calls for the last few months every day from Monday through Friday, and fellowship, and I got to see 12 or 15 of the guys, a couple of the caddies. It was nice, so we didn't lose traction.

**Q. Will you play the Masters?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yes.

**Q. How exciting will that be?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** It's always exciting. It's one of my favorite events. And just great to see what the Masters has done for the game of golf, not just for their own tournament. It's brilliant. It's awesome to be a part of that and I'll play there as long as they let me.

**Q. Since your last time here, they've added a couple bunkers on 12 and 14. With courses that you know really well, do you like to see them adding those additional challenges or is it something you don't like changing?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** No, it's not always -- you can't generalize it. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it's maybe not ideal, in my point of view. But I think what they did here were good changes. It makes you think a little more. You've got to be a little bit more precise. And if you can't quite fly those bunkers, you're going to have to probably lay up, because nobody wants a 50-yard bunker shot. That's maybe the hardest shot in golf.

**Q. Going back to your Zoom chats, who's got the coolest Zoom room?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** That's a good question. Really don't know. We're all in just -- I was in my office and other guys were at a breakfast table, because it was usually in the mornings. It's hard to tell. Tom Lehman had the grandchild on his lap sometimes. There's different areas. And it's not a Zoom room, you can go anywhere. You just have your iPhone. You could be in the bedroom, you could be at the kitchen table, you could be in the office or anywhere in the house, so it changed. It wasn't always the same.

**Q. What is it like to be affiliated with a tournament that has such a huge charitable function to it like the Ally Challenge?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** It's awesome. I mean, that's really what the PGA TOUR stands for, what we try to achieve every week. We try to raise as many dollars as possible for local charities mostly. You can go from tournament to tournament, that's usually the case. Obviously, some are more driven and more successful in that regard than others, but every week, hundreds of thousands of dollars usually go to good causes. We're thrilled that that's the case and we're proud of it, to give back.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Thanks, Bernhard. Good luck this week.