

BERNHARD LANGER

CHRIS RICHARDS: Bernhard, welcome to the 2021 Cologuard Classic. I want to first start off with the news about Tiger. Just what are your thoughts about Tiger and general comments?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, I don't know the latest details, I haven't kept up with it, but it was very tragic for anybody that is in an accident, and that type of accident where he's in a way fortunate he's alive, I suppose. Two broken legs, I don't know what else there's going on. It's a major setback for him. He was I believe recovering from his fifth back surgery and that would have taken quite an effort, and now he's got to deal with this. We're very sad for him and the family. Wish him all the best and hope he recovers well.

CHRIS RICHARDS: What are you looking forward to this week? You're the defending champion. When you come back to a golf course that you've won at, what are the feelings the first time you come back as the defending champion?

BERNHARD LANGER: They're great feelings, they're positive. You feel like you know how to play the golf course. You have good memories, even remember certain shots and how you pulled them off. I played here now a number of times, so I should know where to go, where not to go. Doesn't mean I can always pull it off. It's always nice to go to a course where you've won because you feel you can do it again. There's some courses where you've never won and you just, it's not as good, just don't feel quite as well.

Q. I wanted to ask you, Mr. Langer, about Tiger Woods' injuries. You being a professional golfer, the thought of two broken legs and trying to come back from that and recuperating?

BERNHARD LANGER: I have no idea and I have no experience, I've never had a broken bone in my body, praise God, so I really don't know how long that takes and if you can fully recover. I imagine you can, because you hear other people having hip replacements, knee replacements, shoulder replacements and broken bones. Lately they've gotten so good at it that some people come back within a few months. But I really don't know.

It's got to be extremely devastating to him. He's been dealing with so much over the years, and he finally felt like a year ago or two that he was finally able to work out and swing the club the way he used to, wanted to without any pain, without any restrictions, at least that's what he said when he won the Masters. Now he had another back operation, so there's got to be something going on that's not ideal, and this on top of it, it's got to be devastating on his psyche as well as just all the rehab he's been doing for years and years, now there's more to come.

Q. Just being here today, playing without the fans that are normally here, what is that like as a golfer?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, we've been doing this almost a year now. It's not much fun, to tell you the truth, but you have to psych yourself up. You get used to the environment, whatever there is, and try and make the best of it. We're all very competitive out here, otherwise we wouldn't be here, and you learn to deal with different circumstances and different environments. We will certainly miss the gallery. Playing 16, that par 3 with the close people there, almost stadium-like, that was always a very neat hole, and same here on 18 and many other holes. This was a tournament where we had huge crowds, people embraced it. And the Conquistadores have done a phenomenal job over the years to make golf tournaments very popular and the people embrace it.

Q. You were at the PNC with Tiger. Looking back to that event, what do you remember? Did you cross paths with him? Did you talk to him? What did you see from his swing and where he was with his game?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, I was like the rest of the world, I wasn't so much interested in Tiger, I was interested in his son. And his son was very impressive. I thought he had one of the best golf swings that I've ever seen from a, what, 12-year-old or 10-year-old. I can't remember how old he is exactly. But pound for pound he hit it a very long way and technically very sound.

And he was a lot like his dad, he was really into it. I watched Tiger watch him more from a dad's perspective. He seemed to really enjoy being with his son, competing inside the ropes and giving his son a bit of a glimpse and an experience of what he deals with on a daily basis. You know, I can only speak from small experience about that and I think it's wonderful for our dads, for any dad to go out with their kids and play golf together and have some fun.

Q. Is Tiger someone you have regular communication with? You guys trade texts?

BERNHARD LANGER: No, not really. I felt it was, you know, we played a bunch of tournaments together over the last 25, 30 years, but he wasn't in my close circle of friends, let's put it that way. I guess Tiger, it's not easy for him to have close friends I would think because when you're No. 1 and everybody wants a piece of you, you've got to have your protective shield up a little bit, pick and choose who you have. I'm a close friend of Mark O'Meara's and Mark was kind of his big brother for many years, so I know a little bit about him.

Q. Injuries and surgeries and all that, rehab and all that stuff aside, as you get to be 45 and 50, what are things you have to do as a golfer to stay competitive, to stay tournament ready, keep your body in optimum shape?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, everybody's a little different, but I think we all feel certain

things or go through certain things the same way. Some have it when they're in their 40s, some start when they're in their 50s, so it depends on your genes, but we are feeling more aches and pains as time goes on. The older we get, you get a little weaker, you lose a little bit of flexibility sooner or later and you try and slow that process down.

If you're someone like me who works out and stretches a lot, I'm trying to slow that process down so it doesn't get really bad in my 40s, 50s, I can still play well and enjoy life and be healthy in my 70s and 80, but sooner or later we're all dealing with certain issues.

CHRIS RICHARDS: Thank you very much.

BERNHARD LANGER: You're welcome. Thanks for being here.