

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
July 2, 2021

BERNHARD LANGER (-5)



Q. So 5-under 67, Bernhard, great start on Friday here. Your thoughts on the day?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, it was a strange day. I had to borrow a putter from Scott McCarron because mine broke yesterday and I was very fortunate to even find one that I could putt with. Started playing really good, was 6 under on the front nine. Hit it close four times and then holed a wedge shot for eagle on No. 8 to get 6 under after eight holes.

I was hoping to shoot my age today, but ran into some trouble on the back nine. I made three bogeys, which was actually four in the end. A couple of loose shots, a couple of very short missed putts here on 16, 17. Otherwise could have been much lower today, but I'll take whatever it is. Made the first round -- got through it and hopefully I find another putter, a better one for tomorrow and we'll see what happens.

Q. You've got a new caddie on the bag this week. Can you just give us a little back-story on that?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, his name is Fran Pirozzolo. My caddie, my professional caddie, Terry Holt, is not going to be here this week for the reason I wasn't actually playing here this week. I was planning on playing the British Open and then the Senior British, but that would have been four majors in five weeks, so I decided to pull out of the British Open and instead I'm playing here.

When I told him that three weeks ago, he said he's already made plans for family vacations and stuff, so that's why Terry's not here. He'll be back next week. So a friend of mine from Houston that I'm staying with, a long-term friend, over 30-year friend, Pirozzolo, he's actually a sports psychologist and many other things. He's got four World Series rings working with the New York Giants and he's been a dear friend of mine for many years. He grew up here, half hour from here. He's staying with his mother, and his brother lives here, so I said why not. So he's caddying for me this week.

Q. So first time ever that he's caddied for you?

BERNHARD LANGER: First time ever.

Q. After kind of, like you said, a back and forth round today, able to finish strong on 18, what's your confidence level heading into the weekend now?

BERNHARD LANGER: I'm very happy with my ball-striking for the most part. I hit a couple of loose shots, but in general I drove it well and hit some really good irons and hit them really

close. If I had puttied well today, I'd probably be 8 or 9 under right now, but it is what it is. So we'll hopefully -- the putter that was supposed to be shipped and arrived today, it didn't make it because the plane was delayed, so maybe it's getting here by tomorrow morning and we'll do a little better tomorrow.

Q. How's it feel to be back here at En-Joie?

BERNHARD LANGER: It's always great to be back. They do an amazing job, really working hard and trying hard to make us feel comfortable and welcome. It's almost like family. So many people come out and say thanks for being here and for your support. It's a tournament that's been around for so long playing on this course that we are very grateful that we have a three-year extension for the next three years and we can come back here.

Q. Talk us through that eagle on hole 8. It was an incredible shot. What was your approach on that shot?

BERNHARD LANGER: It's a long par 5. I'm not that long anymore, so I hit a good drive, laid up with a 2-hybrid, had 91 yards and hit a beautiful sand wedge, almost a full sand wedge, landed I think a foot short of the hole, probably bounced past it and spun back in. I didn't see it because I was down on the hill, but it was right on line. When I heard the people go like crazy behind the green, I knew it was in.

Funny enough, two holes later on No. 10 I had the same club, landed six inches short of the hole, bounced up and hit the flag and then spun 12 feet backwards. If that hadn't hit the flag, it would have gone past the hole and come back and either in or very close. So not a good break, but glad I'm hitting my irons that close.

Q. You talked about sort of difficulties with putting, obviously not using your putter, how much of an adjustment was that for you using someone else's putter?

BERNHARD LANGER: It's a big adjustment, especially the length was the same but the weight is a little different, and mine is face balanced when I hold it and this one was toe down, so when I practiced with it this morning first time, I felt the putter wants to do a little bit of opening through impact and that's my bad stroke anyways. When I putt bad, I usually open it myself, and then if the putter opens and I open, then we're going to have a really bad putt. I saw that appearing two or three times today from short distance, the ball just went much further right than it should.