

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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XANDER SCHAUFFELE



ALLIE LeCLAIR: We would like to welcome Xander Schauffele into the Wells Fargo Championship media center.

Xander, you've had some great success here at Quail Hollow, last year with your runner-up finish as well as being a part of the victorious 2022 Presidents Cup. Have you had a chance to play the course yet and can you give us just a few comments on it?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's definitely the last time we were here as a team, had some good vibes. Talked about it a little bit today with Austin and Pat. Definitely good vibes being on property. Played nine holes. The greens have been resurfaced so they do have that firmness to it despite all the rain. Just as a whole, just a completely different course than from the Presidents Cup. Definitely good memories to look back on, but you're not going to be able to play off of any memory.

ALLIE LeCLAIR: You've got seven top-10 finishes so far this season. What's been working so well for you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: A little bit of everything. I'd say I haven't really been able to get everything together at once, which is sort of the story for every Tour pro, so still working on that bit.

Q. (No microphone.)

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I can hear you.

Q. Shane was in here earlier talking about how playing at the Zurich kind of freed him up a little bit, you get into that team event and kind of frees you up for the rest of the year. Do you have that feeling at all, especially when you're playing with a guy like Patrick and you kind of have the back half of the season still in front of you? Does it free you up at all? Does it kind of shake things up having that event right in the middle of the season like that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, for Shane, they won, so when you win, it definitely, you have a sense of playing freer. I've been on both sides of it where I won late in the year and I won early in the year. You definitely sort of cruise through tournaments with a different mindset for obvious reasons after you win early in the year, so I'm sure Shane has that feeling right now. I haven't won so I don't really have that current feeling, but yeah, it's fun to play in the middle of the year, it's fun to shake things up. Playing with Pat, I'm not scared to hit sort of a loose errant shot, I know he's going to chip it up there to a tap-in. So there's



certain shots that with certain weird winds on property that you may attack a little bit differently versus if you're just doing a normal stroke play tournament.

Q. I know you said there's nothing you can really pull from when you were here for the Presidents Cup going into this week, but like you said, you have played well here in the past. What is it about Quail Hollow that you kind of see the course well, or is it something that fits your game, or what is it, what makes you feel so comfortable out here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: A lot of the holes feel like execution, it's a big boy golf course, championship style. I've played it sort of overseed and with bermuda, it plays very different both times. This week with the rain, the fairways seem to be a lot softer than they normally are. Usually your ball's sort of bounding out of the fairway into the bunkers and into that right rough and you kind of have to gauge it going into the greens that are particularly firm. I think it's just a fun course to play and you have to execute shots throughout the entirety of the tournament.

Q. Have you gained speed this year? The stats seem to suggest it. Was that a by-product of the swing changes or anything else?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I can't really pin it on one thing. I started working with a new trainer, he's definitely helped me feel a lot stronger, just my baseline strength is probably better. Then working with Chris as well, moving the club a little bit differently, that's been very helpful. I think a combination of the two. I don't know how to weigh the situation between them, what's more or less, but those two things have definitely helped me pick up some speed.

Q. Was it an intentional, like I want to pick up speed this year?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It was, yeah, so it's nice to be able to accomplish that goal.

Q. Did you feel like you were falling behind guys or that was important to competing? Where did that kind of come from?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: If you just kind of look up, I mean, Scottie is an outlier in many ways currently. He's actually dropped speed, which is just mind blowing. No one hits their irons or gets up and down around the greens better than him. So his iron play's elite, so he can afford to sort of drop some distance off the tee. I mean, I think he's hitting more fairways. I haven't really done too deep of a dive, I just saw that his average ball speed was down.

I played with him a couple years ago and he was sending it past me, so at that time I feel like I needed to pick up some pace. And now that he's dropped back, he's just doing Scottie things. But in general if you look at the sort of top 10, 15, 20 players in the world, there's sort of a threshold that you need to hit if you're not sort of a crazy elite iron player or crazy



scrambler or things of that nature. So I figured any edge I can get on the field, if it's flying the ball 15 yards further and being able to take out a bunker on a hole that other guys can't, that will help me over the span of a season.

Q. And did you play the front or back today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I played the front today.

Q. So you haven't seen the new tee at 16 then?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Austin told me. Yeah, Austin told me they put a tee at 340. I'm going to need a gale force wind to cover that one.

Q. Xander, welcome back to the Queen City. I'm curious from the scheduling standpoint, you have this Signature Event here, next week is the PGA Championship up at Valhalla, but of course not too far from here is Pinehurst and the U.S. Open which is next month. How do you manage that, because I'm sure it's tempting to want to go over there prior to the start of this tournament and at least take a look at it? How are you at least trying to manage that from a scheduling situation?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'm lucky, Austin my caddie, he went. He flew in from -- I was in Florida just practicing. If I didn't play New Orleans, I was probably going to sneak over to Pinehurst, but just being on one week of rest, I ended up not going over to Pinehurst or Valhalla actually.

Austin went over to Pinehurst, checked it out. He said it was very soft. Just like here, they got a ton of rain. It's just so hard to tell when you go early in advance to tournaments how a course is going to play.

Even if you take Augusta for example, the one time I went on a scouting trip there, it was 42 degrees and hailing and I still played 18 holes because it was a dream of mine. I've never played at Augusta -- I mean, this year was the hardest, but any other day I've ever played it was never hailing. It's kind of hard to decide how to go about it.

Q. That makes sense. So with that sort of little knowledge that your caddie has about Pinehurst, I mean, when do you start sort of forming a game plan or do you sort of feel like I'll know more once I actually see it personally and start practicing?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, once I get on property. He has some sort of idea on how the course is shaping and things of that nature. Honestly, in big weeks like that, you hang your head on a statistician or some stat guy that you can have, but Pinehurst, I believe there's no data on that property. That's sort of a week where I feel fortunate to have a caddie as good as Austin because he's going to have to go out there and walk 30,000, 40,000 steps to give me any sort of advantage I can get?



Q. Xander, are you aware of the cut streak you've got going right now, and if so, have you given it much thought?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Are you trying to hit me with a commentator's curse here or something?

Q. No. Well, you can't miss it this week, so I figured I could bring it up.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's right, it's an OK time. Just don't bring it up any other week, right?

Q. Yeah, it's fair this week.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, yes and no. It gets brought up. I think Austin's actually the one who brought it up to me a couple weeks ago maybe, but it is what it is. I don't know who else is playing a lot of the events and making the cut. I think it's definitely a testament to consistency. All of us out here want to win tournaments and I guess that's a different question, but yeah, I'm aware of it now that you've mentioned it.

Q. Does it give you any, I don't know, sense of perspective as to the fact what Tiger did all those years ago making all those cuts?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah (laughs.)

Q. I think you're like 90-some behind him.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, yeah, it would mean I would have to play like another three and a half years to get close to his number. Yeah, it's ridiculous. That's why he's the GOAT, he did stuff like that and he has records like that that will never be broken.

Q. In all seriousness, though, when you're doing it like this, obviously it's been a while, have there been any times where on a Friday where you just thought, man, it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world if I did miss a cut, or do you fight through those thoughts to try to keep going?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I grind. I don't think I've ever sat on a property and, you know, glass half full maybe after I missed the cut, I was like, you know, probably a good thing I missed it, you know what I mean?

But when I'm in the hunt and trying to make a cut, it's definitely one of the things that are exciting out here as a Tour pro and sort of gut wrenching. No matter how highly ranked you are in the world or not, it's pretty humbling. And it's fun and stressful to make these putts down the stretch and hit good shots to sort of make the cut.

Q. Xander, when did you start thinking about the Olympics? Obviously with them



coming up this summer, has that thought started coming into your mind at all? When does that start playing out for you, after major season? It's got to be tough --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's hard, you kind of have some plans in place. The U.S. team, I'm sure there's other teams, but the U.S. team just feels like it's a really hard one to qualify for even though they're taking four guys. Imagine if they were taking two like most countries, it would be pretty brutal.

But yeah, just trying to position myself. I haven't really thought too far ahead. I've sort of planned if I were to qualify of sort of staying overseas, either popping in or hanging around versus coming back and doing the whole back and forth thing. Other than that, that's sort of the extent of my brain traveling that far.

ALLIE LeCLAIR: All right. Thank you so much, Xander, and good luck this week.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thanks.

