

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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XANDER SCHAUFFELE



MODERATOR: Good afternoon, everyone. We'll go and get things started. We would like to welcome Zander Schauffele here to the ZOZO CHAMPIONSHIP.

Xander, making your sixth consecutive start. As we always do, we'll start off with some opening comments on what it's like to be back in Japan.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's always a pleasure of mine to be in Japan. First was in Osaka for two days and Kyoto for two days prior to this. First time for both and it's always one of my favorite stops of the year.

Q. Came out here earlier, what were some of the things you did and plan to afterwards the tournament?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I pretty much ate all through Osaka. Visited -- I was a tourist along Dotonbori there and in Kyoto, went to a couple shrines and enjoyed some onsen with my wife, so it was very, very relaxing.

MODERATOR: Being a professional golfer, travel all around and can kind of cause jet lag, but came out here earlier, does that help with the adjustment.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: We'll find out this week with my scores, but I think so. I feel better. I've done the charter getting in at 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. I've come a little bit earlier and I've come in Sunday. So I've tried it all at this point.

MODERATOR: Been at this course all six times, but just got done with the practice round. What are you seeing with the course and the conditions this year?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: The greens are really fast. I think depending on rain, the course could play very difficult this year. So if we get a little bit of wind and no rain, it could be the highest, highest score I guess, winning score. If we get a little bit of rain, it could be sort of like years past.

MODERATOR: Added two majors to your resume this season. Has treatment been any different this time around coming back to Japan?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I feel like the fans here have always been very supportive of me, which I appreciate. The majors, they probably help a little bit in that category, but everyone's always so nice to me.

MODERATOR: I'll probably have a few more at the end, but we'll open up for questions.

Q. Looking back to your season, you won two majors and how was your season?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It was a dream come true. Winning two majors in a season is, you know, you sort of dream of that stuff and for me to be able to do it is very special. So I will always remember 2024.

Q. So you brought the Claret Jug to Japan this time. Are you going to show it to your grandparents this time?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Of course, yes.

Q. How was their reaction when you showed it?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Oh, I haven't -- since I've been -- I literally just got to I guess Chiba or Narita on Monday, so I haven't seen my grandparents just yet. There's a chance that my mom showed her parents on -- my parents got here a little bit earlier, last week.

Q. This tournament is held once a year. What part of your golf game would you like your fans to watch?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: All parts. Hopefully I play really well and can give some nice entertainment to all the fans that come out this week.

(Question and answer in Japanese.)

Q. Xander, just wanted to find out, obviously you had a very successful Presidents Cup, you guys played so well, had a lot of fun. Do you think you could take some of that momentum from the fun that you had there into having good form into here in Japan today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's the last competitive golf that I've played, so I was able to sort of play a little bit better each and every day when I was on property. Kind of got off to a little bit of a rough start and then by Saturday, Sunday I was starting to hit the golf ball pretty nice. Definitely take that sort of momentum and try and carry it as long as possible.

Q. Xander, congratulations on an amazing year. Just wanted to ask you about Chris Como and the influence that he's had on your career this far.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: He's been tremendous. I've known Chris for maybe 10 years now, but I've only been working with Chris for pushing probably just under a year, call it a year now.

Yeah, I mean, I trust him a lot. I have put a lot of sort of faith in what he's telling me, just

believing everything he's telling me and trusting everything he's telling me. It's a scary thing obviously, I had pretty much the same coach my whole life and to get advice from someone new and to sort of put your whole I guess all of my tournament trust and feels and everything that goes into sort of competing at a high level into his corner was a really big deal for myself and my team. Chris is an awesome individual and definitely very happy that he's part of my team.

Q. I noticed that you mentioned that you're bringing the Claret Jug to Japan. Do you have a preference for which major you won?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm not picky. Just the Wanamaker's --

Q. Too big?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You can't put it in a carry-on, I'll say that much. It would be a massive trunk.

Q. You had an amazing 2024 as we know. What do you think you need to do next year to win Player of the Year?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, it seems I need to have the best career ever. I just had my best career ever and wasn't really close. I'm pretty content with how I played and where my game is at. If I can keep on doing what I'm doing, I'd be very pleased.

Q. Xander, when you think of 2019, obviously Tiger won here, what stands out from that week with what Tiger achieved that week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Well, one, he made history by winning obviously. What I remember honestly, I sat on the first tee with J.T. and Rory and I couldn't believe how many people were just on the property. Tiger has -- obviously there's some very big names here that pull a really big crowd, but Tiger seems to always move the needle the most. It felt special just for how -- it felt like a major almost just for the amount of people, like it was 10 rows deep on the first hole and it was insane.

Him winning was obviously really special, but he definitely brought a different feel in 2019 to the tournament on top of his history that he made.

Q. I think you played in your first Presidents Cup later that year in Royal Melbourne where Tiger was playing captain, led a team to a win there. Was there anything that stood out with his game?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, he's impressive. His body even at that time wasn't, you know, where he would like it I'd say. He wasn't 100 percent, not in my eyes at least. I was there in the team room with him late at night doing physio and ice baths and all those things. For him to be the captain, for him to go out as our captain and shoot, I think he was 5 or 6

under on his own ball his first match when it was super cold weather and chipping in and doing Tiger things, you know, I felt like a kid in a candy store just sort of one of our great idols in our game was doing his thing and he was on my team for it.

Q. Just one last one from me. Obviously a great year with those two majors. Being in Japan, being half Asian as well, what would a win here on Sunday mean at the end of an amazing season?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it would be a cherry on top. I have a lot of my family will be out and my grandparents will be out. To be able to win -- I don't get to see them very often, so delivering the gold medal to them was really special during that COVID year. I think delivering another win in front of 'em and for 'em would be even more special.

Q. Have you won in front of your grandparents before?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No. During COVID they weren't able to attend. I was able to show them the medal that night at the hotel. We were able to sort of sneak around now that it's OK to say, but at the time we conveniently had rooms next to each other. So random. That was how I was able to share the medal with them that night.

Q. What's your strategy to play this golf course?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: There are five or six holes that you just have to try and play for par on the property. If you can do that, that would give you a very big advantage on the field. Then there's probably another five or six holes where you feel like you can make birdies each day.

So the course is very polarizing when it comes to holes you feel like you can birdie versus parring. My plan is to try and just separate the two and sort of treat them as sort of separate tournaments.

Q. So the holes you want to make pars, is that like long par 4, or what kind of holes?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, No. 4 is a long par 4. No. 5 is a very difficult par 3 with water. No. 9 is a very long par 4. No. 11, 12 are two very long par 4s, and 17 is another very difficult par 4. No. 16 would probably be another hole I would want to par. I don't know if that's six holes, but all those holes if I can make par on them, I'll be very, very happy.

Q. Xander, TGL announced its schedule for the inaugural season starting in January. How excited are you with this new initiative for that kind of golf and what can fans expect from out of this?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I think it's very exciting. Sort of our first mesh of golf and technology being sort of mashed together on an entertainment platform. You know, with the arena being built there in Florida and being complete, I think we're playing -- I'm first up

based on what I saw on the schedule. I forgot who we're playing, I think the Bay Club I believe. So it will be a really fun match and it's an honor to be the first guys to go out and give it a run.

MODERATOR: Perfect. That's all the questions we have. As always, thank you for the time, Xander.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thank you.