

U.S. Open Championship 2020

Saturday, September 19, 2020

Mamaroneck, New York, USA

Winged Foot Golf Club

Xander Schauffele

Flash Interview



Q. Xander Schauffele, even par, 70. What do you take from the round today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, when I was in the fairway I was able to sort of capitalize on my position, and when I wasn't, I made a mess of a few holes. For the most part you just can't hit in the rough on certain golf holes out here, and when you do, it's kind of a half-shot penalty almost.

Happy that I was able to make the birdie there at the last and kind of give myself a chance tomorrow.

Q. When you look at the first three days and what you thought was going to happen, did you envision Monday through Wednesday this being the kind of golf course where you have seen -- I know it's all relative, but where you have seen these type of scores that maybe Matt put up today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Kind of. I mean, he hits it really far. He hits it really high. He's not afraid. And yeah, he doesn't really care. It's not that surprising that he played -- I played with him the final round of the PGA Championship, and he destroyed that place, as well, and it was playing difficult there on the last day.

Yeah, 5-under is really low. I thought 3 maybe might be the low today, but he obviously topped that one nicely.

Q. What do you think you'll take out of today that will help you tomorrow?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just staying patient. It's just another day at the U.S. Open. Kind of beats the crap out of you and kind of recover tonight and have dinner and laugh about it and then try and do it again tomorrow.

I mean, I think I made some good swings, a lot better swings than sort of my second round out here, and hopefully I can build off of that.

Q. I'm not sure I understand what being patient means. Does that mean not completely having a

meltdown?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's so bunched. When you look up at the board, bogeys are out there, birdies are rewards and pars are great scores. Staying patient is just everything, taking your bogey when you have one, capitalizing on a birdie when you can and kind of riding the wave.

Q. Have you come close to losing it this week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, not at all. We've been playing a lot of golf the last three months. I'm in a decent head space.

Q. You've had to do this once already at the PGA; what is it like on a Sunday trying to finish these things with nobody out here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it sucks. You know, it was funny, I made sort of, I think, almost a 20-yard putt or 17-yard putt on the 8th and then eagled the 9th and I was sitting there -- it was just awkward. It's the U.S. Open, and it's a major championship, and it's playing really tough.

Those are sort of the shots that really get your tournament going around and fires up the crowd, and it was just -- I mean, you hear crickets chirping. It was kind of lonely out there, not going to lie, but I think it's definitely easier to sort of stay in your own head space and not let anything sort of bug you too much since there's no one out here.

Q. So trying to close one out at 21 years old, which is what Matt is going to try to do tomorrow, is easier maybe because there's nobody here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, I'm not in his head so I don't know what's going on, but I would imagine if you had two options, I'm sure, knowing Matt, he'd want to play in front of fans. He is that type of player. But I would have to think the polls would push towards it would be easier without fans.

Q. Obviously some crazy things have happened on the 18th hole here. I wonder what you think of it as a finishing hole and kind of when you're on that tee box

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what's going through your mind's eye?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Left rough is like a water hazard. Right rough is giving yourself a chance. Bunker is okay. Hitting the fairway is gold. You can kind of -- it's starting to firm up a lot now, so that second shot is starting to become very difficult.

It's just really fair. It's tough. I hit a 9-iron kind of seven yards right of where I was trying to and I had a 28-footer that broke about 10 feet. If I hit that thing on line, it would have been right up there five feet.

It's very fair, I think, and it's a very, very good finishing hole.

Q. With that shelf and when you're kind of looking at it, being aggressive -- if you need to make up a shot, like if you're on tomorrow, you need birdie on it. How difficult is it to make something that works?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know where the pin is going to be tomorrow, but you can make it happen. If you hit a good drive and you're in the fairway, you'll have a 9-iron or 8-iron in; and if you make a good swing, you will give yourself a good look at birdie.

Obviously there's trouble looming just long or just left or just right, but if you can kind of pull off sort of a miracle shot in the moment, you will be rewarded for it.

Q. I wanted to see if you could expand on a previous question because you've been there when it's loud, whether it's Augusta or Carnoustie, and you've experienced it when it wasn't at Harding. If you could explain what the difference is from inside.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just fun, man. That's why I love playing.

Q. But the difference of --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Of no fans, with fans?

Q. Coming down and the pressure you're feeling and the stress you're feeling --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just everything is exaggerated with people. People yelling, there's more noise, there's more things. You have to try and focus more. Right now it's so quiet, it's eerie, it's weird. It's not like anything anyone has experienced. It's hard to feed off of certain things. When you do go birdie-eagle or something, usually you kind of ride a wave and you can usually focus a little more and get in a zone, and right now

it's sort of like a college tournament almost where you're doing your own thing. We have a caddie now, which is nice, but college you didn't have one.

It's just strange. I really don't know how to explain it, but I think everyone out here is missing the fans.

Q. When we first met you at Erin Hills in '17, you kind of liked the anonymity then. I wonder if it's been any different for you to play when smart people are picking you to win or you don't notice it at all?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't really care. I do my own thing. I've got a small team, and we try to prepare the best way we can, and I just enjoy playing in these tournaments. You know, whether I was a favorite or not, it doesn't really bother me, I just try and handle my own thing.

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