

U.S. Senior Open Championship

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Omaha Country Club

Bernhard Langer

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Bernhard Langer, thanks so much for joining us here in the interview room. Bernhard, the 2010 U.S. Senior Open champion and the winner of 11 senior majors, the most of all time.

Bernhard, you turned professional almost 50 years ago now. Looking back at your game from the 1980s and 1990s, in what ways do you think you're a better player now at age 63 than maybe you were back then?

BERNHARD LANGER: I would think my technique has gotten better over the years, as you practice every year, every day, and you learn more about the swing, about techniques, you know more about yourself and how to play certain grasses, certain shots. So you get wiser, hopefully, have more knowledge, more understanding, so that should make you a better player.

Then you reach a time, with some guys it's 40, with some it's 50, with some it's 60, when your body starts breaking down and you lose distance. All the young guys, they hit it forever, and it's become a power game the last sort of 25 years, I would say, where distance is extremely important. I've reached a point in my life when I'm starting to hit it shorter while the other guys are still getting longer with the modern equipment. So I have to make up for that by being more precise and accurate and make less mistakes.

THE MODERATOR: You've said you're not done winning out here. You've said that a few times. As you approach your mid-60s, what will be key for you in the coming years for you to continue to play at a high level and make more trips to the winning circle?

BERNHARD LANGER: As I said, I'm about 40 yards shorter than many guys out here now, which means I'm hitting 4-iron when they're hitting 9-iron, and that becomes tougher to compete, but it's still possible. There's certain courses where I have better chances than other courses, but even -- I just have to play close to flawless golf. I've got to hit fairways and lots of greens and got to have a



really good short game to hopefully compete on some of the courses.

As I said, there's other courses where distance is not quite as important, and those are the ones where I will have a better chance to win.

Q. How do you consider OCC as far as a course that you have a chance on?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, I like the golf course, but it's playing very long. We're playing it at 7,000 yards, par-70, so if you make it a par-72, you add 400 yards. That's 7,400 yards for seniors. That's a lot of golf course. And a lot of the greens are elevated, which means if you hit a 9-iron in or a 7-iron, you can stop the ball. If you come in with a 2-hybrid or a 3-wood, you're not going to stop the ball. I think that explains it all.

Q. How has it been working with a new putter this week?

BERNHARD LANGER: It's my old putter this week. It was hard last week playing with a different putter that I never used. Now I'm back to my old one.

Q. Got it reshafted?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yes.

Q. You played here in 2013. What do you remember of the course, and what maybe has changed?

BERNHARD LANGER: Not a lot has changed besides maybe five or six holes were lengthened by 30, 40 yards, so that's a drastic difference. And some of the greens have been modified a little bit. What stands out about this golf course is it's probably the most undulated from tee to green that we ever walk. It's a very extreme up-and-down golf course, and the rough is very punishing right now, and the greens are very severe. I mean, everybody talks about Augusta greens. I think these are more severe than Augusta in terms of slopes.

Q. Talk about your relationship with Alex Cejka through the years.

BERNHARD LANGER: We've been friends ever since he



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became a pro basically, and I'm about 13 years older than him. So his father fled from the Czech Republic many years ago, came to Frankfurt, and that's where he started playing golf, I think.

Alex is a great guy. He's had a few injuries in his life, which held him back a little bit, motorcycle, cars, other stuff, but he's got one of the best golf swings out here, and when he gets the putter going, you'd better watch out. He's already proved that. He's made an immediate impact. Just about every time he teed up, he had a chance to win, and he's already won twice.

Q. How about the other young guys out here? Who's playing well in your eyes, and who do you have to look to to beat?

BERNHARD LANGER: There's lots of them now. You have Jim Furyk is playing full-time. Who else? Retief Goosen or Ernie Els, they're playing full-time. They don't go back to the regular Tour anymore. They're both very long, have a lot of game, major winners, proven their game around the world, not just in the U.S. or Europe. Those are the main guys, but a guy like Kevin Sutherland -- I mean, you can rattle off 50 guys that can win on any given day or any week. The Tour is that competitive. It's that good, because we on a regular basis only have 80 guys that compete in a tournament. Here we have 156, I believe, but normally 80.

So they're from all over the world. You get the best 80 guys teeing it up, and it's tough. It's not easy.

Q. What would one more senior major championship mean to you?

BERNHARD LANGER: It would mean a lot.

That's why I practice and play and compete, to win tournaments. It's the same on this Tour as on the younger Tour. The majors mean more than the average tournaments, and the USGA does a phenomenal job with this tournament. The way they do everything is first class, and it's a pleasure being here.

Q. You played with Mike Ketcham today, and he was very complimentary of you, of at least lending your thoughts on certain things or him just watching how you went about preparing. Can you tell us what you saw in him today, if anything?

BERNHARD LANGER: I like his golf swing. He seems fit and healthy and hits it a fairly good distance, which is going to help him around here. He seems to have a swing that he can repeat that hits the ball high and straight. Don't

know how good his short game is because I didn't pay attention. We don't score when we play practice rounds. But he was impressive for a teaching guy, teaching pro, and I think he's got a lot of game, a lot more game than some of the others who have qualified.

Q. In 2013 you had a great opening round, great weekend round, stumbled a bit on Friday. When you return to play the course the second time here in Omaha, do you contemplate what you did wrong or what you could have done better in preparation for the current event? If so, what might that be this week?

BERNHARD LANGER: No, I don't. I don't even recall my individual scores and the mistakes I made. I don't remember. That was eight years ago and 300 tournaments ago or whatever. I don't know. Or 200. So I don't recall that. I go through every -- at the end of the day, I go through my round, and I recognize where I went wrong, where I hit a bad tee shot or a bad chip shot or putt or whatever, but I don't remember those eight years later. That's part of being, I think, a champion, forgetting the bad stuff and moving forward and remembering the good stuff.

Q. One silver lining that came out of the last 18 months, you became a grandfather. How has life changed since you've added the title of "Opa"?

BERNHARD LANGER: It's a great title, and it's even better than what I've heard from others, so I'm loving it. We've had three grandkids in a span of ten months, and I enjoy every minute, every day I can spend with them, just holding them, hugging them, playing with them, and seeing my own kids becoming parents, it's pretty unique and special. It's almost better than having your own kids. You can mess with them, play with them, and then send them back and say, okay, you take care of them now. And I don't have to change as many diapers as I used to either.

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