

The Memorial Tournament Presented By Workday

Wednesday, May 28, 2025

Dublin, Ohio, USA

Muirfield Village

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Xander Schauffele and go straight into questions.

Q. (No Microphone.)

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Playing better and getting points. I'm a little bit behind the 8-ball here, so I'll take as many points as I can get.

Q. Are you worried about that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Worried probably isn't the right word, just feeling a sense of urgency. I know there's a few big events left of the year and I just need to show up for 'em.

Q. You obviously are aware, we saw the news last night, about the TOUR Championship changing. As a guy who I think had the low score there more than once and didn't get a win, I'm guessing you're good with this move and at least moving it forward?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'll take my wins from before, yeah, if they redo it.

Q. Will they go back and give 'em to you now?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'm not sure. Will they, Preston?

THE MODERATOR: TBD.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: (Laughing). No, it's all good. It seems to be more aligned with sort of how other playoffs work. Golf is really the most merit-based sport, unless I'm off my rocker here. And now East Lake and winning the TOUR Championship, I think it's the same thing. Everyone is trying to hoist that trophy and that part hasn't changed at all. It's just the way we're going to go about it is a little bit different, and I think it will be easier to follow for fans now that everyone is starting at level. And, shoot, if you make it in as 30th -- I made it in as 27th before, you really have a



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nice look at trying to win this thing.

Q. I'm curious if you've ever been to Oakmont.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I have not. Not yet.

Q. Are you at all curious, given what you've heard about it? It is a little bit of a different venue.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I mean, I am curious. You know, once the USGA gets their hands on certain courses, they play a certain way. I don't know who designed the course. I've been told. I'm sure I know who it is. But in terms of how the place plays, I think just like here, honestly, it's like a U.S. Open. If you hit it in the rough, you're not going for the green. You're going to be pitching out, and then you're going to be working extremely hard for your 4, if not trying to make a good bogey, or you take on way too much risk and you bring 6 or 7 into play.

So you have to enter a different space when you're playing in U.S. Opens, and I don't see it being any different at Oakmont.

Q. Why do you like it so much, the U.S. Open?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just a battle. It really is. It can be extremely rewarding if you are able to stay disciplined for 72 holes. The cliché statement of golf is a marathon, it seems to be the most true feeling when you play at U.S. Opens. You just feel like you're going to war every day.

Q. Have you ever been tempted to quit on a U.S. Open -- by "quit," I mean just figure you're too far back, too far whatever, and just go through the motions?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I play to the whistle, always.

Q. I didn't know that. Sorry.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I figured you would have, but that's okay.

Q. How is golf swing stuff going? Like, I know you've



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been working with Chris for, what, two years now almost?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Ish, yeah.

Q. Is the stuff taking hold? Have you had to go back and work on it? What's the status of it?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Always working on it. Yeah, I would say it's taken hold. Small tweaks here and there. I think I'm trying to move from the mental transition of trying to play perfect golf and golf swing to just trying to get back to seeing certain shots and picking better targets and things of that nature.

I feel like I've been a little bit stagnant over the ball, coming back and sitting there, you almost can tell I'm thinking one, two, three, four things. If I can get that down to one or two, that would be ideal.

Q. What are those things?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Trust me, you don't want to get in my head. I'll tell you that much.

Q. Give me a flavor.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Oh, just whether it's posture at setup, my right hand getting too strong, shutting the club too much on the way back, club getting stuck inside on the way back, not getting the club enough on line up top, stacking at address, there's like too many things. Like I said, you don't want to get up there.

Q. The other change to the TOUR Championship that they mentioned in the press release was making the course play harder, making par -- a score closer to par more likely the winning score. How do you feel about that and can you give an example of what you think they might do?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's a good question. I think it being sort of our hardest tournament to qualify for, just being 30 guys and 30 guys after a year-long race, I think it kind of fits to make it not 30-under winning. I think it makes sense to make it difficult. So with that being said, I mean, pin locations, grow the rough, make the fairways smaller. I mean, to start you just make fairways small and grow rough, make greens firm and fast. It's going to be pretty difficult.

Q. Would you like to see that tournament move around to other venues?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, I haven't really

thought that much about it. I think Coca-Cola and FedEx need to decide if that's something they would like. They hold a lot of the chips there. I don't think it would be -- if it's like some sort of rotation or something of that nature, it could make sense. But again, I think it's one of these events that everyone wants to qualify for, everyone wants to win, so I don't know if it makes sense to kind of keep it in the same spot or have it move around. I haven't really thought about it, to be honest.

Q. If we put you in charge of driver testing protocols, how would you handle things?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I would test everyone and make sure I would get everyone's serial number with a driver. Pretty easy.

Q. Do you think that that's a realistic thing, like a realistic approach from a player perspective?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It just depends if you want anyone playing with a hot one or not. It's pretty simple.

Q. Do you think it's a big deal when drivers, I guess, fail these tests right now. I mean, it happens all the time, but for whatever reason --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it really is normal. I didn't even understand sort of the public's negative opinion on it. It didn't really register in my head because I know, one, it's, like, we hit our drivers a lot, so, like, they creep and then they go over a line. We don't know when the line -- we have no clue. Unless our driver physically cracks and you start hitting these knuckle balls off the tee that kind of disperse everywhere, then you know your driver's broken.

But in the terms of this creep thing, it's not like you're going to be a guy who has 170 ball speed and then all of a sudden your driver's hot and you have 185. It's not like a cork bat. That's just not how golf works. You either swing it hard and hit it hard or you don't.

I think the trickiest part is no driver's the same and no shaft is the same. They can have all the same writing and logos on them, but the makeup of each head and shaft is slightly different. A lot better now than they used to be, but it's just hard for us to sort of -- we have a trusty, our trusty club, and then you take it out and switch it. Same thing with a putter, you know. No club is exactly the same. So as soon as you make us change, there's a little bit of a grace period where you have to get used to it.

But by no means do I think anyone is, like, trying to have some hot driver out here. That's not really how this works. It's, like, your club and you want to use that club because

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you know it like it's your best friend.

Q. Henry Fownes designed Oakmont. Does that do anything for you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, I lied earlier. I don't know who Henry Fownes is. Sorry Henry.

Q. Would you describe yourself as, like, a golf architect nerd and what do you like about it and who do you like?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, sir, I'm not a golf architect nerd. I just know that modern golf has really been tricky for architects. I think everyone quickly goes to distance as making a course hard. You just put pins on crowns and make par-4s 530 yards. Am I okay with that? I'm the guy in the field that's just going to try to beat everyone and have a better attitude and try and get it done that way.

But if you're going to start nitpicking the architecture of it, some of our best holes aren't that way. When you start turning drivable par-5s into long par-4s, there's a reason it was supposed to be a par-5, and not a par-4, because you're trying to hit a wedge into it, not a 4- or 5-iron. So that's as much architect talk as I got for you.

Q. I apologize if you've been asked about Oakmont. Have you been out there?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I have not. Not yet.

Q. What have you heard? And I'm curious your opinion of par-3s that are 250-plus yards because they have the 299 one out there, number 8.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, that will be fun. Yeah, L.A. Country Club had a couple of those. It was interesting to hit a sand wedge and a 3-wood or driver into those. I've heard Oakmont is -- from several players, it's the hardest course they've ever played. That's kind of the most people have talked about it. Not much detail on why. Just it's long and the rough is impossible and you can end up hitting 50-yard pitches trying to get up-and-down for par on every hole, something of that nature.

Yeah, just because a hole is long -- I touched on it before. Just because a hole is long doesn't mean it's good. I think there's a certain risk-reward that should be on a hole and a certain way a hole should be played. It shouldn't just be about trying to hit it as far as possible -- I mean, it's modern golf, hit it as far as possible, hit it in the fairway, hit it somewhere on the green, and make do with what you got.

I still enjoy playing golf, but there are some courses that

seem to be more fun than others and that's because of the architecture.

Q. When you were a kid, do you remember watching U.S. Opens where it was usually chip-out rough?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, some version of Tiger taking a lob wedge and looking like he's going to hit it 300 yards, you know, some collage of guys topping shots out of rough, guys not advancing it correctly out of the rough, guys having meltdowns out there. That's kind of what I remember from U.S. Opens growing up.

Q. So does that make it more of a mental test, then, in two weeks than --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's everything. If you're not hitting your golf ball well, you're not going to, like, will it around the property. You're just not going to play well. If you're hitting it in the rough, if you're hitting seven fairways or five fairways at U.S. Open, you're just not going to get it done.

When Dustin played well at Oakmont, he absolutely striped his driver on Sunday. He hit a little 10-yard fade on every hole and he played really nice. So that's at least what I was told. I haven't fact-checked that one. You have to play really well -- if you're playing really well, I think U.S. Opens are a tricky task because it can make you feel like you're not playing well and that's where that mental part comes in.

Q. You said you didn't realize how much people were talking about the driver thing and the creep and all that other stuff. Do you think the fans see that as cheating?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: From what I've heard when I've talked to some guys, it seemed that way, which I didn't think was really right. There's not much information on it. So it's, like, when a guy has a cork bat in baseball, it's, like, a big no-no. You know what I mean? And in golf, too, when a driver creeps, you shouldn't be able to play it. But at the same time, it's not quite the same thing.

So I just don't believe there's any guy out here that's intentionally saying -- because the whole problem is when your driver is hot, it will break just shortly after that. That's just how it works. So do I think any guy is out here is like, Oh, I have a hot driver. Like, I'm going to hit it a mile this week?

No. It's just, this is my driver that I've been hitting for a year and I love it, and no, I don't want to switch. So I think that's kind of more the attitude. And yeah, I thought it was

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kind of crazy when you test 30 guys and there are other 120 get to kind of roam around. It's kind of weird.

Q. Which major do you think does the best job of identifying who plays the best golf that week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Oh, man, I think all of 'em do. I feel like all of 'em really do. Yeah, I'm not sure which one specifically. They present different things. I feel like they're all kind of trending towards a similar style, which is just hit it really far. Like, when I first went to Augusta, it was -- if you shoot a nice round, you can shoot 7-under. But you are, like, landing your wedge in, like, 9-foot windows and catching the slope correctly and hitting really good drives and pulling off crazy shots over water with a long iron, and it feels like you're just on cloud 9, and you'll shoot 65 or 66.

It's, like, with how long Augusta is now and how they have set the course up and now that the greens are like concrete and like a U.S. Open-like, I mean, it feels, like, impossible to shoot 65 at Augusta. So when I say that, I feel like all the majors are sort of trending -- weather-dependent, trending towards 8-under is the winner, 7-under is the winner, over par at Oakmont might be the winner, that kind of thing.

Q. Do you think par matters to the USGA? They say it doesn't.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: (Laughing.) Yeah. Yeah. I don't know. I would imagine it matters. I would imagine that it matters for a lot of people. You don't want to -- if you own a golf course -- if I owned a golf course, I wouldn't want the pros to come and absolutely bash my property and shoot 40-under. I think, you know, unless you look at a course and you see the history of winners and you're like, okay, these have yielded really good winners, and it's 20-under, sure, that's great. You feel good about your property. But for the most part, yeah, I would say that they care.

Q. When you had the driver issue at the Open that year, was your -- for you, was it more you didn't like the way the testing was conducted or --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: In Portrush?

Q. Correct.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. No, it was more of -- I can't remember, it was so long ago. I think I had an issue then about just them not testing enough guys, and then something about, like, it became public about mine, and then I just -- I kind of lit fire and threw everyone under the,

but. I remember doing that. I remember there was, like, a line. I was like, I'm stepping across it. So that was in 2019.

Q. But I mean, it is sort of like -- from where we sit, on your side, like, this is something that isn't supposed to be disclosed, and then there is sort of this negative connotation that comes out with it. I wonder if that bothered you at all.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It was sort of like the PGA. I mean, I was -- someone wrote about Scottie -- like, I was the one who leaked it, basically, about Scott's, and he told me, and it was more of, like, a credit to how good he was, you know? And I didn't realize -- like I said, I apologized. I was like, Sorry, dude. Like, I wasn't trying to have that be a question in your media after you just won another major.

It was more about, like, you know, guy just used his backup and absolutely rinsed the field again, so it was more of like that kind of thing.

Q. He actually really explained it well.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Okay. I didn't see it, but that sounds like Scott.

Q. The way he explained it, it was an excellent explanation as to how the whole system works and, like, sort of not that big of a deal.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Right. Like I said, yeah, guys, you have a driver you like and that's what you use. It sucks to try and switch. But we do also -- part of our job is to have a backup and it is to test it, so...

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