

# The Northern Trust

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Jersey City, New Jersey, USA

Liberty National Golf Club

## Xander Schauffele

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'll go ahead and get started with Xander Schauffele. Welcome to the virtual interview room at the Northern Trust. You've had a very impressive season highlighted by seven top ten finishes, including your Olympic gold medal not too long ago in Japan. So just thoughts on the season so far and how special that was for you to win the gold in Japan.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's been so far, so good. Obviously, good feels in the last couple weeks in Tokyo. So I think overall the season kind of feels like a blur. I guess it always does at the back end of it. Just happy to be here in the playoffs and looking forward to a good run.

THE MODERATOR: Obviously, the playoffs are starting this week. We're here at Liberty National Golf Club for the first event in the FedExCup Playoffs. What do the FedExCup Playoffs mean to you? You've had good success out here before. We're back this year. Just your thoughts on entering the next three weeks.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I guess it's what I always look forward to. Just making it to the playoffs just means you kept your card for starters. Moving forward, I think it's probably the most cutthroat golf that we can have in terms of pressure. Besides the majors and THE PLAYERS, which fortunately count towards the FedExCup Playoffs, it's just the most fun and pressure packed golf you can have. So we always have so much to play for, and it all comes out of this.

**Q. So Xander, when you talk about kind of the nature of this tournament and blah, blah, blah, were you thinking internally more about positioning for the FedExCup or the Ryder Cup? It seems like it's almost, for some people, two races going on at once? What do you think is on your mind more?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'd say first things first you just want to position yourself in the best way possible for East Lake. I was pretty far back, and I played really well at East Lake, and I found myself finishing second. So I made it very apparent to myself, even if I play really good golf, it's



not enough to come back if you're too far back starting the week, which is sort of how it should be. Whoever has good playoffs or a good year should be ranked high enough and moving along from there.

But there's obviously a second ranking being run. I'd say for me it's if I can just handle the playoffs really well, then the Ryder Cup will take care of itself. It's kind of day by day, and fortunately the FEDEX is before the Ryder Cup. So that's that.

**Q. And if you were to be really honest with yourself, when there are times like this positioning for this cup, that cup, whatever, and you're not thinking about that, you're only thinking about the golf, is that true? Do you think there's players that can block that out? Have you ever caught yourself thinking outside the ropes, if you will?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, for sure. I think just recently in Tokyo I was already thinking ahead of what I'd look like with a gold medal on before I even had it, and that worked out well. I thought to myself it's okay to think ahead. As I said, I have been doing a little bit of reading. A quote that stood out to me at one point was just saying that it's natural to think in advance. It's just your ability to sort of come back to the present and lock in is sort of what matters.

I think everyone out here, if you get off to a hot start on Thursday, if you have a low round on Saturday, you're going to be thinking about how well you can position yourself moving into East Lake, but it doesn't really matter until you sort of handle the deal. For me, instead of sort of trying to bury that thought and not think about it, I just sort of allow it and then try to come back to life whenever I can or as soon as possible.

**Q. Xander, I'm guessing you've been home since Memphis and then back to here?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I went home for a week.

**Q. Is the gold medal at home somewhere in your house?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Pops has it. I can't get it off of him right now. I had a couple of media things to do with



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the medal, and then I got a phone call shortly after that asking for the medal back. So he is taking good care of it as we speak.

**Q. And I know you mentioned East Lake and your runner-up finish from a few years ago. I should know this, what did you start the week at East Lake on the list? Do you remember?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think I was at 3-under or whatever 11th place is. I think that's what I kind of went in -- I don't know. Something like that. I was pretty far back. I was six or seven shots back, and I think I actually won East Lake by three shots, the actual tournament, even though it doesn't count for anything. I think I actually won that by three and still lost. So there's that.

**Q. I guess the aim to my question would be what lesson did you learn from that? Don't start 11th or like positioning yourself as we just talked about?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's tricky. It's the playoffs, and you're trying to -- it is three weeks in a row, which is kind of nice, so if you do start playing some good golf, there's some continuation there. You just have to position yourself really well. East Lake is a really hard golf course, and it's so hard to really beat the field by a lot.

Honestly East Lake being a course where you can kind of win by seven or eight. I think everyone is capable of doing it, but it's an interesting one. It's a difficult course to do that on. So I think you just have to position yourself as best as possible.

**Q. Just kind of to follow on that, we had a case a couple years ago with Patrick, who went into the TOUR Championship as the No. 2 seed and had a stinker of a tournament. It happens. And winds up like 28th in the FedExCup. Is there a sense of fairness here that you can have it moved to the cost of about \$2 million, or have you guys talked about that option?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think you're talking about Cantlay?

**Q. Yeah.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: We have not talked about that, but I know that we're on a similar page in terms of having -- sort of rewarding play kind of throughout the season. I think the Comcast is a really good way of doing that. He dipped into that pool this year, which is obviously a nice little bonus before the playoffs start.

Yeah, that's a tricky one. He obviously had a really good

season. I know the playoffs is supposed to be cutthroat. I mean, going from 2nd to 28th, I didn't know that happened, but that is pretty cutthroat in my book. That's kind of a harsh penalty for having an off week.

I don't know. It's an interesting one. I'm sure people are still discussing whether it's the best format for us. It is what it is for now. Until it changes, we just have to deal with this one.

**Q. Who do you think is discussing it, the locker room or the people that actually matter?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I would hope both. More so the people that actually matter. We're just out here playing, and we're supposed to be taken care of. Hopefully the people that matter are talking about it.

**Q. And one last thing I had for you, Xander, on the other cup. Do you like the idea -- I know it's been a different year with the pandemic, but do you like the idea of six captain's picks? Do you think that's okay, or do you think that's too many?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. This is my first Ryder Cup. What is it normally? Is it eight or nine? It's eight and four? I don't know. It's an interesting year. I would say, because it's such a long year, six is probably fair. You obviously want to pick guys who are in good form coming up.

I'm in the last position right now, and let's say, if I won a lot two years ago, I would have positioned myself really well, but if I'm playing really bad now and fall outside of it, it's kind of a tricky situation. I think there's really no harm or no foul with the extra six picks in this interesting long COVID break.

**Q. We have the 2021 Aon Risk Reward champion coming in next after you, Matthew Wolff. Can you talk about what the Aon Risk Reward means to players? I know you're an ambassador of Aon, and how it affects your decision-making and strategy throughout the season?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's a fun challenge. I think a lot of guys probably weren't too aware of the challenge. It is a cool thing Aon puts on for both the men and women, awarding \$1 million to the winner of the sort of Risk Reward Challenge hole. Matt played a very limited schedule this year and was still able to win. So you can kind of tell he obviously played those holes -- they're printed in our yardage book now, which kind of helps versus us trying to find it in the locker room.

But he played those holes very well, and he was awarded \$1 million. So clearly him and his caddie had a good strategy for the par-5s.

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