

BMW Championship

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Wilmington, Delaware, USA

Wilmington Country Club

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

JACK RYAN: We'd like to welcome Xander Schauffele into the interview room here at the BMW Championship.

Xander enters the week No. 6 in the FedExCup standings and finished T3 at the 2018 BMW Championship not far from here at Aronimink. If we can get an opening comments on your return to the BMW Championship.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's an awesome tournament to come to. I think BMW does a great job with venues, big championship-style golf courses. It's always a good thing being back here.

JACK RYAN: Next week you'll make your sixth consecutive start in the TOUR Championship, a place where you won in 2017, finished runner-up twice. Looking forward to that next week I assume? What are you looking forward to accomplishing the next two weeks?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, just it's all about putting yourself in position this week. I think I've come in fourth during the regular season once before and did not play well, neither the first or second playoff events, or I think maybe it was four at the time. Looking to position myself better going to East Lake since I've had a pretty good track record there.

Q. The world of golf is in crazy land. How would you like to see all this resolved?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Some sort of unity. It's definitely fractured currently. Yeah, we're just in the middle of it. In a nice peaceful way would be a nice outcome.

Q. This is a course we don't play on TOUR; is your approach to this week any different than if you were playing a new course in a regular season event?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Not really. I think being overseas, I played very well. The ball was played down lower, flatter, further back in the stance, different tilts. Last week I hit it horrendously, and not hitting it great right now. I'm trying to get myself to sort of hit more up on it again, see the ball up in the air more.



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I guess it's not really a course thing, it's just adapting to play styles, if anything. That would be my biggest thing.

Q. I know you're a West Coast guy. I'm wondering if you've been to Delaware. Is this the first time?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Nope, first time. I've been to plenty of states, but this is a first time for me.

Q. What are your impressions so far?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Unfortunately when we golf, it's very hotel or house, golf course, hotel or house, golf course. I love my job, so I do spend my time at the course and not really sightseeing. Maybe I'll -- probably not, but maybe I'll come back to Delaware and sightsee at some point and see what it's all about.

Q. Did you expect the course to be in such great condition for a state that doesn't often get the recognition in golf like Delaware?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think there are gems everywhere across the U.S. I think if the weather -- weather permitting it can always be in great condition. I don't know what kind of system they have here, SubAir or some sort of heating system, not that you need it right now because it's so hot, but SubAir to dry it out. I'm not sure what this course has, but so far it rained a little bit on Monday, I believe, and it's been pretty dry since then. I think the course is going to start playing firm and fast and sort of what we had hoped for a playoff event.

Q. Going back to the fracture, are there people on LIV that you miss?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, from a competition standpoint, all of them. On a personal note, I miss Dustin and AJ.

Q. Who doesn't?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Who doesn't, right? They're two beauties. AJ is full of one-liners, makes me laugh, and I appreciated that. But yeah, I don't know the list fully, so -- but maybe I could poke out a few more.



Q. Shifting gears to 2017, on two accords, one, does this almost take you back to those days of coming on TOUR and having to learn a new course every week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, a little bit. I think there's a certain level of comfort, I guess, competing on different grasses and sort of roughs, chipping out of certain roughs, hitting out of certain bunkers. The more you do this, the easier it gets to adjust, or at least it should be.

I think I've learned how to prepare a little bit better compared to 2017. But yeah, it's always kind of fun to learn a new course.

Q. When you joined the PGA TOUR in September of '16 -- right?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Korn Ferry, yeah. I was a part of the umbrella.

Q. Who sponsored you back then, and why did they sponsor you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Adidas was still a sponsor. I had AP as a sponsor. I don't know if my sponsors are going to like that I'm rattling off other sponsors --

Q. We can stop there if you want. I guess what I'm getting at --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: TaylorMade was another one of them. Why are you asking these questions?

Q. I'm working on it. We were talking about can't-miss kids coming out of college as you identify young stars, and I'm trying to figure out who would have identified you.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I mean --

Q. Did I ask that poorly?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It didn't sound great. You're lucky I know who you are so I'll answer this.

But yeah, I wasn't one of those can't-miss kids coming out. If you want me to say that openly, it doesn't bother me because it's just the truth. Yeah, it was sort of a very incentive-based sponsor sorta type deal. I think AP was in 2017. I think Korn Ferry was literally just like a shot from -- my dad used to be in the golf industry, so he knew several people in it, and they sort of took a chance on me, and if it didn't work out, it didn't work out. It obviously worked out for me.

Q. As a highly skilled player, one of the best in the world, can you identify a can't-miss kid? Can you look at a college kid coming through now and say, yeah, this guy is going to be something special?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm sure some of the pros could probably -- if we play enough rounds with a kid, we may be able to see -- we could probably put a better educated guess on it, but it's always a guess. There's can't-miss kids in every sport, and they just don't pan out.

I think unless you are living with a kid, saw interactions with families with a kid, saw how his schooling worked, how structured he is, how structured he isn't, work ethic, things like that, then you could probably have an even more educated guess.

There's so many things that go into being and competing at a top level that it's so hard to tell when someone is developing at 17 or 18 what it's going to look like or what their outside life looks like that's going to affect their on-course play.

Q. Right now there's a program that the top 5 college seniors go directly to the Korn Ferry TOUR. Do you think that could or should be amended to go straight to the big leagues?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, I'd say that you could make arguments for it. It wouldn't bother me. I think in order to make sure that kids want to play on the PGA TOUR, that's definitely a nice incentive coming out of school.

I don't know what the time frame on it would be or what the starts would be. I imagine you'd sort of be put in some sort of rookie category.

But yeah, I think -- I don't know, there's probably a stat or number you could run just based on the top 5 or 10 guys coming out of NCAA how many of them have panned out on the PGA TOUR, that have worked through the Korn Ferry and whatnot.

Yeah, I think that wouldn't bother me whatsoever.

Q. Normally this would be a pretty big week for qualifying for Cup teams. Obviously it's kind of maybe second or third fiddle this week. From a player perspective, has this run-up to the Presidents Cup felt different than some of the other Cup teams that you've been on?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, a little bit. You just don't really know who you're going to be playing with or against,

I guess, compared to previous years. Getting on a team is such a result that for me personally, it kind of -- as much noise, with everything going on, it doesn't feel too dissimilar compared to previous years for me personally.

Q. Just wanted to ask, what is a characteristic of a golf course that would maybe make it easier to adapt, and does this golf course have that since you've never played here? Not just you, most of the field has never seen this golf course before.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, I'd use this course as one that is hard to play, but in terms -- I guess when you use the word adapt, hard to play and compete on, but in terms of getting to learn it, not very difficult. There just isn't much to it. I know that may sound bad, but it's really long, you don't want to hit it in the rough, and every putt you have is almost downhill. Those are sort of my main takeaways so far. Bunkers better than the rough around the greens. It wouldn't be my favorite course to play blind, but you could definitely do it, compared to like a Hilton Head or something like that.

Q. Well, Hilton Head is a much, much shorter golf course. Does length play a big factor it is in how easy it is to step into a golf course --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: A little bit. It's hard to make a 650-yard par-5 special. It's just really long. That's what makes it -- I guess if you want to use the word "special" again, or difficult. It would almost be impossible if you made a 650-yard hole with a dogleg and water and a raised green and run-offs. It would be like a seven-hour round out here, which is what we're trying to avoid.

Q. Xander, given you've seen the golf course and all, what number do you put this week on a victory?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's a really good question. I look at this place as sort of like a harder Caves Valley. I have no idea. I couldn't tell you. It really depends on if it firms up. A lot of the fairways dogleg, and that first cut will catch the ball but almost makes it unpredictable coming into the greens.

Q. Do you see it being double digits?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I went to Caves Valley and I thought like 17-under was going to win, and then those two boys absolutely destroyed the place. So it's sort of like, yeah, the longest hitter to ever play for us and then the best putting week ever. I always err way too low out here on the TOUR, and guys are just way better. The guys are good, so aim high, I guess.

Q. I know you've had your ups and downs in golf and will for as long as you play it, but have you ever had a case where you've gone so quickly from winning every time you tee it up to wondering where the ball is going or wherever you are now?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I haven't had the luxury of winning so often to know what the backup to that would be. But yeah, it's just a style. To prepare for this week, it would have been -- winning at Torrey Pines would have been like a nice preparation for this -- not even though because it's so hard to hit fairways there. You've got to hit it really high and far here. It doesn't really make sense to try and hit like a low fairway finder because if you miss the fairway you're going to be further back in the rough because your ball is not going to go anywhere. It is just "sendito" out here.

Q. Assuming you went to the meeting last night, just your general thoughts on what you hope would be the outcome of it all.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, you looked nervous to ask that question.

Q. I waited until the end.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. It was a really nice meeting. It was great. It was exciting. It was new. It was fresh. Coming up with other adjectives here, yeah, I am very hopeful with sort of what's to come, I should say.

Q. If you don't mind me asking --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You're going to ask whatever you want.

Q. When you're dealing with any group of players there's always going to be somebody who says something and I'm getting a sense that there was a really united, concerted effort that whatever happened in that meeting stays in that meeting. Have you ever been in a meeting like that where that was kind of the edict coming out where let's just keep this to us?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I think I'd be pretty unhappy if I saw one of those guys from last night just blabbering to you guys what we talked about. That would be really frowned upon, and you probably wouldn't get invited back to the meeting. Yeah, there's a little bit of a code there, I'd say.

Q. Last week's ruling with Cam Smith, my question to you is once you leave the golf course, should that be it? Should you be questioned the next morning?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You're bringing in the -- it's something that can be talked about in all sports, the review, the replay.

Q. But shouldn't it be once you've left the course, it's over, it's done?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. It's so easy to play devil's advocate there. You just play both sides of the fence and you're going to be sitting there staring in the mirror going, I don't know if I feel good about this. I don't really know, to answer that.

I think, yeah, it was tough. I felt bad for him. Watching the replay, you just assumed that he should have known or someone should have said something, but the correct ruling was -- I thought it was kind of -- he seemed like a good sport about it, but the fact that he just sort of teed off at 9-under at the 11-under time, he should have been going earlier, maybe with less wind to get it back -- it was a little sloppy in my opinion from a handling standpoint. Yeah, I feel bad that it happened that way, but I really have no answer there on sort of the whole instant replay thing or the replay overnight deal.

There's been terrible rulings in all sports, so I'm not calling that one a terrible ruling, but unfortunate rulings I should say.

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