

# BMW Championship

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Castle Rock, Colorado, USA

Castle Pines Golf Club

## Xander Schauffele

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Xander Schauffele here to the media center at the BMW championship. Since we saw you last at Memphis, you had a runner-up. Just want to get your thoughts on the first FedExCup event and entering the week here at the BMW championship.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's always good to be back. BMW just has this big tournament feel. They spoil pretty much everybody on pretty much everyone's team. Really happy to be here. It's a pretty cool venue, very different. Just a big change from last week being in Memphis.

Tuning in back to last week, it was a good finish. I think shooting 63 on Sunday is never going to make anyone sad. All good.

**Q. You've had a tremendous season but so has Scottie. How would you compare what you've accomplished this season to what he's accomplished?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I've won two times and he's won seven. We both have a lot of top 10s. That's kind of how I'm drawing it up. I know that's how you guys draw it up.

But for me, as a competitor, I just have a lot of respect for him. It was cool to get to know him and Meredith a little bit more at the Olympics, and even Teddy, too.

He's been playing unbelievable golf. I feel like we're all just chasing him. I've done probably the best job of getting the closest to him, but it's still very far away.

Just a lot of credit to him and his team for putting together a really special year.

**Q. You mentioned last week in Memphis that you had gotten to know him a little bit better in Paris. Just curious what you guys did so that you could get to know him a little bit better?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: We played on the same -- we



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were representing the United States, so we wore the same colors and we played practice rounds together, Wyndham and Collin. Each day we played a foursome with Team USA. When you get to spend some time with people and you ride in cars with them and kind of like a Ryder Cup or Presidents Cup, you start to get to know people and their team and their sense of humor or what makes them laugh or what makes them tick. That's what I meant when I said I got to know him and even Collin and Wyndham more. It was a cool experience.

**Q. Any particular takeaway from getting to know more about Scottie?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, he really is -- he's genuinely just really nice. He's a really good dude. He's not afraid to poke at people and laugh at have a good time. He's definitely hyper competitive. But yeah, at the end of the day he really is a rock-solid guy. There's honestly nothing I can say to knock on him.

**Q. You mentioned playing with Scottie at the Olympics. Wyndham was also on that team. Him being from here, did he tell you much about this course or did he keep those secrets to himself?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't think there's -- altitude and how far the ball is flying is usually the big discussion. You see caddies and their team members trying to figure out with the machines and all the high-tech stuff we have these days versus back -- I can't even imagine what it was like 25 years ago trying to figure out how to play at a golf course like this. It would be a lot more difficult.

Yeah, Wyndham talked about the property. He talked about how cool it is. He's definitely proud to still have a place here and come here and was excited for the week, and he thought everyone would really like it.

**Q. What part of the course have you seen so far? Have you seen all 18?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I've seen all 18 holes.

**Q. Any wacky numbers altitude-wise that surprised you when you got up there, clubs you hit?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Not really. I lived in Vegas for a



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couple years, and it's not quite 6,500 or 6,600 feet up in the air, but I think tucked up in Summerlin there it gets maybe just shy of 3,000 feet. I played roughly 5 percent for two years when I was at home, and maybe that helps me a little bit sort of trust -- the only weird thing we have sometimes is when you're hitting over water and you're hitting a 4-iron from 265 yards. It's kind of weird when you think of it that way, but once you and your caddie break it down -- it looks far away, but once you and your caddie break it down, the number you have in your head seems like you're at sea level, for me at least.

**Q. After playing two days, does it feel like you have the numbers dialed in or is it one of those things where all week you're trying to figure that out?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think it's going to be all week. I was joking with Austin saying I might have to intentionally hit more club than some guys off of tees just so I can catch my breath by the time I get to my golf ball. I think if you're first up on some par-3s after a long walk, you might be huffing and puffing a little bit more than normal.

**Q. Can you talk to the momentum that you want to take from this week forward into next week, knowing you're probably going to be 1 or 2? How important is momentum going to East Lake?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's big. That's what I was trying to focus with my team on in Memphis. I think same as this week -- fortunately I had a good regular season, so I'm in position to not relax but I can play conservative and kind of hold my spot. I could win this week and still not take Scottie, just with how often he finishes in the top 10, with the amount of points we're getting.

That was my goal last week was just sort of get the swing and the shape of it, pushing that in the right direction, and start seeing some putts go in. This week, as well, no matter what happens, I think just really understand that I need to stay in a good process and day in, day out do I things I need to do to sort of springboard me into playing really well into East Lake.

**Q. You've been paired with Scottie a lot recently because of your position. You will be here again. Has there been any issue getting caught up or not getting caught up with the battle between the two of you?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I don't know. I feel like we kind of look at it in a similar fashion. We're really just playing against ourselves and the golf course. The score -- I've said this several times in the media. The score really is just a result. Some days you play really well and shoot 69 and some days you kind of play crappy and shoot 66.

That's just kind of how the game is. Then vice versa, you can play well and shoot 2-over and play bad and shoot 8-over. So I think sticking to your process, what's gotten us this far, is going to be important and not really getting too emotional about what's happening around us.

**Q. When is the last time you threw a club during a tournament or otherwise expressed visible frustration?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. That's a good question. For you at least.

**Q. Have a good answer.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I get frustrated often. I quickly try to correct myself, just knowing that it doesn't do me well. I don't operate well when I'm too angry or too happy. If I ever get too chatty on the golf course, I lose focus on what I'm trying to do, and if I get too angry, I lose focus on what I'm trying to do, as well. I try and stay in the middle lane of my mind.

**Q. Where did you learn that?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I got my card on the Korn Ferry and I was extremely angry -- I think I missed nine cuts in a row and felt like I was playing pretty well --

**Q. You're talking about as a rookie?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: On the Korn Ferry, yeah. First year on the Korn Ferry. It was my first time, I'm sitting there, huge pat on my back, I got through Q-school and I was fired up, and here I am. I'm a fresh kid out of college and I've got my card already, that's pretty special. Then I made 25 grand, I'm floating Austin with me every week and paying him more than I'm making, we're rooming together and I'm angry all the time.

It was a lot of self-reflection, I guess, at that time to realize that I was really frustrated and I felt like I was playing decent golf, I was just missing cuts by one shot and I was just having these little mini-meltdowns all the time. Got my act together, fixed that, and then looped that in. Got my card my rookie year. Was able to get through the Playoffs on the Korn Ferry or Web.com at the time and then same thing happened.

I finished top 5 at Sanderson when I was -- it wasn't a regular event. I guess it was -- I don't even know what they call it anymore to be completely honest. Same thing, I was about to lose my card, and then I Mondayed into the U.S. Open, and the rest is history. I was able to turn it around.

Two years of beating myself up in hotel rooms and just

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realizing that I need to stop kind of acting like a child in my own way is how I came to that conclusion.

**Q. You did that on your own?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, my dad has been my biggest supporter mentally. Family, as well. Then now my wife, as well. They all know me really well and how I tick. They can spot when something is wrong or not. They've just got to -- I think the people closest to you know your buttons, and they can tell if they press a button and I'm a little too sensitive or too hot that I'm not okay, and they check me at the door all the time.

**Q. What would you consider on TOUR or maybe anywhere the worst loss you've ever had, the hardest one to get over? A lot of negativity here, I apologize.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, you're killing it.

When I three-putted at Sentry and I got to -- I had a two-putt to win and I three-putted and I got in a playoff, and then I was so rattled from three-putting, had a meltdown, internal meltdown and chunked a chip off the fringe or something -- I can't remember. I'm pretty good at being a starfish when it comes to stuff; I forget. Three-second memory here and I forget about it.

But I just remember three-putting there, was really excited, really amped up, downwind putt, whacked it seven feet by, missed it, was in complete shock, then had to go into a playoff. Had no chance of winning that thing, obviously.

I remember sitting in the hotel room looking at the floor and my wife Maya is asking me if I'm okay, and I was like, you're going to have to give me at least 10 or 15 minutes. That was four or five years ago.

But that's like the only one I can think of off the top of my head.

**Q. It took like two years to win again after that.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. Thank you. I'm just coming off another -- I've done it twice now in my career. I haven't won a tournament for two years and was able to rattle off two majors. I don't even know what that means, but you'll be here to ask me the weird questions along the way.

**Q. You just alluded a minute ago to your early days as a pro and obviously you're not playing for a lot of prize money and joking about -- maybe you weren't joking about paying your caddie more than --**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It was a lot of prize money.

**Q. For you it was, right, at that time?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, yeah. If we're going to compare and contrast, not as much as now, but yeah, winning 30 grand in a week was pretty damn special to me at the time. And my caddie.

**Q. At what point do you even consciously recall when you didn't think about the money? Because early on when you're starting out, you probably need to think about the money.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Well, yeah. When people are expecting you to pay them and you have people backing you, people helping you to move along and you feel like you're failing immediately when you're not supposed to be -- I wasn't sitting there thinking about the money when I was playing bad. I was sitting there thinking about how I'm missing cuts by one. It was more of that than anything else. I was more disappointed; my competitive side was really ramped up because I was rattled about how I was missing these cuts by one shot, playing with guys that I felt like I could beat, and they were smoking me by three or four shots on two days.

It was more of that than anything else.

**Q. Do you ever recall a time thinking about a missed putt cost me a thousand dollars or whatever the number was? Would you have ever zeroed in on the numbers based on the score? And obviously getting past that is probably pretty important.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, in all honesty, not really. My friends have texted me in the past, letting me know that that putt, they feel like it cost them, too, for some reason. My friends think we're all on the same team; there's a lot of "us" when they write it. I'm like, okay, at least they're wearing it with me.

**Q. So they're not doing that to bust on you?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, they're busting on me for sure, yeah. They want to make it hurt.

But yeah, I honestly don't think there's any pro out here that's sitting there, like, oh, if I make this putt I'm going to make 50 more grand or 80 more grand. Someone might say it to them after the fact, but when you're in there, you're trying to make an eight-footer that's right edge. You're sitting there like, all right, I've hit this putt a few times; let's see if I can roll this thing in. Then you hit a bad putt and you want to go straight to the putting green and hit an

eight-footer that's right edge.

**Q. In this era of inflated purses, does \$25 million still get your attention? Does 15, 10, 5, the sort of money you guys will be playing for the next two weeks?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, it's interesting, the media has been an interesting thing to me the last two or three years. There's a reason behind inflated purses and a lot of people have been talking about money. The news that I do read, it's funny, it's really negative. It's painted really negatively in golf, which is fine. I think people like to hate on anything these days.

But when I look at other sports, when someone gets a \$300 million contract, there's all these positive comments about how someone got their bag or they've worked so hard to get this and they deserve it, things like that. It's interesting to me. I think maybe golf is a gentlemen's game and you're not supposed to talk about money, but all the media wants to do is talk about money.

Us players, I think the players that make the most money don't think about money because it's just not the most important thing.

To answer your question, yeah, I mean, winning \$25 million would be really cool and really nice, but I don't think it's going to change my life, and I can tell you if I lose and play bad, I'm going to be pretty upset about playing bad and not being able to peak at the right time more than losing money.

**Q. You mentioned the other sports, and NFL quarterbacks now are making \$50, \$60 million a year. Should the top golfer on the PGA TOUR be making \$40, \$50, \$60 million? If Scottie Scheffler wins the FedExCup I think his season earnings not including off-course endorsements would be \$60 million.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's a lot of money. It's different; the money that's around the top players is skewed. You take the top 10 quarterbacks, you're going one-on-one, which is not really fair, I'd say. Scottie has won seven times. I think that's including Olympic gold. Maybe eight. I don't want to mess that up. And he's made significantly more than everyone else.

If you look at how much 10th has made, the 10th best player in the world has made, it's not going to sniff how much Scottie has made. That just shows you how well Scottie has played in these big tournaments.

You look at the No. 1 quarterback, he's getting \$60 million and then the No. 10 quarterback is getting 52, and then

No. 15 is getting 39 or 40. So it's like, obviously there's way more money in football with TV and everything that's surrounding it. It's hard to compare the one v one because Scottie has just been that much more elite, and I think he deserves everything that he's getting.

**Q. You were talking about Team USA and we've obviously got a Presidents Cup coming up. If you were looking around the bubble, what's the smarter choice for a captain's pick, a veteran or a young up-and-comer that might be being blooded for the future?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. I have to imagine you really have to -- more than the veteran or the rookie, probably more the horse for the course, in all honesty. I think your goal is to win the Cup at all costs. You've got to pick the right guy for the right course.

Obviously he has to get along with everyone. I look at the top 20 guys on our list here, and I can see everyone playing with everyone. There's no issue with anyone that could be or is going to be on the team. That part makes it easy in terms of the team being cohesive.

Montreal apparently, it's not some crazy big property. It's more old school with maybe modern greens is what I've heard. I'm thinking of some sort of narrow course that you've got to hit a lot of fairways, the rough is going to be up, got to be a decent putter, kind of hitting shots into elevated greens so maybe a bit higher of a ball hitter. But whether it's a veteran that fits that mold, great. Whether it's a rookie that fits that mold, great. Whether it's a guy who's never been on the team, great. It doesn't really matter.

**Q. When you were first a rookie or whatever and maybe not ready to be on a team but thought of as a future player, would there have been value in having you essentially go and be in the background to get a feel of it?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, it would be too much of a tease. You're sitting there, doing your head in about how you didn't make it. It's a really cool experience, but I know how competitive everyone is, and as much as you're going to root for your squad, it's going to be tough to wear that one mentally. I think you're better off going on vacation.

**Q. Regarding back to here, does this course present any more or less of a challenge to you than any other first-time venue would be?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think it's pretty straightforward. I don't think so. The altitude is the tricky one. We played



in off the left on 18 just now, I was having lunch, and I looked and the flags are whipping in off the right. I think there's going to be a little bit of that.

When you're in the trees and you can't see many flags and all of a sudden the wind switches and it's blowing seven and a half to 10 miles an hour and it switches sort of 45 degrees, that could cause some problems, especially when you're coming over water on a few holes and hitting an 8-iron from 200 yards. That can get kind of weird. But other than that, no. I think it's very fair. I think it's very straightforward. There's a few ways you can play it. You can be really aggressive off the tee or you can kind of be a little bit more defensive.

**Q. A question used to come up in the Tiger era. Remarkable year you've had and your World Ranking average would probably be No. 1 in a lot of other years besides this one --**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thanks, man.

**Q. That's a positive, right?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: In a Doug way, sure.

**Q. Is that something you've ever wanted to do, and does it seem like a long way off just because of what Scottie is doing?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Becoming No. 1 in the world? It's a very big goal of mine, yes, and I've been told, yes, that Scottie is an outlier in several years, and I would be. But it's not really good enough, is it? That doesn't take away from what I've done or how I feel. I'm proud with the work that I've put in and with the people that are around me and that have helped me. Just result. I keep saying it, but it really is. I'm just going to keep knocking. That's what I do.

**Q. When you look at where you are and what you've done, was there a point from your rookie year -- when did you feel like this was possible, or did you feel that way from the get-go?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: A little bit of a mixed bag. I think when I would set goals and talk with my dad a lot about sort of the mental side of it, a lot of positive self-talk, a lot of self-belief. As a kid, you tell yourself things, you try and dream of it at night, but until you actually do it, it's sometimes hard to believe.

I think stabilizing myself in the top 10 in the world helped me a lot mentally, knowing that I can kind of hang and even in years that I wasn't playing my best, I felt, and then

kind of working with someone like Chris this last, I guess, year-ish has sort of helped me be able to hit certain shots that I wasn't able to hit under the gun.

That combination was sort of a long line of self-belief that my dad has always tried to put in my head, is probably a good combination for where I'm at.

**Q. Going off what Doug was saying there, was there a result of a tournament early in your career when you look back and you think, I know I'm going to make it now?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: When I finished -- when I Mondayed -- I played with Stricker 36 holes to get into Erin Hills, and I played with him, and I had to go into a playoff the next morning actually to play like four more holes, like a four for six, I think -- six guys for four spots. I got off the green, Strick told me, I think you're really good. He asked me how my year has been going, and I told him it hasn't been going great. He gave me kind of a nice veteran pat on the back. Then I got to Erin Hills and played -- I think I finished tied fifth or tied sixth or something like that.

After that it was like a huge sigh of relief because I felt it was a pretty big stage for me, and then I secured my card at the Travelers shortly after that.

I think when you secure your card as a rookie, it is something that you can celebrate, no doubt.

**Q. Did someone ever help you out along the way outside of your family that you look back fondly on? A tournament give you a sponsor invite or someone give you a free lesson or anything?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I never got a free lesson. My dad was my only swing coach for pretty much ever. I get a lot of love and support from my hometown, San Diego. There's a lot of -- my dad would golf with a lot of -- they're probably 60 or 70 years old now, and they still text me after I play well. When I was learning how to golf, I would ride in carts with them.

Those types of people, but for the most part, my core group has been my family that have helped me so much.

**Q. In a previous year, could you imagine a scenario where a player would win two majors and not be the Player of the Year?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. I mean, I think -- didn't Vijay have to win nine times to take Tiger in whatever year that was? I think when you're trying to -- Scottie has made himself very dominant and very known in this world of golf

we're in, and everyone knows what they have to do now to sort of get on the top of that mountain, and it's going to look like probably something what Vijay did, something crazy like that, to take him.

**Q. I know who you usually play with in Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup, and I know who Scottie often plays with in those events. What would it look like if you guys actually played together?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: If Scottie and I played together?

**Q. Right, if you were teammates in those events, what would it look like if you played together?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I would hope that we could beat whoever we played. I think we'd have a lot of fun. Teddy and Kais get along well, I get along well with Scottie. I think, yeah, depending on the format, it would be a lot of fun.

**Q. Is it better to be you than the 13th best-paid quarterback in the NFL?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's a weird one. I don't know. Josh Allen is probably the only quarterback at a really high level that I've ever talked to, and he was a really nice guy. What are there, 32 teams in the NFL? So you're still in the upper part of that. I don't know what it's like to be in a locker room rallying a group of men to go to war every Sunday.

I'm very happy with the person I look at in the mirror most days. It's just very different, I'd say, comparing the two.

**Q. If it's not about the money, what is it about for you? Is it to be at that mountaintop, to be the No. 1 player, or is it something else?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I've always played soccer as a kid and it was a team thing. We'd lose, and I always wanted to play forward because I wanted to score the goal and make the difference. I was too young to understand sort of how it all worked. But I played defense, and they wouldn't score, and we'd tie and lose in PKs or something like that and that would do my head in because we'd lose.

Then I saw my dad playing golf, and we talked about how it's an individual sport, and as soon as I started hitting golf balls on the range and seeing a golf ball fly, it was kind of love at first sight. For me, I've always loved just playing golf. I've always loved hitting golf balls.

Now not being so new to it, that sort of honeymoon sitting on the range as a 12 year old, 13 year old hitting 600 to

1000 balls, I don't do that anymore, but I really enjoy the sort of process. I like, whether it's my trainer telling me we need to go from A to box C this off-season, this is how we're going to do it, or my putting coach telling me I need to hit this many putts and see if I can get this result or Chris telling me that I need to get my swing speed or the club to shape or move this way in the next week or two, see if I can do it, there's so many little challenges that present itself week in and week out in golf because there's so many variables and so many moving things.

I just really enjoy that challenge. It's an ongoing battle. It's a really hard one to win. New opportunities always seem to present itself. That's the part of golf I love the most.

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