

TOUR Championship

Tuesday, August 23, 2022

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Xander Schauffele to the interview room here at the TOUR Championship. Xander, a great three-win season for you so far on the PGA TOUR. Maybe just some opening comments about entering the week here at East Lake.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's always a good thing to be back. It's a course I've played pretty well on, and it's always a big goal at the beginning of the year. So far, so good.

Q. You're probably the best person in the field to ask this: Is the format perfect yet? Is there any way it could improve?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'd be sort of a backseat driver on that, unfortunately. I think it can always improve. You know, I think unfortunately I saw on the news of Will not being able to play this week, and after a season that he had to sort of just to go to last place, I think it's a bit harsh. I think it could be sorted out a little bit better.

That would be an example. I've obviously been on sort of both sides of that fence, too, from a competition standpoint.

I understand why it's the way it is, but I think the overall consensus just from talking to players is maybe a sit-down needs to happen to sort of reshape it or try to make it better, at least come up with options and then show it to us or just give it a whirl.

Q. What would you consider your most important shot of the season?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Hopefully I can answer that on Sunday. Up to this point? I don't know. It's hard to tell. I mean, there's pivotal points in every tournament. We're all very competitive. I've made a putt to make the cut on the number and I've made a putt to -- not to win a tournament, but I guess to make the finishing hole easier for myself and winning an event. It would be hard to rate.

Q. There's some pretty good friendships up there on

the leaderboard. I'm just wondering, are you fully willing to step on your buddy Cantlay's neck for \$18 million?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, whenever we play tournaments it's always a competition thing. We obviously enjoy hanging out. Most of the guys out here honestly enjoy hanging out. As soon as we step on the green grass, even in a friendly game, I think everyone is trying to beat each other.

Q. Knowing how well he's playing, how tough is he going to be for you to run down even?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: There's a lot of guys that are playing really well. I'd say anyone that made it into this tournament and in this format, it's kind of a bit of a free-for-all, especially anyone at even par. You shoot 6- or 7-under that first day, you'd imagine you'd put yourself right in the tournament.

I'd say it's there for the taking.

Q. It's been a tumultuous season for professional golf. How important is this week as a showcase for the TOUR? You've got all the stars here; you're in a place with a lot of history. Do you feel like it's a great tournament to kind of display the product a little bit?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'd say it's a nice finishing touch for our year to come to East Lake. Like you said, it's a ton of history on property here, a ton of history made I guess for our TOUR, as well, with some of the finishing stretches and ups and downs and how people have played.

I'd say yes, this is a very nice touch to our season.

Q. In here we talk a lot about all the macro developments between the different tours and the players and all that, but is there a lot of chatter this week about that or are you guys focused on the tournament?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'd say there's enough reason to be selfish as an individual out here on TOUR. Not much talk about anything, to be completely honest. Just everyone just trying to beat each other for the big prize.



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Q. What do you think is the biggest moment in golf this year that doesn't involve you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Tiger. Probably Tiger coming down 18 at the Open I'd say so far probably has a lot of clicks and a lot of views in everyone's hearts I would say.

Q. So Tiger missing the cut; we'll go with that.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You said it.

Q. How long before you realized that the putt you missed on 18 cost Pat two shots here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: At dinner, over dinner. Yeah, I don't think either of us really knew. I think he was just trying to two-putt and I was just trying to get out of the way at that point. I don't think I really knew what was happening.

Q. For a guy who has broken par I think 18 of the 20 rounds here, 52-under over five years and still doesn't have a trophy to show for it from here, do you take that as a positive or an annoying thing?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: A positive. You can only control what you can control, and I've managed

to play pretty well here. Other guys have beat me. If I can just keep knocking on the door and keep appearing here at East Lake, I would imagine I'd be in good hands for quite some time.

Q. I know you guys played a tournament together in college, but is there a story of when you and Pat hit it off or how the friendship started?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, we were teammates. I'd say that's when we became very close. We just spent a lot of time in those team rooms and team environments, especially from a player to player. When you are paired with a partner, it just makes you close. You'll know right away if you're going to get along with that person or not.

Q. You guys are now, each of you and Pat have a win playing with each other on the final day. Did you sense anything different in Pat? He kind of had a rough time at the Travelers but got it over the line last week. What did you see?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's fickle when you're trying to win a golf tournament. Travelers was sort of -- probably going to go down in history as a complete outlier for him. It was a day -- I've played a ton of rounds with him

and I've never seen him play that poorly. Kind of what he did on Sunday with the lead is what I would expect over at the BMW.

It really wasn't that different from an attitude standpoint or like a strategic standpoint. His execution was just sort of slightly off, and he paid the price for it there, and then at the BMW he did everything he was supposed to do when leading a golf tournament.

Q. Do you guys trash talk at all about the wins?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: While we're playing?

Q. No, like that you had the win, now he got the win?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No. It's just -- we're just looking forward to the next opportunity to try and take each other down on a Sunday.

Q. Given that you won the TOUR Championship in the old format and didn't win the FedExCup, do you prefer that system even if it weren't the points system that we used then? In other words, separating them, having a tournament and then determining the FedExCup winner?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Well, subject to the whole matter, just being in the mix of it. But I don't think it's that big of a deal to have two winners show up on the green. I think when Tiger won, was that the last year that there were two winners?

Yeah, so Justin Rose won the FedExCup that year, and I guess from a media standpoint Tiger may have stole the show, but he's going to do that to anybody.

I don't think it's that big of a deal to have two people on the green. They just want one, but it is kind of weird from a -- we're all competing and someone is going to be better this week, but someone is going to win the whole pie, as well.

It doesn't seem that strange or illogical to have two people sitting up there getting an award.

Q. What about the idea that's been kicked around a few times where you play the TOUR Championship and see where the points are and then just have a one-day thing for two, four, six guys, whatever, just one round the next day?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. You'd need to get a lot -- you'd need to get some people in a room and really sort of lay out four to six options and then really have a good look at it and see how everyone would feel about it. I



couldn't tell you what would be better, to be completely honest.

Q. What do you think Pat would be good at if he wasn't a golfer?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: A lawyer. (Smiling.)

Q. How come?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: He's really good at putting his thought into words, thinking to finality, and he's very linear. He can sort of pocket most people into conversation if you slip up. So yeah, I'd say a lawyer would be an easy one for him.

Q. Speaking of words, how long were you out here on TOUR before you felt comfortable expressing your views?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Well, I mean, it's pretty hard to truly express your views in this room since someone is going to mess it up, but I'd say --

Q. This room?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Media in general, yeah.

Q. Let me rephrase the question just to get ourselves off the hook here.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Are we back on this one?

Q. Just to clarify, before you felt like you could get into a locker room or be in a group of players out to dinner and really share your opinions on things.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, a couple years probably. A couple wins, a couple years. Overall, we all play golf for a living. It's not like we're supposed to know too much about anything else but playing golf.

In terms of giving an opinion on too many things, I would say we should probably leave that to most of the experts or people that do it for a living.

Q. What's your opinion now on a scale of 1 to 10? How strong are you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: When I speak in this room?

Q. Other rooms.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: A private room, probably a 10 out of 10, but I'd say in weird spaces like these, like a

neutral-ish 4 maybe, 5.

Q. At 4:00 in the afternoon?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, probably down to a 2 at 4:00 in the afternoon.

Q. I don't want you to come up with a solution for the Playoffs because I don't think you have one and we could talk until we're blue in the face, but it seems like if there was an option of carrying it through the whole year and then you'd get a week where someone like peak Tiger has got it wrapped up or it's volatile and wild like it is now, it's a pick your poison. Which one do you think is better?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: If you compare the two, I'd say it's -- if we had it like it was before, Scottie would have won the FedExCup months ago. I'm sure Scottie would like it in the old system, and it would be hard to argue that he doesn't deserve it.

But from a playoff standpoint and shaking it up and giving the viewers what they need, at the end of the day we play golf and we're entertainers, so we need to create an entertaining space. I think having some sort of alternative outcome where someone else has a chance to win is what everyone would want. Like I said, I don't know that what that looks like, but I'm sure it could be improved.

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