

# Arnold Palmer Invitational

Tuesday, February 28, 2023

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

## Xander Schauffele

### Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. We would like to welcome World No. 6, Xander Schauffele, to the interview room here at the Arnold Palmer Invitational presented by Mastercard, 2023. Thanks for joining us for a little time.

You've made one start here in 2020. I think had you a top 25. Coming back here for a second time, what do you bring with you from that experience?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, the course is really hard. I think 5-under won last year. It's always very difficult. The forecast shows a very windy Friday, so it's very much an execution-style golf course versus a plotting-style golf course. So with the wind up I imagine it being very difficult.

THE MODERATOR: Do you see any changes to the course from what you remember a couple years ago when you played?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, all the greens seem new. The turf seems to be a lot more consistent, I would say. Greens are pretty firm, probably a little bit on the slower side. But that makes sense with the winds picking up in the next couple days.

THE MODERATOR: Okay. We'll take some questions.

**Q. So you came once, decided it wasn't for you, and now you're back. Is that it?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, I mean, I'm a West Coast kid. So I'm trying to grow some roots here in Florida, so there's a good chance that you'll see me a lot more often on these Florida courses.

**Q. The grasses and stuff are so different?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. It's just not what I'm used to growing up. So it's very nice and it's very consistent compared to what I'm used to on the West Coast, you know, but it's just the norm for me.

**Q. You said putting down some roots. Are you**

**moving?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm trying. We'll see. It was snowing in Vegas, so makes golf very difficult.

**Q. Next door to Patrick or two doors down?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. We're actually just going to share a house at this point.

(Smiling.)

**Q. But in reality is it just to get used to a different environment, get used to the grasses, or is there another reason?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, for sure. I mean, there's a reason everyone's kind of on this side. After the West Coast Swing pretty much everything's east of Texas, so it would make a lot of sense, you know, minus a couple majors, depending upon the year, a U.S. Open, obviously.

But for the most part all the golf is Northeast, East, and the time zone and travel, I'm not getting younger, so trying to be a little bit smarter with my time.

**Q. Have you found --**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Nice haircut.

**Q. Oh, yeah? I'm thinking of a comeback. Give me a second. Have you found a recipe that works for you in getting yourself ready for a major?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Probably not. I haven't won one yet. You know, I think I kind of have an idea. It helps to play a few of the properties more often, get comfortable.

But for the most part, I mean, you really just got to get yourself in the right mindset, and the biggest thing that I've kind of learned is, it's so hard to do, but get enough rest. It's a hard thing to do what you're trying to learn a new course and you're really eager to win and want to go out there and practice all day and get acclimated to the property.



But sometimes the best thing you can do is rest up so you're fresh to compete.

**Q. Have you ever got gone up early to Augusta, for example?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I went once with Austin. And I don't know how many times I've played now, five or six times, and I've only gone once, my first time I ever played it, and it was 40 and hailing, basically, and I still played 18 holes and had a blast. Probably the happiest I was on a golf course with how bad the weather was.

**Q. You called this an execution-style golf course, which I suppose can have two different meanings. But do you like the idea that this is a golf course that has single-digit winners, that plays maybe more like a major, demands more on everything that's in your bag?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's good prep for a major. It's just a really hard property. They started mowing the grass -- this is new for me. They started mowing the rough towards tee boxes, which is just absolutely horrendous. It makes it so difficult. Every time you miss the fairway you're sitting underground or trying to like find a bunker you can hit your next ball into or if you can cover a hundred yards over a hazard or you name it.

So the level of difficulty they're putting up here is real. So it's definitely good prep for a major and definitely gets you, or it should get you very dialed in.

**Q. What other courses do you play that would be similar to single-digit winners and getting you ready for a major?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Memphis is another course that's really hard. It's very target-oriented. You have to execute your shots and be really committed to your lines. There's no -- when I say execution too, sometimes playing to sort of the fat part of the side or the big miss towards the fat part of the green, you leave yourself like a 40- or 50-footer.

Out here, if you're out of position, you would be lucky to have a 40- or 50-footer. Typically you're going to have a 30-yard bunker shot or a 20-yard bunker shot, depending on where the pins are. Just because you hit a great drive doesn't mean you're going to have a decent look on birdie. You have to keep it going on every shot pretty much on every hole.

**Q. This may seem kind of weird, but what kind of ego**

**do you have, do you think?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Sorry?

**Q. What kind of ego do you think you have?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: What kind of ego do I have? I have an ego. I do.

**Q. I think we all do. I'm just trying to get an idea of what --**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: The level of it? I probably would never tell you. Just keep you guessing.

**Q. We just make stuff up anyway.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Big, big ego guy. (Laughing.)

**Q. Whatever it is, and I guess we'll find out in another lifetime, how do you manage it in a sport like golf?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just play the game. It will humble you, pretty much, especially out here. It will kick your ass a lot more times than not.

**Q. Have you ever -- and this question was posed to Jon Rahm a little bit earlier. If you are firing on all cylinders, do you think anyone can beat you?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't think so. I feel like I've almost never fired on all cylinders. I can't wait to see what that feels like. But I would imagine -- I've worked pretty hard at this, so if I do fire on all cylinders -- it wouldn't be possible -- but the whole point of golf is you can beat the best without having to fire on all cylinders, and when you do, you know, there's a few guys I've seen fire on all cylinders and it's fun to watch.

**Q. What's the closest you've come, do you think?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. That's a great question. I really haven't put it together.

**Q. All the times you come to Orlando for tournaments, have you ever gone over to the Disney and done some of the stuff in the park?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: What do you think? (Laughing.)

**Q. It could go either way.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't have any kids and, you know, I'm like almost 30. But I just told my wife, actually, the other day, I was like, if we're driving, staying -- I guess



everything's surrounded by this Disney World thing, so I was like, if we have kids, this is some day, you can take them there because it will drive me nuts.

**Q. So have you ever been to any of the Disney properties?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Maybe. Once, once or twice. I've been called the Grinch before, during Christmas time, so that kind of adds up.

**Q. I'm pretty sure I'm the only one who noticed this, but I saw you with the red Odyssey putter today on the practice green. I know you had a putter that they had made for you, what are you working on right now with your putter? Are you considering going back to the red version this week?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: They actually made both of them for me. The red one is actually incognito, but it is, like the new one, it's milled. They just painted it. Oh, yeah, you got to take a closer look. It's nice. It's like a big brother of my other red one.

**Q. So if you weren't firing on all cylinders when you won back-to-back starts last summer, what was missing?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Here we go. When I would imagine firing on all cylinders, it's sort of like -- you kind of have spurts of it, I would say, through a certain span of holes.

Yeah, I mean, when it's really windy, like in Scotland -- I would call that plotting. You plot around a property, you play really smart, you hole a couple putts in the wind and you don't have to be perfect. Which is why I really like playing golf over there, because you can just work your way around a property avoiding those bunkers and you're life will be manageable.

The Travelers, yeah, I mean I 3-putted 15. Like shanked it on 16 or, whatever, 16, like way right of the green. Got up-and-down. I mean, it's golf, so firing on all cylinders you're asking for a lot of us. Like, it's rare. Maybe it happens for a round and that's sort of exceptional and then you shoot 61 or something like that.

So I hooked it on 12 and it hit the fence and came back in a play. So it's like, that was my big break. If I was firing on all cylinders I would have had like a birdie look there, not like a have-to-save-bogey look-type deal. So that would probably be the difference.

**Q. How closely, if at all, do you follow the world**

**rankings? I mean, do you look every week and if you do look do you just see what number you're at? Do you check the points? Or are you like Pete Rose when you're on the course? I mean, Pete Rose would have his batting average figured out by the time he got to first base. Are you making a putt on 18 going, Oh, that's .6? What's your feeling about it?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm aware. I would say I'm kind of spotty. There are times where I'm looking more. If I need some more motivation than normal, then I'll just look at the page.

Everyone strives to be the best in the world, so looking at that page and if you're not No. 1, you should be pretty motivated to work hard.

So, but for the most part I would say -- it varies. There will be months where I won't even really care or look at it, because I'm just working on something in my game. Other times I'll look at it to use it for motivation. So it varies.

**Q. As we look forward down to 2024 and beyond, do you have an opinion on what is an appropriate size of field and whether there should be a cut as it relates to some of the top events?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, we're trying to make the best product. To answer the cut question, I am always for a cut. Emotionally I'm for a cut. There is an aspect of it, I would say, that's really entertaining for some.

But at the end of the day a lot of people like and a lot of kids like to come see the top players play in the world. And if they're not having their best they can still, if they got a baseball game on Saturday, Timmy can still come with his dad and watch Rory tee up on Sunday, no matter what happens.

I think it's also an easier package to sell to the sponsors when you tell 'em that 20 of the top 20 players in the world are going to be there Thursday through Sunday. I think that's an easier package to sell when it comes to sort of what makes the best product.

And then size of field, I mean, you start looking at the issues we start to have on the West Coast. We can't even finish tournaments on time. We're waking up at 5 a.m., we're teeing off easier, we're missing sort of windows on television that aren't ideal.

So I'm no expert on what size that would be. Smaller than not, probably. But you can start to create sort of a better product by you start ticking off those boxes and then solve it from there.



**Q. What's your favorite tournament to warm-up in the dark at?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Waste Management's pretty fun. See some crazy people running at like whatever time that is in the morning. Use the leaderboard as like a warm figure because it's so cold usually in the morning there. But it doesn't give any warmth, let me tell you.

THE MODERATOR: Okay, thanks for your time, Xander, we appreciate it. Have a great tournament.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports