

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

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Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

Billy Horschel

Sam Burns

Press Conference

HALEY PETERSON: Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to get things started. We would like to welcome the duo of Billy Horschel and Sam Burns to the media center here at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. Welcome back. Just want to get some opening comments about this is obviously a special tournament to both of you; Billy, two-time champion, and Sam, a Louisiana native. Let's start off with Billy.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I think I've said this every year for I don't know how many years and it sounds like a broken record. This feels like a second home to me. It's felt like that for quite a while now. I have a lot of really close friends that I met in my early years here, so to be able to see them, reconnect with them, see the same faces and the volunteers in this event that truly support this event tremendously, it's a second home that I truly love to come back to every year. It's an event obviously I've had success with. I love that.

The Zurich Classic, Zurich and the Fore! Kids Foundation had the idea to make this a team event. I thought it would be a home run, and it's obviously -- everyone I've seen the last few years how great this event has been and how many guys on the TOUR love coming here and playing with partners, and I'm fortunate enough that I've got a really good partner this year in Sam Burns, and hopefully I don't hold him back like I did last year.

I felt bad last year because he played so good, and if this was an individual event he would have won. I have no doubt about it. I just delayed his first victory by a week, and hopefully I can do a better job of not being an 800-pound gorilla on his back weighing him down.

SAM BURNS: You're so full of it.

Yeah, I mean, it's the only thing in Louisiana that I get to play every year, and so to be able to come back to my home state is always really fun for me. I look forward to coming here every year. Like Billy said, it's a second home



for him. It's a first home for me.

I love coming here, and I love being able to play with Billy. We have a great time out there, and really looking forward to this week.

HALEY PETERSON: T4 finish last year. How did this pairing first come about last year, and then if one of you want to comment about how your games complement each other.

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I think we had a couple different guys that we both work with, and I wasn't there whenever they kind of thought about it, but he was --

BILLY HORSCHTEL: He was on the outside. His caddie Travis Perkins was on my bag for the Masters in 2020, the November Masters. I didn't have a caddie at that point so he was filling in for me, and he was staying with me and we were talking about Zurich Classic, and I asked who Sam was playing with. He said, he doesn't have a partner, he's actually trying to find one.

I was actually thinking about making a change or wanting to -- I like keeping things somewhat fresh sometimes, and I actually called our stats guy we work with and I said, do you think Sam would be a really good partner, and he said that would be a home run partner, a great partner for you. You guys have built a really strong pairing.

Then our sports psychologist that work we work with, Brett McCabe, he loved the pairing, and it was as simple as that. It happened within a two-day period at the Masters in 2020, the November Masters. I'm just thankful that he's a higher ranked player than me somehow so he didn't kick me to the curb looking for a better player so I'm just thankful for that, like his other friend Scottie Scheffler he could have easily gone with.

Q. How would you guys say your game complements each other?

SAM BURNS: Well, I think for Billy, he's such a consistent player, he's somebody that's great to play with because he's always in the hole. He hits the ball really well. He's a



great putter.

It's nice knowing that if I'm hacking around in the trees that Billy is going to be able to take care of that hole, and I think it's a great strategy because a lot of times I can play really aggressive because Billy is on the green and has 20 feet a lot of the time.

That definitely frees me up to try to make a bunch of birdies, and we'll try to do that the best we can.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: We'll do a good job of that this week, I promise you.

Q. Was there much talk (indiscernible)?

SAM BURNS: I think last year was kind of like, all right, we'll -- I feel like we were really close last year. May have been something different if we played poorly or something else, but we kind of both felt like we wanted redemption because we were really close last year.

I hit a tee ball in the water on 18 that cost us big on Friday, and so I think -- I love this pairing. I think we complement each other well, and hopefully this week we'll be able to go out there and have a good chance.

Q. Billy, talk about your game being (indiscernible).

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I mean, it's everything. To me if I feel comfortable in a spot, in a place that I enjoy being around people, I just tend to perform better. It's no different than when I'm on the golf course and my setup doesn't feel good and my swing -- doesn't matter how good the swing is, if I don't feel comfortable over the golf ball, I'm more than likely not always going to make a great golf swing, or if I'm not comfortable in my putting setup I'm sort of going to have a little doubt in that.

It's everything; the people here are so welcoming, they welcome you with open arms. They want you to enjoy their city, they want you to enjoy their town. The food is unbelievable. I've talked about it many years now, I love coming here, I eat all kinds of food. I probably leave here weighing five to seven more pounds than I did when I arrived here.

You know, it's everything about this place that I just feel very comfortable with, and I think that's what's led to the success that I've had here.

Q. (Indiscernible).

SAM BURNS: I do, yeah. I think first off, it's Bermudagrass. It's what I grew up on. Right off the bat,

that makes me more comfortable than another type of grass.

I think just being my home state and having the support of the fans and getting to see friends I don't get to see often and going out to dinner with them, it's just a relaxing week for me. It's fun to get to go out there and get to hang out with Billy. We've played together a lot away from this event. It's fun for us just to go out there and compete and just enjoy the week.

Q. Talk about your games, how you complement each other. How important is the mental part of a playing partner in your pairing?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I mean, I think some guys are more natural at it and some guys have to learn how to be paired with a partner. Yeah, it's one thing to play with a partner in a practice round, in a money game against another partner, a pair of guys, but it's different when it means a little bit more, when you're adding those strokes up and you're deciding whether you're going to make a cut or miss a cut or you have a chance to win.

I think Sam and I are both real naturals at it. I think it's not something that we have to work at. I think we get along very well, which is I think the one key, one of the big keys on the golf course, and he knows that if I mess up, he's got my back, and if he messes up I've got his back. Neither of us get really down. We're always, hey, we're going to get this back, let's not worry about it.

When he hit his drive in the water on 18 last year in the second round, I know he felt bad and I know that's what not he wanted to do, so we just tried to move on from it, and I missed a three-foot putt at No. 12 last year when we were sort of making a little bit of a charge trying to chase down the leaders, and that sort of derailed our momentum a little bit because we obviously had to make up that shot.

Like I said, it's one of those things where some guys have to learn that partnership has to sort of grow together, and I think us -- it's a little more natural. Obviously we've played some practice rounds before we came here, but we sort of have the same competitive fire within us, that we both want to win, and we're willing to do whatever it takes to win.

It makes it a lot easier when you have a partner that's very similar to you in the way they think and the way they go about the mentality of the game of golf.

Q. (Indiscernible).

SAM BURNS: At the end of the day, like Billy is saying, we both want the same thing. It's not like, hey, Billy, I'm sorry;



it's none of that. We both want to play well, we both want to win, and so it's understood between the two of us, it's not like, man, I'm sorry I missed the putt. Don't worry about it, we'll get it back. We'll focus on the next one.

I think both of us having that mentality, it makes it a lot easier for us to move past mistakes, because alternate-shot is a tough format and it's very challenging. Just knowing that going into it definitely helps us.

Q. (Indiscernible).

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I've said this for the last 18 months now, he's so good, and he's going to do some unbelievable things in this game of golf. Obviously I've been a cheerleader on the side with my pompons trying to tell everyone how great he is and to watch out for this guy.

I knew -- I talked to him Sunday -- well, I sent a video to him on Sunday after he won in Tampa the following week here. I wanted to tell him after the final round, like -- I think I said to him, hey, you just go play the way you did this week, you're going to have a chance to win. I didn't want to put the extra pressure on, hey, you do exactly what you did this week, you're going to win, I know you're going to win next week.

I had this feeling within me that I knew he was going to win the following week when he left here because he was playing so well. He'd been close for so many tournaments now, and it was finally nice to see him get over that hump that we all have and get that first victory.

To add on two other victories this year, he's been close to some other big victories, and it's -- obviously we know the Justin Thomases and the Jordan Spieths, that little generation, but I honestly believe that Scottie and Sam are these next two guys coming up, and what Scottie has done over the last few months has been unbelievable, and Sam has been right there. It could have easily been Sam than Scottie. A couple putts go in, a couple things go his way, get a couple bounces, whatever it may be, Sam could be up here with four wins in the last seven or six events and holding a green jacket.

Listen, I think the world of him.

Q. The stakes are raised in this team format. Does that raise the competition level knowing you're in a team format and it's not just you against the field? Do you feel that competition raised?

SAM BURNS: I yeah, I think for sure. We're both very competitive guys and week in and week out we practice hard, we prepare hard because we want a chance on

Sunday. Coming into this week with a partner and a teammate, it kind of makes it that much sweeter to play well with a partner, with a teammate. Definitely it's an event we look forward to every year.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: For me in this event, any team event, it's just more relaxing for me, more freedom for me, knowing I have a partner. It's more enjoyable.

I don't know what it is, I wish I could put my finger on the secret why I seem to have a little bit more laid-back mentality this week, relax a little bit more, enjoy a little bit more. I wish I could bring this demeanor and the way I am here into some majors because I feel like I put a little too much pressure on myself in other events, but this one is not that way, and that's why I've been able to play better here than other places. I'm more free and more relaxed, and that obviously allows me to have more success and play better golf.

Q. (Indiscernible).

SAM BURNS: Billy? No way.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I don't know what everyone sees. I don't see that.

Q. When you have a teammate do you feel like you have an obligation to tone it down?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: No. I mean, no --

SAM BURNS: I hope he doesn't.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: My competitive fire burns the way it burns. I wish I could -- I'm not going to say I wish because I don't think if I was this way it would make me a better player, but I envy Scottie Scheffler and some of these guys that they hit bad shots, they're not playing well, you can't tell. They're just enjoying the game of golf and they're having fun and laughing.

I can be that way for a little bit, but it just runs way too hot inside me, and I can't stand not being able to play to the level that I expect of myself on a day-to-day basis. There's times that it boils over, and you know what, it happens. I've apologized many times for it and I'll apologize in the future for it, too, but that's me, and I just try to -- I just hope people understand that not everyone is cut from the same cloth.

This is my work, and this is what I do for a living. I'm curious if I went to someone else's job and if they were having a bad day and things weren't going that way, how do they act? Now, they may not be able to throw a club

and they may not be able to slam something, but their reaction is a little bit different because they may be in a confined space or an office or a building so they react differently. But my fire is going to be that way the rest of my life.

I think I've done a better job of handling it and trying to do it in a proper way, especially in a way that doesn't affect anyone I'm playing with. Like I said, that's me, and that's the way it's always going to be. This is going to sound blunt, it's going to sound bad, but if you don't like it, I honestly don't care anymore. I've cared enough over the last 13 years of my career to try and please everyone that watches me, and you know what, I can't do anything more. I've done everything I can. If you don't like me for some reason, I don't care anymore.

SAM BURNS: If he gets running too hot this week I'll just go give him a hug and calm him down a little bit.

Q. Sam, you're a LSU guy. I'm curious your thoughts on the hiring of Brian Kelly and the future of the program.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Should have hired Billy Napier.

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I think he'll do a really good job. If you look at his track record, he's won everywhere he's been. I think it's kind of a different style than what we've had in the previous years, but I'm excited. I think it's going to be kind of a fresh start for the program, and it's going to be -- I know a lot of people around the program are really excited. I think he's going to do a really good job these next few years.

Q. I was wondering if your partner was aware that LSU beat Florida in the Women's Match Play final on Sunday.

SAM BURNS: It's Team SEC. There's no --

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yes, I'm very aware. I keep up to date with all Gator sports and just like he does, he keeps up to date with all that's happening in the Tiger nation, so I was very aware how that match play situation went on Sunday. Also I'm very aware who won the football game last October, so we're not having a great record. But you know what, we've --

SAM BURNS: We're teammates, that's right.

HALEY PETERSON: Gentlemen, thanks for joining us, and good luck this week.

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