

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

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Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

Xander Schauffele

Patrick Cantlay

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. We'd like to welcome the defending champions of Zurich Classic of New Orleans, Xander Schauffele and Patrick Cantlay.

We'll get started with you, Xander. If you can take us back to last year, how your team gelled in getting the win here.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: We played great last year. We got off to a really good start and had that cushion coming into Sunday. If we could do something of that nature, that's what we're shooting for.

THE MODERATOR: And your recollections last year as well, Patrick?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, we got off to a hot start and kept it going the Friday and Saturday. Then on Sunday we kind of had a lead and just played smart all the way in.

THE MODERATOR: Both of you guys, really good form so far this year, but both still looking for a win. Just comment a little bit about how this format playing together, how that can help you get that done again this week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Well, it helps having a really good partner. We're both playing pretty good golf coming off of a solid week. I think sometimes two minds is better than one, especially when they're both working well.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think it's an advantage having another great player as my partner. So it should be a good week. It's a golf course that we're comfortable with by now, and hopefully we can defend this thing.

Q. Patrick, I know you were asked in Hilton Head, but that pitch shot off the bulkhead that you hit, is that something that you can ever anticipate or practice? And seeing that you have kind of similar things here, could you anticipate maybe having that kind of shot here or somewhere around the green?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Hopefully not.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I hope not.

Q. Hopefully not, but with the bulkheads and railroad ties.

PATRICK CANTLAY: We play a number of Pete Dye golf courses. So I think by now a lot of the guys on TOUR are used to a lot of those par-3s that are pretty extreme with the water right up to the green.

There's a few here this week, but I definitely hope I'm not in a similar spot. It was a bad spot.

Q. You all were able to win wire-to-wire last year. I know that's hard to do in any tournament. Is it any different challenge as a team? Is it more difficult, or is there any difference at all in trying to wire the field?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think it's easier as a team. You kind of share the burden of stress and anxiety that comes with winning a golf tournament versus it being all on your own.

If you hit a bad shot, obviously when you're playing a tournament by yourself, you have to pick yourself up. This rare opportunity with this tournament and one other this year, most years your partner can pick you up when you're down. So I think it's probably a little bit easier to go wire to wire.

The team obviously can go backwards as well, if you're feeding off each other in the wrong way or one guy is kind of dragging and you can't pick him up yourself, it can go that way.

I think with Pat and I, we played so much together, that more times than not, we're going to pick each other up when one of us isn't doing so well.

Q. Between rounds, day to day, how much strategy, or is there much?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It feels kind of like clockwork



now.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't think there's too much. We look at some of the stats from ShotLink to make sure that we're hitting the right clubs off the tees and stuff, but for the most part, we've played this tournament -- this will be our third time playing together now. So I think we're kind of into a routine and not much extra strategizing going on.

Q. Xander, I remember a year ago it was almost kind of like a joke of was that win going to launch you into winning more individual events, and then obviously you did. Where would you describe where you're at right now with your game in terms of you've gotten that conversation out of the way of winning more events and trying to go on and win bigger things?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You're always trying to win more, every year, all the time, every tournament. Anything that can sort of propel you in that direction is something that's really helpful. If we can use this week to help ourselves win more this year, then we're definitely going to do that.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Guys, Matt Fitzpatrick said that of the pace of play on the PGA TOUR is disgraceful. He called it appalling. Do you agree with that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think that's the TOUR's job to sort of take a stance there. All the things that have happened as of late have all been within the guidelines of the TOUR and what's supposed to happen. No one's been penalized for slow play or anything of that nature. So we're all operating within the framework of what the TOUR gives us.

If enough people complain or if enough TOUR Pros complain, that's something the TOUR needs to address to either make it faster or change the time par. Without any context, it gets tricky because when you set up golf courses with Stimp 13 or 14 greens, tees in interesting positions, and pins in tough spots, it's just going to take longer.

We're not playing like the local muni that sort of the average Joe compares our time par to. We're playing for a couple million -- you know, \$3.6 million. If you're going to spend an extra minute to make sure you put yourself in the right spot, we're going to do it.

That's just the nature of our game and our sport.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I mean, like I said, being on the PAC'S been interesting because the times that it's taken to play rounds has been pretty much the same for the last ten

or even longer years. So trying to speed it up, I'd be curious to know how they'd want to do that.

I played the last two tournaments, and my group hasn't been warned at all. So we've been in position the entire time. I don't know how you would want even the groups that I've been in to play faster when our groups are in position and can't go faster because the group in front of us is right in front of us.

Q. Do you feel like you are a slow player, though?

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, I'm definitely slower than average, have been my whole career. I definitely take my time. And when I hit my ball on a bulkhead, I'm definitely going to take my time to make sure I make the right decision and try to get the ball back into the right spot.

Q. We all know that Ryder Cups, Presidents Cup teams, you have a celebration after a victory. How did you all celebrate as a two-man team?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: After last year?

Q. Yeah, after last year.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: What did we do?

PATRICK CANTLAY: We just hung out with the team, had a good time.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Dinner, some drinks, I think, something of that nature.

PATRICK CANTLAY: Yeah, hung out in the team room.

Q. So yesterday Max Homa said, Xander, that you were the most underrated trash talker out there on the course. Just wanted to get your thoughts on that.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Wow, that's an interesting call out, first of its kind for me. I like to have fun. I like to needle at people. Just like everything child on the planet, if you don't like being needled, just ignore me. That's kind of how that works.

When people start ignoring me, then I move on to the next target.

Q. You guys have been playing a lot of golf lately. Are you worried coming into this week about fatigue?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I wouldn't say we're worried. We're kind of like camels. We just walk and walk and walk and walk until we drop basically, but it's early

enough in the year. Yeah, we're probably more tired than we would like to be, but for the most part, a couple good nights of sleep and some good food here in New Orleans can save the day. So I think we're both fine.

Q. You two are basically paired together in events like this, in the Ryder Cup seems like forever now. Is there ever a point where you're like, hey, maybe I do want to see something else? Or you guys are really like you are my partner kind of forever?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You put it like that, yeah. We don't have friendship bracelets yet. Maybe we'll get those worked out after this week (laughter).

Yeah, we both like winning, whether we're playing against each other or not. If we can team up and feel like we have a better chance to win, we're going to do it.

Q. Patrick, you've been asked about pace of play a lot these past few weeks and you answered it well, but how much have you talked to other players on TOUR, I guess, about that issue because some have called you out?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I haven't had anybody come up to me or talk to me, but I'd be perfectly happy to talk to them about it.

Q. The people who come to a lot of these tournaments, obviously, there's a lot of talk about the future of the schedule for the PGA TOUR, what's going to happen with these elevated events and everything. For both of you, what place do you see tournaments like this, the John Deere, the Valspar, et cetera, having in the tournament schedule? To help ensure, as you continue to go forward, there's tournaments every week. It's not just an elevated tournament or a major.

PATRICK CANTLAY: I think next year you'll probably see these tournaments have stronger fields than they have historically. Next year the FedExCup season is going January to August, so there will be much more of an impetus to play as well as you can in the short time frame to try to make it to the playoffs.

I think these tournaments going forward, especially next year as we get through this transition year, the tournament field should be stronger than ever.

Q. You guys are both elite level players, very accomplished. How does the title defense when you two pair up feel different than a normal week on TOUR when you're defending a title?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I'm not sure it feels too different. I feel like, when you're defending a title, you come into the week with a little higher expectation, which can be good and can be bad. I think it's nice to come to a tournament knowing you can win and have won the tournament. It's obviously a golf course that you like and a tournament that you like.

So I think we'll just try and keep carrying all the good momentum from last year into this year.

Q. Xander, the trash talk, I'd asked Max and Collin if they would trash talk you guys, and they said Pat would just be stone faced, and Xander would be the only one to be able to really give anything back. I was curious if there would be a friendly so Cal rivalry because they're kind of the other marquee team coming in as one of the favorites?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, there really isn't trash talking in golf. It's just not a thing in golf. I think, when we're at home and we're playing --

Q. That's more what I --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Playing five ball at home, if someone has an important putt, I don't think we'd get too low to the point where we're going to make a sound while they're swinging, but definitely point a few things out to them before they're going to hit the shot.

Yeah, it's all in good nature, and it definitely makes the day -- it makes practice more fun when you can kind of needle at guys and guys give you reactions. Out here, it's not like -- it's just not a physical sport. There's no contact. So there's no sort of interaction that would be aggressive of any nature verbally or physically.

At home there's time for it, but out here it's all professional.

Q. (No microphone)?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think just comfort. I think it's fair -- it would be fair to say that you could find a team that would be good, but there's so many different stats out there now. The guys are so good at analyzing the data now that you could have a lot of really good hypothetical teams, but at the end of the day, the players competing that are on the same team need to like each other. That's a really big part of the chemistry.

To answer your question, yeah, I think it's fair to say you could find a really good team here that you may not have thought of, but for the most part, when it comes to pairing up teams for the Presidents Cups or Ryder Cups or these



events, there's so much data out there that could point to the top five teams already.

Q. (No microphone)?

PATRICK CANTLAY: I don't practice with much music. I don't play it when I play at home or anything like that, but I think some tournaments you'll see it at and others you won't.

It would be hard to imagine the Masters warming up with music on the range. But if another tournament feels like they'll be able to draw more people in with music, I think that's perfectly fine.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It varies. When Pat and I are playing a money game at home, there's no music. If we're playing with our caddies -- we wouldn't be drinking, but they'd probably be drinking -- there would probably be some music. It's all situational.

Pretty much Pat's point, if the tournament can make more money and feel more comfortable with the venue with a lot of music -- Waste Management, for example, it's a big party. Would we like to see Waste Management every week? Probably not.

It's just not really the best thing for myself personally, in terms of competing at a really high level all the time, it would probably wear me out too soon for you to do that every single week. But, yeah, every once in a while, I think it makes it fun, and it's a nice break.

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