

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

Sam Burns

Billy Horschel

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: All right, everyone. Good afternoon. We're going to get things started. We would like to welcome Billy Horschel and Sam Burns to the Zurich Classic of New Orleans media center.

Billy, Sam, welcome back. Billy, two-time champ, and Sam, Louisiana native. We'll get some opening comments, what it's like to be back, and your favorite stops of the season. Start with you, Billy.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I think I've talked about it for a decade plus. This feels like a second home to me. I come back here, and I see a lot of familiar faces, faces that have become friends of mine. Obviously being part of the Zurich family, seeing a lot of the Zurich clients and customers and some of the Zurich execs as well.

Such a great week. I enjoy it. The food is unbelievable, as we all know. It's always good vibes here. I'm relying on all those good vibes from years past to sort of spark my game this week.

SAM BURNS: The Zurich, I came and watched this event as a kid. It's the only PGA TOUR event in my home state, so I love coming back here. It's one of my favorite places to come back and play.

Still have a lot of friends down here from my time at LSU, and I also have a great partner, so that helps. Yeah, it's one of my favorite weeks for sure.

THE MODERATOR: Sam, going off of coming here as a child, are there any specific memories you have or any players you remember from attending as a fan?

SAM BURNS: Actually, I forget what year it was, but I came with David Toms and his family, stayed with them the whole week. That was really cool for me growing up, just being with them and kind of getting together in the locker room, behind the scenes, and just kind of seeing what it was like. It was a blast.

THE MODERATOR: Runner-up finish last year. How soon did this become a lock on your schedule this year, especially as partners?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I don't think it was anything but a lock. This is a tournament that I love very much, and I love coming here, and I've had success here. Obviously Sam being a Louisiana native, the only tournament in Louisiana, as he said, he's surely not going to miss it.

I think after playing five holes the first year together, I think we said we're not splitting the band up any time soon. He said I'm his partner even if he has to push me around in a wheelchair in the decades to come (laughter).

Q. Since you were last here, you were on the Presidents Cup team together, played a match there. Can you kind of reflect on what that week meant to both of you and how much fun it was to be paired together in that environment as well?

SAM BURNS: First team event for me, first for Billy as well. So it was cool to experience that together. That was such a fun week. Had an incredible team. Going on to win and getting to celebrate with all the guys was a blast.

It's cool to come back here and get to play with a partner, something we don't get to do very often. So it's a fun week.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Like Sam said, for me, he's ten years younger than me, so my opportunity to make teams in the future is running out. So to finally make one was huge. It was one of those things I wanted to check off, things I've done at the professional level.

To finally get to play with him -- listen, him and Scottie are really good friends. They've known each other for a long time, and the stats guys said pair them up as much as you can. But I was sort of trying to beg as much as I can to play with him as many opportunities as I could because I know the chemistry we have, the way we play together. Whether it's in a four ball or foursome format, I think we do really well together.



To experience it with him, someone that I've experienced really great memories here, but also to do it on the Presidents Cup team, I tell people, the golf part was great, but everything that led up to the first round and just stuff after the rounds back at the hotel, like that went by way too quick. That could have lasted another two, three weeks, and I still don't think I would have gotten my fair share of it. I wouldn't have been tired of it because I enjoy spending so much time around the other players, the captains, their wives and families.

Like I said, it was really nice to be a part of that and see what it was like from the inside instead of hearing about it from the outside.

Q. Before the tournament last year, you talked a little bit about how you were the boisterous one or flamboyant one maybe and Sam was quiet. After eight rounds here together and then one in Presidents Cup, are you starting to get some of that out of him?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: No, we sort of just switched roles now.

SAM BURNS: He's getting old. His temperament is kind of going down a little bit.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I don't have as much energy anymore as a 26-year-old. I've got to conserve the energy I have on a daily basis.

Listen, I think as anything, as you mature, you grow as a person, you grow as a golfer. You learn things. You learn how to handle situations and everything. I think now it's funny, when things do happen on the golf course, it's just hysterical to me that the one time I get a little upset sometimes, it makes the round of social media. Here's Billy at it again. You guys haven't seen me for the last two months.

Someone would say -- like I've been like an angel, haven't been upset, whatever, and the one time I get frustrated and show something, it's like here is Billy again. It doesn't bother me. It's just funny. Obviously I set a precedent early in my career, and I understand it completely.

Like I said, I'm 36 years old. I'm getting older. I understand how to get myself focused and when I need to kick myself in the butt and get myself going again.

Q. Billy, obviously you followed this up with a Memorial win last year. You said you wanted to spark your game. How would you describe where you're at and why things haven't been going the way you hoped

this year.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: It's been a very frustrating year. I talked to my team last week after being in a good position after two days, and then to miss that cut, it's probably the most frustrating and, I would say, the biggest struggle I've had in my 14, 15 years as a professional.

Listen, the stats don't lie. I haven't hit the ball very well, and most of it's been iron play. I didn't drive it very well in the beginning of the year. We tried to make some changes in the off-season, and I talked about that, and it just didn't materialize the way we thought.

So for the last two months we've sort of been making progress, and we know what we need to do. It's been a strange, strange year for me, and it's been a strange part of my career because, coming off playing some really good -- the last couple years, playing some good golf, and expecting to honestly take it to the next level, push to get inside the top 10, push to get maybe inside the top 5 if I play really well, get myself in more contention on a regular basis.

Listen, it's been a struggle, there's no doubt about it. I can't sit here and not lie and say has my confidence been shaken a little bit? Yeah. I'm not as confident in my game right now as I was at this point last year.

But there's good signs. There's stuff I'm doing well in practice, and there's still some bad swings here and there. I think we're closer to -- we understand why we're doing it. We just haven't -- you know, just trying to figure out what we always need to do to figure it out. Hopefully what we did after Friday's round last week is sort of the final puzzle piece. I really don't know until I get into a little bit more of the heat of competition.

It's been a grind. I worked really hard this year. Not that I don't ever work hard, but I've been more consistent and put in the time to try to, like I said, compete with the young guys, compete with Sam. Make sure that I'm in a position on a weekly basis to battle with the best players in the world.

When you put in that much time and effort and you're not getting results out of it, it wears on you a little bit. But like I said, confidence may be shaken a little bit in my game right now, but determination and the belief in myself hasn't changed. I know how good of a player I am. I know what I can do. And I've just got to keep grinding it out until things start coming my way.

Q. Sam, it feels like a lot of top players congregate in some of the same areas -- Vegas, Jupiter, things of



that nature. You've chosen to stay here. I was wondering if you could explain what this area and Louisiana mean to you.

SAM BURNS: I think for me this is home. I don't really have a desire to go anywhere else. I have a lot of family in Louisiana. My wife's from here. And I just enjoy it. I love coming back to where we live. It's very relaxing.

We get to go to a lot of cool places on the road and see a lot of big cities, but I don't really have a desire to live in one. So we just really enjoy it. We like the slower pace.

Q. Sam, what's the biggest thing you learned from David Toms?

SAM BURNS: I think I was always able to ask him a lot of questions, and he was very gracious with his time in answering them. I think one of the biggest pieces of advice that he gave me when I first got out here and it's kind of always stuck with me is don't try to be someone that you aren't. Don't try to play golf like someone else you see. Just stick to what you're really good at and try to continue to make it better.

I think I've definitely struggled with that at times, trying to do too much or trying to swing the club a certain way or hit certain shots that don't necessarily kind of match up with my golf swing or identity, of the typical shots that I hit.

So I would say just trying to focus on making little things in my game better and then just stick to kind of what I do well.

Q. Billy, do you worry about losing your spot here to Scottie Scheffler, and how would you describe their relationship?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: No. Listen, if Sam said he and Scottie want to play together one year, I'm fine with it. I'm not going to be sad -- I'm going to be sad about it, but I'm not going to be a hard ass or jealous.

I understand the relationship they have. They're best friends. They grew up together playing a lot of junior golf. They stayed together a lot on a weekly basis.

I would say, hey, I understand. I would want to play with one of my best buddies at some point in time. I would be like, hey, I'm always ready to team up again next year or future years if you want to get the band back together.

Like I said, if he came to me and asked, I wouldn't put up a fight at all.

Q. Does the PGA TOUR have a pace of play problem?

And if so, what's your solution?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: We've had a pace of play problem since I've been out here. It's been out here for a long time, there's no doubt about it. I don't think we should ever take more than five hours to play on Thursday and Friday unless conditions or the course is one of the more challenging courses out there.

In my years out here, I think what I've seen is guys just aren't ready to play when it's their turn, simple as that. People talk about using range finders. That's not the cause of it. Caddies do a really good job of getting yardage, walking it off as they're walking to the ball. It's never the caddie's fault.

The majority of times or every time, it seems like the player not being ready to play. Situations like being on the par-3, and the first hit, the green hasn't cleared yet. Then it finally clears, and they just now start talking to the caddie about the yardage and the wind and the club and everything.

I think what you'll see between Sam and I is a majority of the time we have a club out waiting to go when it's our turn. We're ready to play when it's our turn. We're ready to play when the green is -- waiting for the green to clear.

What's the solution? I don't know. We've increased fines. We haven't fined anyone or penalized anyone a shot. We haven't taken away any FedExCup points.

Listen, it's frustrating because I think Sam and I are both quick players, and throughout the years when you're playing and you sort of want to get in a rhythm and a flow of your game and you have to wait. You have to wait 20 minutes to hit a shot or 15 minutes.

I mean, it was similar this year at PLAYERS Championship. The second round, I came out and birdied the 1st hole. Yes, it's only the 1st hole, but it was a nice little rhythm, and you go to No. 2, and the group of Rory McIlroy was in front of us waiting to tee off, and we had to wait 25 minutes to hit our tee shots. It was just a slow round of golf.

It's tough to get in a really good rhythm, especially for me right now because I'm sort of working on something that, when I do find that little rhythm, I do want that little rhythm and swing to keep going. So you have to wait. It sort of gets you out of your rhythm and the feels that you have.

I don't know what the solution is. The surely it's not going to be solved in my time on the PGA TOUR. So we're just still going to have to deal with it. I think just try and walk -- I've tried to walk slower to my ball and just do a few other

things to not -- to give myself a little bit -- you know, try playing within a rhythm, not rush to the ball and be prepared as quickly because it really doesn't make a difference, which sounds bad, because it does. We should be playing quickly, and we should be playing in the rhythm and the pace that I like to play it.

It's tough when you see guys take a lot longer. I played with a guy last week that took, I would say, some excessive time on his shots when he was the second or third to play. I just don't understand that sometimes.

Q. For both players, obviously there's a lot of talk about what the TOUR schedule is going to look like in the future with these elevated events and everything. Where do you both feel, kind of like the Zurich, these places on the TOUR, a tournament like the Byron Nelson that you've won Billy, a tournament like the Valspar, that you've won, Sam. Because they can't all be elevated events and majors although there's the possibility the elevated events may float around, some of them.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I've talked about this in the past. I've talked to the TOUR for many years on this. We have an unbelievable product on the PGA TOUR, but I felt like our product going forward needed to evolve, needed to change a little bit. I didn't know what that was. I had some thoughts.

When you look at what sponsors are paying, and before the designated events got talked about -- let's just go back three years. Listen, the number was going to keep increasing as the years went by, as the decades went by. There was some point in time where that number those sponsors were paying, they weren't going to get their rate of return. They weren't going to get their investment back out of it.

When you're going ahead and paying 12 million one year, and five years later it's going to be 19 million, what are you getting for 5 million more? What else are you getting for that value?

So obviously the TOUR -- it wasn't like I brought anything to the TOUR that they didn't know. But I was sort of trying to, in my own understanding, what the TOUR's idea was and the product was. We've made some changes because of LIV, there's no doubt. You have to admit that some of the things we've done in counter is because of the effect of LIV.

But I think it was, at some point over the course of the history of the PGA TOUR, I think the top players would have gotten together at some point to say, hey, we need to

change some things up out here.

So now we're in a designated and non-designated tournaments. I think the non-designated events are going to hold their own. I think this one's a great example. This one's a great field. You've got players always wanting to play together. It's unique.

How this is all going to play out? It's still sort of a wait and see game. Is it still going to be successful? Once again, it's a wait and see game. It's going to be two, three, four years of us doing this to see if it was the best thing for the PGA TOUR and the product going forward.

But I think for the guys coming up and for anybody on the PGA TOUR and in the Korn Ferry guys, anyone trying to have aspirations of making it to the PGA TOUR, the great thing is, if you play really well, you're going to get financially rewarded, and you're going to be beating and competing against the best players in the world on somewhat of a more regular basis.

Sort of in a financial sense, if you play well, you're going to get rewarded, which is the way it's always been out here, but even more now to an nth degree. I think it's an exciting time on the PGA TOUR, in my eyes.

SAM BURNS: What was the question?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Designated, non-designated events, what do you think of the schedule?

SAM BURNS: I don't really know where these events will fall around the designated events. I haven't seen that. But I think like Billy was saying, each event certain guys like for certain reasons, whether it's me and Tampa, I really like that golf course, so I'll always try to play that event, depending on where it falls.

An event like this, it's unique. It's something fun for us that we don't get to do very often, so guys will definitely try and come and play this event.

Yeah, I think it will be interesting to see kind of how it plays out over the next few years.

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