

Zurich Classic of New Orleans

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

Avondale, Louisiana, USA

TPC Louisiana

Billy Horschel

Tyson Alexander

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Billy Horschel and Tyson Alexander into the interview room here at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans. Billy is our 2013 and 2018 champion at this event. Billy, we'll start with you if we can talk a little bit about being back here and also playing with Tyson this week.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: It's always great to come back here. I've said it for numerous years, this is like a second home for me now. I've gotten to know a lot of people that have become good friends and family, been an ambassador of Zurich for the last 10, 11 years, a lot of the same customers and clients I see over time.

It really is like a second home. I have a routine of where I go eat, where I go and the people I see and everything. It's just a great place to come. We go to so many places around the U.S. and around the world to play golf, and very few times do we get to know to a place that we can consider a home. I'm lucky that we've got THE PLAYERS Championship where I live, and I'm lucky to have a place like TPC Louisiana I can call home, as well.

Playing with this guy this week is going to be awesome. I've known him since we were young guys at the University of Florida. He's worked really hard to get himself out here, and he's had some success, and hopefully we can have the ultimate success this week and get him to raise a trophy finally out here.

Q. Tyson, talk a little bit about the partnership with Billy and how excited you are for this week.

TYSON ALEXANDER: Yeah, obviously he's normally with Sam Burns, and I think Sam is having a kid this week or soon. I got the call, and obviously we have a great relationship. We went to college together. We practice together at TPC. We work out together at home.

It's an easy fit. We get along well, and looking forward to it.

Q. Tyson, talk about the state of your game, T14 at Valero recently and T55 last week in Punta Cana. Talk about your form coming into the week.

TYSON ALEXANDER: Yeah, I've been trending lately. Last week I didn't play very good on the weekend, but I feel good about where it's headed, and I'm working on the right things.

I think that's very important in this game, to have just a clear picture of where you're headed, and I'm excited for the future.

Q. Billy, obviously congratulations on winning last week. If we can talk about what that week meant to you and coming into this week what your expectations are.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, last week was great to finally get back in the winner's circle. Everyone knows the story of me at Memorial and breaking down in front of the media afterwards, so coming from there to where I was last week, it's been a process, a lot longer process than I would like. I'm not the most patient guy. But I've had to work my way into playing better golf.

I knew good golf was coming, or I'd been playing good golf leading up to that. I made a decision to go down to Corales for one reason and one reason only, to go win. I didn't want to sit home and take another week off. I felt the game was really good. I wanted to come and continue to build that momentum not only at the Corales but for this week and for the continuation of the year, and it just worked out perfectly to get the victory.

The game, like I said, is in a great spot. I think Tyson's game is in a very similar spot that my game was in a couple weeks ago. He's really close to playing some really good consistent golf, and hopefully this is his breakthrough this week for him. It's going to be a fun week out there, and we'll see what it has in store.

Q. Billy, you're currently No. 1 in the AON Swing 5. I know the Next 10 is also on the horizon for you, something you're paying a lot of attention to to try to



get into Wells Fargo. Talk a little bit about that.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, the AON Swing 5 and the AON 10 I think has been massively successful this year, with the Signature Events and understanding that the top 50 guys based off last year's FedExCup were guaranteed into those events and everyone else who was not in were going to have to play well, and AON and the PGA TOUR gave us an opportunity to possibly play our way in. Like I said, it's been massively successful.

I think with the way you play and the way you pick decisions, some better decisions have to be made to figure out your schedule so you get that opportunity to play your way into those events. That's why I went to Corales, because I can't play next week in Dallas, so I wanted to give myself another event to possibly play my way into the Wells Fargo.

With that, you change your schedules, you make some better decisions throughout the year, you change it to give yourself opportunities to play in the Signature Events, which as we know right now are vital because of the points that they offer compared to regular events.

Q. Billy, when did you find out about Sam's situation, and how long did it take you to call Tyson?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: So I talked to Sam last November. We were chatting on the phone, and he mentioned to me that him and Caroline were pregnant. I was really excited for them. It wasn't until the beginning of this year when I was talking to him, I said, hey, when are you guys due, and he said April. I was like, oh. Maybe, I'm not sure if I mentioned it there or maybe a couple days later, I was like, when exactly in April, and where do we stand, and he told me it was going to be around the Zurich Classic time. I said, no worries.

To be honest with you, after that conversation I think in early January, I was still so focused on my game, I wasn't really worried about the Zurich Classic and finding a partner, and then Tyson and I were talking I think probably in late February, early March, and we just said -- he's like, do you have a partner, and I said, actually I don't; I honestly haven't even thought about it, and let's just play together.

It was the easiest thing to do. I want to play with people I like. I want to play with people I enjoy. Tyson is obviously one of those. I hope he still likes me after this week. But no, it's great. I'm fortunate enough to have quite a few great relationships out here, but to have one of my friends that I've known longer than anyone out here on the PGA TOUR makes it easy.

Q. Along those same lines, Tyson, we joked with Billy the last couple years about him running hot and Sam running cool. Have you gotten any pointers from Sam? I know you know him from Florida, but how excited are you to play with him?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: He's seen me more at my worst than anyone out here on the PGA TOUR. Let's just say it's simple as that.

TYSON ALEXANDER: Billy has matured a lot since college, to say the least. But I'm probably more like the Sam. I'm probably a little more even keel. I can get mad, too, but I think Billy will be just fine. I think Billy is doing just fine. I think he'll take care of himself, and I'll take care of myself.

But yeah, I'm excited to play with him. I think I bugged him actually. I was like, hey, what's the deal. I had some other people asking but I wanted to play with him. So it worked out.

Q. Billy, do you get superstitious with the restaurants you eat at? I know it's well-documented you're really close with Desi Vega. Do you make sure you eat at Mr. John's Steakhouse every single year? How is that going to your restaurants per week there?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I go to Desi's at least once if not twice throughout the week. I went to Galliano's on Monday night. We've gone there the last three or four years, and they have an unbelievable bone-in pork chop that I absolutely love, and then I've got to do some dinners on Tuesday for Zurich.

But yeah, I have a few other restaurants that we hit up. Acme Oyster House on the players' night is fabulous, what Mike Rodrigue and his team does for us.

I would say this is probably the one place I'm not superstitious with my food. Other weeks throughout the year, yes, but this week because there's so many options, you've got to make sure you hit up all the different options and you leave here full.

Q. I know you're not from here, but you've almost been like a native son here. You've had so much success here. Have you become like a tour guide for all the other players on the TOUR? People that are new, do they ask you where to go, or do you kind of guide them in the right direction?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I give them some options. If they ask me some restaurants to go to, I give them some options.



Desi is very well-known throughout the PGA TOUR. He has a lot of PGA TOUR guys come into his restaurants and dine there.

Like I said, Mike Rodrigue and his group do an unbelievable job taking care of us at Acme Oyster House. But listen, there's a lot of options in this town, and you can't go wrong.

So yeah, I've given some pointers to a few people over time, and I'm just not the only player doing the same, so yeah, some of the young guys come up and ask us a little bit.

Q. Speaking of food, Tyson, anywhere in particular you'll go this week or looking forward to?

TYSON ALEXANDER: Well, I've got Billy the tour guide to tell me where to go. He just points me in the right direction.

Q. We get a lot of fans, golf fans asking us about who's coming to play this year, and I said well of course Billy is going to be there and the fans said I love watching him out there, he's such a madman. It sounds like you touched a little bit on that, that that characterization doesn't exactly catch you by surprise. How do you take that and what can you add?

BILLY HORSCHEL: Listen, I fully accept those characterizations because obviously there's been times throughout my career that I say I'm not fond of but they happen. But I think if you watch me over 72 holes, you watch me throughout the year, there's very few of them. You just have to -- the cameras happen to catch me at those moments, and it gets blown up, and it's fine. I'm okay with it.

But I think you watch me now, like I said, it's very few and far between. I would more or less like to be characterized that people see I'm enjoying myself out there. I'm very respectful to my playing partners and I cheer them on. I'm a golf fan -- not only am I competing with the players I'm playing with but everyone else in the field, but I'm a golf fan at heart. I love to see quality golf shots and great golf shots, and I'm not afraid to congratulate my fellow players when they do something I thought was pretty special.

Listen, that characterization is part of me, and it's going to be part of me until I leave this world. I can't do anything about it.

Yeah, like I said, I've had those moments. I'll probably still have some of those moments, but they're not nearly as prevalent as I would say early in my career.

Q. (No microphone.)

BILLY HORSCHEL: Listen, I'm not afraid to wear my emotions on my sleeve. I've said it from the very beginning when I came out here. I think there's too many -- maybe not now but in the past there's way too many robots on the PGA TOUR. I think fans love to see someone that's like heart sleeve show their emotion that's a great thing. It's different.

I think you go to your local club, you go to your local municipal golf course, you're going to see guys doing the same exact thing.

So I think for me, I'm okay with that. Like I said, I'm okay with wearing my heart on my sleeve, showing my emotion when I hit a great shot, when I hit a bad shot, how frustrated I am when that does happen. It's not a bad thing at all, and I don't take it as a bad thing. Just sometimes I wish there was other characterizations added on to that sometimes.

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