

BMW PGA Championship

Sunday, 22 September, 2024

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

Billy Horschel

Press Conference

CLARE BODEL: Welcome, once again, to the press conference of the BMW PGA Championship, now a two-time winner. Can you sum up for us how that feels.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Feels amazing. I'm excited. I'm thrilled. I'm speechless. I can't put into words, you know, how this -- what this moment means to me, and it still hasn't actually sunk in, but yeah, I mean, it was a special, special tournament that I love to death, and to come out as a two-time champion, you know, I'm just over the moon.

Q. You holed so many putts yesterday. When you holed that first one on the first green, it was a bit of a sheepish grin. What were you thinking just then?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Exactly what the green said. I made another long putt. It was one of those that you just sort of like, you don't expect to make and I make it, and I can't believe this happened again. I had a big grin on my face like, yeah, I just made another one.

Q. This summer you did so well at Royal Troon. You really quite like United Kingdom soil, I take it?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I do. I do. I do enjoy coming over here. I do enjoy all parts of the U.K. I do fancy London, especially Surrey. I've made some great friends over here that I hang out with my come over and spend time with. As I've told people over the years, it wouldn't shock me if somewhere down the road I do buy a little place over here and spend some time over here in the summer when my kids are grown and out of the house.

Q. How much support did you get out there from West Ham fans? Is there anybody here from the club, each-players or anyone here today to cheer you on?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Unlike '21, Dec and Nobles were here. I don't know if anyone -- actually, my bad. Tripp Smith, one of the minority owners, the American owner of West Ham was out here, and we had a couple other buddies out here. But he was the only one out here from the club from West Ham. Yeah, I hear a lot of "West Ham"



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and "Come On You Irons" and "Up the Hammers."

But listen, I was playing with Rory McIlroy, and he's going to have the most support and the most people behind him, which I would -- if I was a fan, I'd be right there with them, you know, supporting Rory.

Yeah, I mean, I get a great support system when I come over here with the fans but it's nothing compared to Rory.

Q. That weekend in West Ham, a lot better result?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: A lot better result, yes.

Q. Obviously Rory is having a tough time getting over the finishing line at the moment. What did you have to say to him at the finish there?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I think I just said -- you know, I made the putt and I was excited but at the same time, I felt -- I could feel for him. Because he's a friend of mine, I've known him since 2007 and I think the world of him and I think he's the best player in our generation. I know he's should somewhat of a tough back end of the year of not getting some victories when it looks like it's going to be his.

I can understand, he does such a good job of sort of, I think, canceling out the outward noise and some of the critics that criticise him at certain times for not winning certain events and getting it done.

But you know, I can just feel for him because this is just another one that adds into that narrative going forward. He was great. He was happy for me. Yeah, it was just two really good friends trying to battle it out at the end.

Q. You're back here the week after next for the Dunhill, an event you really love playing in?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I do. I've enjoyed it. I love the home of St Andrews. I enjoy being on the golf course. It's such a fun week not only with the partners I've had but all the amateurs that are involved. It's a really relaxed week compared to the Pebble Beach AT&T Pro-Am; it's more corporate there. Where at St Andrews, it's more of like a get-together, we're playing golf, but we are also enjoying being on some special hallowed grounds.

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I think majority of the guys that play enjoy it. Maybe the only time they don't enjoy is when the weather is really bad as it is one of the days the last three years.

Q. Can you talk about when you saw Rory's put go in at 17 in regulation, what were you thinking at that point? Obviously you were focused on trying to make your own but just talk about that situation first.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I was expecting him to make that. I said it to him right after he made it. I said, "I had a feeling you were going to make yours."

Because he had played some really good golf the last two days, but he had not had that really big moment that we know Rory can have at any given time. And when he made that, I was like, well, there it is.

You know, and I'm like, I've got to birdie mine and I've got to do something special on 18 to hopefully get into a playoff with him and possibly Thruston Lawrence. Luckily enough, neither one of those guys birdied 18.

Like I said, when that putt went in, I was not shocked because I felt like he hit a lot of quality putts over the last two days and had just been burning edges, coming up just short. So I was not shocked to see that one go in.

Q. In that playoff, you had that 5-footer, let's say, against the water kind of, that putt. I'm standing there thinking, what is going through your head? Because obviously if it doesn't go in you're going to lose the playoff. But at times -- and then you understand you got yourself to that point but still it just seems to difficult to try to deal with a 5-footer in that situation.

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Yeah, I think my mindset in that -- on that putt was going back to the putting green and being on the chalk line. If everyone has ever watched me on the putting green, I spend countless -- I say I've spent countless hours on a chalk line with two tees and just rolling the ball between two tees. And I spent countless hours doing putting drills that I have to make X amount of putts, and if I don't, then I have to redo the drill until it's completed.

And on that putt, I envision the chalk line starting in the right center of the hole, all I did was just imagine me rolling that ball on the chalk line and breaking a little bit to the left to go in the hole.

Q. And one last one. I know that last Sunday, I'm not even sure if you were on a plane or not but you were sitting home last Sunday somewhere, and I know you'll

say, Yes, I thought I could win if I came here. But in reality is that true?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: I flew over on Friday night. I went to a West Ham game on Saturday to see the 1-1 draw with Fulham.

To be honest with you, I just want to come over here and play a really solid week of golf. Did I think I could win? I felt like if my game showed up, yes. But I had taken two weeks off. I had had to deal with a back injury, and so my game wasn't -- I didn't spend as many hours. I had not been as sharp. I wasn't as sharp as I wanted to be coming in here.

So I knew I just had to sort of be kind to myself and be patient and not, you know, get too frustrated if things weren't perfect and weren't working the way I wanted them to, and just sort of try and play my way into good some form, and I did a really good job of that.

Honestly, if I don't putt well this week, I don't win. There's no doubt about it. Because I did not hit it good enough to win this tournament. But I managed my game well and I made a lot of good putts, and I made a lot of long putts that allowed me to be sitting up here right now.

Q. Is the Presidents Cup, not being involved in that, any form of motivation to you to say, I want to prove a point, or are you okay with that? Are you good with that?

BILLY HORSCHTEL: Listen, I would love to be on that Presidents Cup team. Jim Furyk is a really good friend of mine. Him and Tabitha are great friends of my wife and I. We think the world of them, and we look up to them at what they have done in the northeast Florida community with charities and everything, and we have sort of copied them and supported our northeast Florida area. Jim has been a great mentor, and I can ask him questions throughout the years, especially early in my career. And I would have loved to have been part of that Presidents Cup team.

But honestly, I didn't think I was going to get a pick. You know, there's people around me who felt like I probably should have been on this team. But I didn't think I was going to get a pick for some reason.

Yeah, there was no motivation or added motivation to not being picked on that team. So you know, I've just got to do a better job of playing well on a more consistent basis, so I don't have to worry about picks going forward.

Q. (Why didn't you think you would get a pick)?

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BILLY HORSCHER: I think I needed to play well at BMW Championship and TOUR Championship because obviously I finished second at The Open Championship. I finished, I think, 10th at Wyndham or seventh at Wyndham and 10th at FedExCup or FedEx St. Jude Championship. I figured I needed another two really good weeks.

I think I was somewhere between 16 and 17 on the points list, and there was a couple guys in the top 12, their form wasn't really good. So there was opportunity that if I could play well those last two weeks, I could possibly earn a pick.

But it was unfortunate that Tuesday of the BMW Championship in Denver, I pulled a muscle my back. Strained something, and I just wasn't able to swing a club for, really, the last two weeks; I just sort of manufactured it.

And that was the disappointing thing is that I felt like if I played well those two weeks, then maybe I could have been picked for the team.

Q. You were trailing by three coming into today. What was your game plan heading out there?

BILLY HORSCHER: Go play a really good, solid round of golf. Matteo is a really good player. I know he's come back from some struggles and it's really great to see him back because he's always had the game. He's shown it at an early age, and it's -- I think we all can appreciate the hard work he's put in to get back to where -- out here and possibly become one of the best players again in the world.

But at the same time, he was going to deal with emotions. He's going to have a three-shot lead and I felt like if I could just, you know, play a solid round of golf and if Matteo went out and played a 5-, 6-, 7-under par round today, then you've got to tip your cap to him.

If I go out there and play well and just sort of stare at his heels, then, you know, he was going to have to be looking at not just me, Rory McIlroy, Thriston Lawrence. There were a lot of guys that could make runs, and this course allows that with the par 5s and some short par 4s.

Yeah, I just stayed in it the entire time. Didn't really -- I looked at the leaderboard a little bit at times here and there just to see where things -- how things were playing out. But you know, I just said, hey, let's keep trying to hit quality golf shots after quality golf shots, and hopefully that leads to really good scores.

Q. When the winning putt dropped, there was a nice big smile from Rory. I was just wondering about the sentiments between the pair of you at that point.

BILLY HORSCHER: Yeah, it was funny, because I think before I hit that putt, I was like, if I make this putt, do I do a fist-pump or celebration or something over the top, or do I do what I did?

I felt like out of respect for Rory and the respect I have for him, I felt like a smile and a fist pump, but then to look at him and sort of see him, have a smile on his face and give me the nod of approval, that meant the world to me.

CLARE BODEL: Congratulations once again, Billy.

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