

The Senior Open Presented by Rolex

Wednesday, July 26, 2023
Porthcawl, Wales, United Kingdom
Royal Porthcawl Golf Club

Bernhard Langer

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for joining us today. This is the third time that Royal Porthcawl has hosted the Senior Open. What can you take from your success previously into this?

BERNHARD LANGER: Good question. I'm not sure if I can take anything with me besides knowing how to play the golf course.

Obviously I had a pretty good game plan when I won here the last two times we played. It must have worked otherwise I wouldn't have won but the game plan by itself is not everything. You have to execute and hit the proper shots and make some putts.

But I feel pretty good about my game. Been playing well the last months or so and look forward to hopefully getting a little bit better weather and see what happens out there.

Q. Since you last played here, they added bunkers, what have you seen playing around this week?

BERNHARD LANGER: Exactly what you said. They have added some bunkers that really are in play like the one on No. 1, for instance, is right where you probably want to land the ball, so you can't land it there anymore. You have to kind of work between the two bunkers now and there's a few other ones that were moved around, either closer or further back so they are all in play depending on the wind conditions. I think they are fairly good changes overall. Makes the course a little bit tougher still. The greens are very severe. You've got a lot of very undulating, tough greens and you've got to be in control of your distance control and place the ball as close to the hole as possible or below the hole. Otherwise you're going to have a few three or four putts around here.

Q. You mentioned the weather. Looks like it will be fairly windy this week. How do you combat that?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, you can't. The one element



that drives the scores up no matter where you play, and when you have this much wind on an exposed piece of land, it's just flat, so the wind here seems to be much heavier and taking control of the golf ball far more than we are used to with a warm wind if that makes any sense.

So you really have to pay attention and hit the right shape or shot because if you're a little off here, you'll be off a lot, not just a little, so ball-striking is very important and missing the greens or missing it in the right places where you don't get penalized immensely and still can play on to hopefully avoid double-bogeys and triple-bogeys. You've got to stay out of the bunker, stay out of the gorse, keep it on the grass.

Q. Over here, everybody is experienced and yet you win the most. What is it that sets you apart and can you give us an idea of the kind of work that you put in?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, you have a half hour or so? Experience is important, and you know, we have different experiences. I probably have far more experience than most guys that are playing in the field. The reason being is I turned pro when I was 15 and I've been playing on tour since I was 18, so I've been playing a lot more tournaments than most of these guys even though they are similar age.

Secondly, if you win tournaments, it breeds confidence and confidence breeds winning, so it helps to have good experiences, positive experiences. If you've been a playing pro for 25, 30 years and you've just been kind of mediocre, it's hard to believe that you can win, I imagine, because you have not won anything yet or not a lot.

That's why I believe Tiger Woods was so dominant as well. He was used to winning and expected to win every time he teed it up and it made winning easier because that's basically all he ever did to a large percentage.

While you play 50 or 100 tournaments, and you don't ever win or you're not in the heat, all of a sudden you get in the heat and on the leaderboard, then it becomes like, oh, what's going on and you know so it's hard to cope with that I think. Some do it better than others but that's just one part.

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

The work ethic, yeah, I take more time off when I'm off so when I get home, say I'm flying home next Monday, I will not touch a club for two or three days probably and then start practicing again on Wednesday or Thursday and towards the weekend a little more to prepare for the following week. But I need a few days away from the game of golf, and I feel that's good for me so you have to know what's good for you. When I was in my 20s, if I didn't hit a ball for a day or two, I felt like, wow, what is this? This is weird. What is this awkward stick in my hand? I have no control over it.

I'm 66 in a couple of weeks. I've made millions of golf swings. I haven't changed my swing. So I don't need to practice and I've already done that swing hundreds of thousands of times. Does that make sense? When I was younger, I was still developing, one month working on this, one month working on that. Always changing, always evolving, and even though to you it would look the same.

But under the microscope it was different and that had to become part of me, part of nature, and I don't need to do that anymore right now. I'm pretty much set in my ways and trying to do the same thing over and over.

I go to the gym every day pretty much. I was talking to my amateurs yesterday in the Pro-Am and he said when are you off, tomorrow? I said, my routine is show up three hours before my tee time. I spend one hour in the gym warming up, and then half hour breakfast and a few minutes to brush my teeth and put sunscreen on, and then another hour on the putting green, chipping, all that and that's another four, four and a half hours.

And I put in another half hour working on whatever didn't work and that's my normal day, and I stretch again afterwards. My routine is anywhere from 8 to 12 hours, if you include stretching and working out. And that's why I need breaks. That's why I need a few days to get away from it.

Q. What do you think of a person that cheats -- (Inaudible.)

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, those are very good questions, I would like to know what verse he quoted, maybe something to do with forgiveness, I imagine.

It's obviously very disappointing when anybody cheats because the game of golf was built and founded on honesty and integrity and that's what we try to teach our younger generations, and that's what we all try to be, role models for that and uphold the rules.

Let's face, it golf is very unique in that way. What other sport penalises yourself? If you're a soccer player, and you kick the other guy, you go, I didn't touch him, I didn't do anything, would you ever say, I tripped this guy, you need to give a penalty. You'll never see that, ever. Any other sport, tell me any sport, tennis, you always think it's in. You never say, it's out.

What I'm trying to say is golf is very unique where we penalize ourselves. I've done it to me. I had a 3-foot putt, I lined it up, I put my putter behind it, looked at the hole, I put it back. The ball moved marginally. Nobody saw it, not even a TV camera could pick it up, but I knew the line wasn't where I had put it. I called for a ruling, and well, the rule is, you address it, you get a one-shot penalty, and that cost me \$330,000, and I called it on myself. You don't see that in any other sport.

That's why I say we are building our game on integrity and honesty and all that kind of stuff. It may be, I don't know what circumstances this player is living under and what's going on and whether that one stroke would improve his life dramatically, I have no idea. I can't imagine it.

But there's tremendous stress out there, a lot of pressure. Some of these people, they have family, they have young kids and they live from this paycheck to the next one, so it can be very tempting.

But to me it's foolish, especially changing a scorecard is ridiculous, really. I mean, how can you think you're going to get away with changing a scorecard? You're not just breaking a rule. You're actually stupid.

Q. (Inaudible.)

BERNHARD LANGER: Okay. Thanks for sharing that with me. I think it had something to do with forgiveness. That's what Christianity is all about. We are not holy people meeting on Sunday. We are sinners. That's why we are all going to church. We are imperfect human beings, because we are all sinners and make mistakes. A lot of people think, they are the holy ones and they gather amongst themselves because they are so special. No. We just acknowledge that we are not.

Q. Do you have an idea when enough is enough?

BERNHARD LANGER: I'll let you know. The time isn't right yet. The goal is to win a few more. If I enjoy what I'm doing and still healthy, I'll keep going. Right now I still feel well and feel like I can compete and if that's the case, I'll keep going and whenever the time is right, I hope I will know it and not bore you with an 82 or 84 and that kind of stuff.

