

# The 153rd Open

Press Conference

Tuesday, 15 July 2025

**Xander Schauffele**



ED HODGE: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm delighted to be joined by the defending champion Xander Schauffele.

Xander, welcome to Portrush. You obviously have great memories of last year. How excited are you to be back for another Open week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm super excited. I just remember last time I was here I really enjoyed playing this golf course. I forgot how difficult it is and how penalizing it can be. It's been fun to get back on site, to get back on the holes. I think everything came back to me kind of quickly. Yeah, looking forward to the week.

**Q. You said last week it would be a win if you played 72 holes without fiddling with your swing. Did you do that?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I was pretty close, yeah. I think I had a better understanding of what I was doing, which was helpful when I was hitting bad shots. It didn't get too windy, and it was 75 and sunny most days.

There were a couple days where it was windy, and you had to kind of move the ball around correctly, which helped me.

**Q. When was the last time you went 72 holes without fiddling?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just something about going through my process, not feeling like I need to go to the range, not feeling like I need to do a whole lot after my rounds, versus seeing my trainer and my physio and then going home and relaxing. I feel like this year's been a lot of straight to the range, looking at swing, trying to figure out why I'm not putting well, all these things.

I had a few moments last week, but overall it was better.

**Q. Do you think your process of learning links golf was relatively easy compared to people you know? What was the transition like?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't think it was easy. I think I'm still learning a lot. I think even from last week to this week, we actually have divots flying this week. Last week was ball

mark-less and divot-less.

Just learning how the ball reacts on certain grass, if it's going to jump or not, when you're sitting in like a fescue bush or weed, how that's going to come out, how much it's going to grab your club. There's so many things you still learn on the way.

More of it's just the mentality. I think, when you say links golf, it comes with weather, and when you play in bad weather, you have to have a good attitude.

**Q. You mentioned a couple things there, but when you initially started playing links golf, what are one or two technical things like, okay, now I have to think about this and do this that you might not have to back home?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just bringing the ball flight down knowing that if it's downwind, if it's blowing 10 to 15 miles an hour and it's downwind, most courses are designed to be played with a certain wind direction. So knowing you can hit a gap wedge from 175 yards knowing it's going to hit and take that skip and hitting it to 30, 35 feet short, it's a good shot, versus in the U.S. you'd be hitting an 8-iron from 175 trying to fly it to within a foot of the hole and have it stop right there.

You have to visualize a lot more than just hitting your number on a machine.

**Q. I don't know if you're a tennis fan, but did you get to watch any Wimbledon? If so, do you compare the four majors in golf with their very different surfaces to the four very different surfaces that tennis presents in its majors?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I did, yeah. I don't know a lot about tennis, but I enjoy watching it. To me it looked like they were having a go at each other for the first couple sets. It was really fun to watch.

Yeah, it's obviously different. Tennis is a one-on-one, heads up, you just have to beat the guy in front of you on pretty similar court conditions. Golf is -- this week is a pretty good example of having to deal with a wave. There's typically a good wave and a bad wave in an Open Championship. You just keep your fingers crossed that you're in the good wave and try and play well. If you're not, fight for your life and make the cut and then try and do something on the weekend.



In terms of comparing the clay to links and parkland to Wimbledon, I don't know, it's a nice comparison, but it's pretty different.

**Q. Are you aware of sea air, do you think about sea air different from air that's anywhere else?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You might have to ask someone else about that question. Wind is wind. A certain strength of wind is -- there's a certain temperature. When it's cold, your body isn't as warm as when it's 100 degrees in Memphis, for example, or 110. You just deliver the club differently when your body is -- when you're wearing layers and layers of clothes, your swing gets shorter. Things like that is sort of what I worry about.

You just club up when it's really windy with sea air, as you're saying.

**Q. Xander, what was your first links experience? Did you think it suited you when you first started playing it? What's the mental part of that for you?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I drove up to Bandon Dunes from San Diego. It took about 16 hours. I was 13 years old. My dad drove me and my buddy and his friend. We played three or four days in a row. I think it was just Pacific Dunes and Bandon Dunes at the time. We got the real weather. My rain gear stopped working. It was that much wind and rain.

I had a blast. I had -- as much as it was nice to look forward to a hot shower at the end of the day, I had so much fun for some reason trying to figure out how to play golf in that weather. Even to this day, you look at guys who grew up in Canada or overseas in Europe, it will be windy and cold, and I always saw guys would shoot 6- or 7-under, and I'm like how are these people doing this?

It was always a battle for me knowing, if I want to be a well-rounded player, I need to learn how to do it. Maybe I went in with that mentality, but I always thought it was a lot of fun.

**Q. How did you celebrate winning The Open last year? Were you able to properly party? I know you mentioned drinking tequila out of the Claret Jug.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm embarrassed to say that, yeah.

**Q. Is it with lime and salt and that kind of thing?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, no. The lid, it barely opens. I had a little tequila there in Portugal. I've had wine out of it, but not too much. I don't drink a whole lot. I definitely drank more after a few championships last year.

Yeah, bummed to give up the trophy this year. Looking forward to trying to get it back.

**Q. Immediately afterwards, did you manage to celebrate? How does it work for you guys? Are you too much of a professional these days to properly enjoy it?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm not Irish, I know the celebrations go a little bit deeper here than maybe what I'm even accustomed to or used to. In my fashion, I had a cigar. I had my family. I had a few phone calls. Austin was with us as well. It was a nice celebration for us.

Then we're going to the Olympics shortly after. It just seems like whenever we play these tournaments, you're onto the next right away. Luckily I was able to go to Portugal, enjoy it a little bit with my wife and some friends, and that was about it.

**Q. Obviously having won The Open now, I was wondering what that does for your expectation levels this week? Does coming back as defending champion come with more pressure or less pressure?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's an interesting thing just because my thoughts of playing really well were at Royal Troon. Coming here, I feel like I'm trying to relearn this golf course, get comfortable with certain sight lines, some blind tee shots.

I think, if I can get myself in the mix is when I think I would have an advantage. That's where my biggest edge would be. I can lean on experience at other points in time, but I think the most fun and the biggest advantage I would have is coming down the stretch if I can get close to that lead.

**Q. You talked about attitude being important this week especially, maybe. Do you feel like you've always had a pretty good attitude? I guess you did at Bandon Dunes. Or is that something you had to work on and develop?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, definitely not. I definitely had to -- there's just a little bit of an identity. You just have to -- everyone has their own. I kind of alluded to that in the past.

For me, being as even keel as possible. I'm not going to be the guy throwing his shoulder out fist pumping, but I get fired up when I'm out there. It may not look like it, but inside, if I'm fired up, I'll take one or two clubs less if I need. I may just not be celebrating like crazy, just because the times I'm at home and I get over the top and start running my mouth too much, I start to bogey holes shortly after that.

I've just learned what makes me play my best golf and tried to lean on that as much as possible.



**Q. And golf being such a mental game, do you ever look around at other competitors or maybe more when you're a junior playing in college or something and seeing guys that beat themselves because they have a bad attitude?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's tricky. It's a fine line, I think. If you're a fiery person, if you're an emotional person, you shouldn't try not to be an emotional person. Obviously if you're sitting there snapping three or four clubs, maybe you've crossed the line. But if you want to slam a club, if you want to throw out a swear word, something where it's going to kind of flush yourself out, get back to neutral then go on and birdie a couple holes, you can use that energy.

Like I said, it's not for me, but I've seen plenty of guys do it where they start to get angry and you're like, dang, that's the kind of good anger. This guy is going to come birdie a few holes. You can kind of tell. It's like a feel thing. I've been playing golf for long enough to see where, if a guy is in control or not, you can tell which way it's going to go.

**Q. Scottie was talking earlier about kind of the fleeting nature of winning or the fleeting nature of happiness after winning. I guess I'm curious, as you like reflect on last year's win in this event, what was your happiest moment after winning?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I was in Portugal with my wife at a beach. I was pretty happy there. (Laughter). Wasn't really thinking much about winning a tournament the week before. It was just like, wow, this is really nice. It kind of reminds me of San Diego actually.

Yeah, I think it's -- you know, I'm 31, 32 this year, hopefully have another 10, 15 years in me where I can be competitive. At some point I'm sure I'll look back on my career, but I just -- I don't have any trophies at my house. I don't really think about winning. You always, I think, if you're really competitive, you just think about how to get better and you think about what's next, which is good and bad.

If you have really good friends around you that will kind of drag you into a celebration, that's nice. I talked with Keegan, and he kept telling me to just really enjoy it. He kept telling me that when I'd sit with him and have dinner with him. I thought about it for sure, just how quickly we kind of move on to the next thing. I just think at some point in my career I'll do that, but right now I really want to keep my head down and keep charging.

**Q. Obviously seeing a look at Royal Portrush for you, if there's one aspect to your game that you really need to have dialed in here with driving, approach shots, chipping, putting, what would it be and why?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think that's why this is an unbelievable venue. It's everything. If you pick the correct club off the tee, you can maybe get away with a few loose drives, but then again, it's very lie biased. Chipping is tricky. Greens are firm, and they're a little bit slower than what we played even last week. Thank goodness because, if they were faster, it would be even more difficult.

Then putting, putting is always tricky with wind. There's some holes where the mounds cover the greens and some holes that are more exposed where the wind is going to affect the ball on the green. I think whoever wins this week is an extremely well rounded player.

**Q. I think you answered part of my question, but is there such a thing as the life of a major champion? What things have changed in your life since you won last year, and what things have absolutely not changed at all?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I feel like my life hasn't changed at all. When I go to a normal golf course, I would see the same people, and I treat them the same and they treat me the same.

If I went out more, I think, my life would probably be a little different. I feel like I'd maybe get noticed more. Between my home, my wife, my dogs, some family, some close friends, the grocery store -- it sounds really boring. I like my life, but it really hasn't changed whatsoever.

**Q. And in connection with the golf, from what you're saying, is it a better approach to start from scratch, especially when you play a major, and not think about the experience of the past and all that? Just a blank canvas?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I feel that way. I feel like you try to start every tournament -- like here the best players in the world talk about how they've done it. It's so simple, which is the hardest thing to do. Don't fiddle with your golf swing. Okay, that sounds easy. Here I am doing it every day.

I think a blank canvas is a great place to start. You can paint many different pictures to win a tournament. You've just got to do the right one.

**Q. It happens every year, but it seems like there's been a lot of caddie carousel drama on the PGA TOUR right now. You and Austin obviously have a great relationship. What is the key to effective player-caddie relationship that lasts so long?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I regret this at times, but I told Austin he'll never get fired for something he says to me. That was a mistake.

(Laughter).



I feel like I should have maybe reworded that back then. I know I put myself in his shoes, and I want him to give me his honest advice. I trust him. He played golf. He's a good player. When I ask him for his advice, tell me what you think -- and we know each other's tendencies when we play golf as well. He hits his putts harder than I do, so he's always on maybe a little bit lower read, things of that nature.

But I told him, I won't ever fire you because you thought it was this and I thought it was that, and if I was right, that's not going to be the difference maker.

There's a lot of variables in golf. Austin is a great guy, a great caddie. He's one of my best friends. I think, if you can keep your caddie as a constant, it's an advantage.

**Q. You say you don't have any trophies?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No.

**Q. Where are they?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: My parents' house probably in a bank vault. I think that's where some of the -- like one of the trophies was when they travel.

**Q. Including the gold medal?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I actually have no idea where that is to be completely honest.

**Q. That's great to know. Why don't you?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: What am I going to do with it? I don't really invite people over to my house. Am I just going to go look at it myself? That's the way I feel about it. I don't want to walk into a trophy room like look how great I am. I was just raised to think that way, and it's kind of stuck. I really don't sit at home, you know what I mean?

My wife hung up some pictures of me in my gym of like me winning the Olympic medal, and she put it so high up I can't reach it. I have to get a ladder now, and it bothers me. Like if anything, put up like me in a Masters jacket, like that would piss me off, you know what I mean? Something like that is more motivating than like, all right, that's not great. I don't want to look at that.

**Q. What would you rather be up on the wall?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: A photo of my dogs or nothing, a clock maybe. I'm always late, so maybe a clock would be good for me.

**Q. You spent a lot of time or a fair bit of time with Scottie**

**last year in Paris. Do you see any similarities between the way you guys approach golf and success?**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It feels that way. I feel, when I hear him speak about his process, he's extremely -- I feel pretty routine oriented. He's very routine, extremely routine. Very disciplined, his team, it's like clock work. I think all of us feel like we have our own system, and he very much sticks to it.

His process is great, and I think he was talking about kind of going onto the next thing quickly. I just think that's why he's been No. 1 and hasn't even sniffed looking backwards. If he was sitting there looking at all his trophies every day, I'm sure he'd still be playing great golf, but I don't think he's that guy.

**Q. He's got a big clock on the wall.**

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Does he? I know Meredith will set him straight if he gets kind of wacky. Yeah, he's a helluva competitor.

ED HODGE: Xander, we'll wrap things up here. Thanks for your time, and good luck defending the Claret Jug.

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