

KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship

Harbor Shores

Benton Harbor, Michigan, USA

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Bernhard Langer

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Bernhard Langer joins us now at the 84th KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship. How are you feeling heading into this one?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, it's great to be here. It's been a great venue I think for the KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship and players love coming here.

I'm just glad to be playing golf after my Achilles surgery three and a half months ago. I'm just happy to be back out competing.

Funny thing is I can play golf but I can't walk, so makes no sense. But that's where it is right now.

Q. A lot of unique things at this golf course. You've played this many years; had some success here. Has it grown on you through the years?

BERNHARD LANGER: No. I thought this was a great golf course from the very getgo. I think from tee-to-green it's one of the best there is. Just some of the greens are a little bit severe, that's all.

But it's always been in great condition and very well received.

Q. And years you've been successful here, what's been the biggest key for you?

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, I don't know. I guess it's like anywhere else. You got to drive the ball well, keep it out of the lateral hazards we have here, and the bunkers, and also the rough is pretty punishing.

I think Jack Nicklaus designed courses are also they make you think, they make you play from one spot to another, not just necessarily hit it anywhere you want.

If you get caught in the wrong side you get punished. Also with the greens. So you really have to think your way and

be precise and figure out if you can't hit the proper shot, where can you get it up and down from and where not.

Q. Bernard, I've followed you through your career. This golf course is as difficult as it is to walk between some holes and stuff like that. Do you think because of your Achilles tendon, there was -- is that why you got a golf cart? Is it that much difficult to get around the gold course?

BERNHARD LANGER: No, it's not for that. It's ADA. We have strict rules, and I had to apply for ADA, got the ADA, and that's why.

But if it hadn't been for that I wouldn't be playing golf anywhere right now because I can't walk 18 holes. It's not just this week, it's every week for a few more months.

Q. At the Insuperity where you played 36, walk or did you have a cart?

BERNHARD LANGER: No. I just told you I can't walk 18 holes. You can put me on the flattest golf course anywhere in the world, I can't walk that long. Standing for five hours and walking is not on right now.

So that will be a few more months and then hopefully I'll have a better chance of being fully restored.

Q. Would you consider yourself a -- you like to keep yourself in shape and everything. It was surprising the way the injury occurred. It just shocked you I think, didn't it?

BERNHARD LANGER: It shocked me because I thought pickleball was not a dangerous sport. I go snow skiing and do a lot of other things that seem a lot more dangerous than pickleball.

When you talk to orthopedic surgeons they will prove me or anybody wrong. 50% of their clientele is pickleball players, believe it or not. Has nothing to do with fitness. Nothing whatsoever.

Yeah, whether you're fit or not you can tear your Achilles

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any time. Aaron Rodgers tore his Achilles, and baseball and football players and bobsleders, anybody, and they're very, very fit, believe me.

The bobsled on ice when they push the bobsled, two men, four men, and then they jump in and they're as fit as any athlete in the world, and they tear the Achilles more than anyone in the world. It's that motion, just putting that pressure on it.

Q. Jeff and I decided we're not going to play pickleball.

BERNHARD LANGER: Smart move.

Q. What do you like about this course, and your career as you look back on the things you're proudest of in your career?

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, wow that's a lot of questions there. What I like about it, first of all, I like a lot of Nicklaus courses. You have to think your way around and play a lot of good shots in the right places.

That is what I do like. You got to be very precise. There are a lot of holes if you're off you can make a triple bogey in a heartbeat.

And then what I'm most proud of in my career, I have no idea. There are a lot of things I've been blessed with over the 50 years I've been playing now as a pro.

You know, obviously the Masters stand out somewhat, but winning more senior majors than anybody and having the grand slam out here is pretty cool.

Winning five father/son tournaments is cool for me, even though it may mean nothing in the spectrum of World Golf. As a dad and being a father of four kids, having won that means a lot.

So there is many other things. Being German, winning a German Open and a German Masters; Ryder Cups obviously. Yeah, the list goes on.

It's hard to pinpoint any of those and make it more meaningful than others.

Q. What kind of pride does it give you -- I know you had your own timetable; doctors were telling you their timetable. To get back out here so soon, what sort of accomplishment and pride does that give you?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, very pleased with it. I had no idea how long this could take. When I talked to other

people that had the same injury and they were talking, oh, yeah, ten months, 12 months. I'm going, oh, my Lord. That's a long time.

So then I talked to my surgeon and PT and they said, we're doing better surgeries now than years ago. We have some called the speed bridge, which is very supportive for the Achilles, and you don't have to go in a cast anymore. Once you go in a cast for four weeks you lose all your strength.

Q. Atrophy and all that.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, just radically. After two weeks of doing nothing you lose 50% of your muscle strength. 50%.

Q. Wow.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah. That's what I said, wow.

Fortunately I didn't have to do that. I was in no cast. I was actually in a rehab two days after my surgery, and rehabbed ever since.

My PT said, we're going to work on the calf muscle and try not to lose too much strength there. It's been working, and had a lot of payer by a lot of people.

Very fortunate to be -- actually I've been hitting balls for five or six weeks now, so I started hitting balls when I was about two months after surgery, which is pretty amazing.

Q. And I don't know if you told the story, but there is a story about them having you stand up from sitting and how much trust that took.

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, yeah, I was scared. You know, I was non-weight bearing for a while, and then my PT, one day we were doing the hour session and sits me in the chair and says, get up. What am I holding on to? No, get up. I said, not sure I can do that.

And it's not me. I'm not a fearful person. I just knew how weak my leg was and didn't think I could do it. He said, okay, here is a pole. Hold on to the pole, now get up. That was no problem. I did that three or four times and less and less pressure on the pole and more and more on my legs.

I was like, I can do that. Take the pole. I got up and it was up here. But yeah, it's fascinating what's going on in our bodies.

Q. Speaks to the mental strength.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, a lot of mental stuff. That's what they do with some of those studies. They take 50 people and 25 get this pill and 25 get that pill, which is nothing in it, and tell all 50 you're taking the same. They're taking nothing and still claim they've been healed or doing a lot better because they believe in it or something like that.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time. Appreciate it.

BERNHARD LANGER: My pleasure. Thank you.

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