

Genesis Scottish Open

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North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

CLARE BODEL: Welcome once again, Xander to the Genesis Scottish Open. Our first winner in the co-sanctioned era at the Renaissance Club and seems to be a tournament that's become a pretty important part of your schedule. Can you tell us how much you enjoy coming back here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it definitely is. It's important for me to get acclimated to the time. Important to get used to the grass, the way the ball rolling, all those good things. It's definitely become a staple in my schedule.

CLARE BODEL: Obviously you played here last year before going on to win The Open. How important is it to have that sort of solid couple of weeks in the U.K.?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think it's massive across the board. Just hard to replicate any sort of tournament feel back home in the States where you can hit an iron, the same club, a difference of 50 to 60 yards just based on how you hit it or what kind of wind you get.

There's only one way to get that done, and it's coming over here. And whether it's hitting drivers in crosswinds or getting used to a different bounce with your wedge or trying to hit it over those big lips that you guys have over here, it's a lot of fun to prepare that way.

Q. Given the unusual start to your year, where are you right now and where is your confidence level in your game?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Everything I'd say the belief is good. I don't think I've given myself a lot of reasons to believe that I'm playing okay. It's been a pretty bad year to be completely honest.

So I'm definitely looking forward to -- I feel like I haven't tried to add on too many other events, and I've tried to just play to an incredible -- get to an incredible place with less starts, which is really hard to do these days.



I'm trying to do a lot of things, and I think the best part of my game has probably been my mental just fortitude, whatever you want to call it, just to try to stay positive and behave as if I am playing really well. But coming off a year like last year, getting hurt, coming back, my expectations and playing ability have not cued up very nicely.

Q. What's the closest you've come to your great mental attitude being not so great?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Maybe Valspar, kind of early on in the mix. Had a couple feelings of, what am I to go out here. Austin was like we're two off the lead and he's like you should probably get it together. That's a fair point. That's the closest where it wasn't really -- just, you know, like I said, I played incredibly well last year and was out for six weeks.

First time I've been hurt. Didn't know what to expect coming back and my mind and the way I was playing golf, I would just look at the target and hit at the target. Didn't really match up coming back at the beginning of the year, and it's still a work in progress. But I've been spoiled to play at a pretty high level for quite some time. This has been a fun experience to try to get back on the horse.

Q. Was it a case of you not appreciating how serious the impact was going to be, or were you even deliberately downplaying it because you didn't want to be looking for sympathy?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, both, probably. I try to not make a big deal out of it. Learning from it as much as possible, more from an expectation standpoint. Yeah, probably downplayed it in my own mind. Yeah, you'll be fine, you've been playing great golf; you just came off the best year of your career. And I've backed it up currently with the worst year of my career. It's been a hot one.

Like I said, I'm trying to do the best I can.

Q. As you try to turn it around, how much of a comfort level is the fact that you have not just won here on this venue but you've also won next week's tournament, albeit somewhere else, does that provide an extra layer



of comfort?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: There's some version of, I wish I could have come over here and played earlier in the year to be honest just from a mental standpoint. Something about playing over here relaxes me a little bit. I definitely try to play less golf swing.

It looks like with the weather this weekend, it might be a little bit of golf swing. But normally when it's blowing 25, 30, some wind and rain comes in, it's pretty hard to think about what you're trying to do with the golf club in your swing versus just trying to keep your hands dry. There's something to it.

Q. By winning The Open last year, how much has that changed your life in terms of being Open Champion? When you're going into any tournament nowadays, do you find there's more pressure on you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I drank a little bit more than I normally do, that was probably the biggest change that I had in my life was trending towards an alcoholic (laughter). It's been awesome.

I really don't feel like -- it's been a weird year for me just from coming off year I had last year into sort of what I did just kind of disappearing and then playing bad coming out of it.

So any expectation I had of whatever I thought I was capable of doing, you know, from a feel standpoint last year, has been sort of reset and I am in full chase mode, like a kid.

Q. Thanks for giving us a headline, first of all.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, please don't use that one. A little context would be appreciated.

Q. We'll do that. You mentioned you wished you'd come over a little bit earlier. That something in the future, you might actually come to Europe a little bit more than you do in the moment?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: If there's some way for me to guarantee playing in some sort of difficult condition on links -- links golf, it could be, yeah. I was just thinking sort of when I come over here, how just coming off of nine holes, just being a little bit more creative, tapping into that other side of your brain.

I was really beating up on myself for quite some time to try and get myself to play like I did last year, things of that nature, which isn't really how you're supposed to do it. But

victim of that, and something about being here, you start taking your hands off the wheel, and that's how I played my best.

Q. Touching on that, you say looking to go back to how you were playing last year, is it as simple as that? Is it looking at videos, what you were doing 12 months ago and analyzing them and trying to incorporate them or some not possible to go back to how you were because of the nature of golf and the way that you develop?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I was going to say, if it was possible, probably would have felt like I won almost every tournament I played in this year but been pretty far from that.

Yeah, I've played pretty good golf from different places. I played really, really good golf from a certain place last year. Whether you call it attached to that or not, my mind was definitely there, and a lot of, you know, too much comparison, I guess, from this and that for myself versus just sort of, I don't know, getting back to some basic things.

So a little bit, you know, we're trying to dip into that sort of video pond last year and looking at what's going on and sort of what I'm doing poorly this year, and then the hardest part has been taking the hands off the wheel and feel like I'm just swinging and playing golf.

Q. You mentioned that it's probably been the toughest season of your career so far. Curious in terms of as a person and as a golfer, what's the biggest thing you've learned about yourself?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Well, I knew I was stubborn. I don't know if I learned that bit. But I'm not sure. I think I'm -- you know, there's no -- I don't feel too stressed. I'm very upset with how I've been playing. I've just really taken on this mindset of I looked at sort of how I would behave when things are going really well.

You know, there's no need to be bipolar. Just make it as genuine as possible. If I'm shooting 80, I really don't want anyone to look at me on the course and be like, that kid's shooting 80. Doesn't matter. I don't care if guys get mad or sad or smash clubs or whatever. This is just a me thing. I know when I'm playing really well, I behave a certain way and my mind in a certain place. I've just trying to rinse and repeat and plug myself in that position.

Yeah, the year -- I still have a few tournaments this year, and we'll see what I can do.

Q. There's a new partnership been announced with a

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Scottish clothing company you've become an ambassador for. Can you give us the background and concept?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: What's that?

Q. Hue Health. It was announced earlier.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Oh, yeah -- looking at my agent. I was working through that, in such prototype -- yeah, lovely people doing it. Yeah, the sensor, to see -- when I saw it, it was a very prototype stage. We were shaving bits of my leg off to put the sensor in to see -- basically it's more of a recovery to look in terms of, you know, when you get hurt, how your leg is firing, how are certain parts of your body firing and you use sensor to see if there's a matchup on the left and right.

At least when I went through the prototype phase, we were looking at my legs and when I was doing a squat or lunge or single-leg lunge, the side-to-side comparison of sort of the output of each leg and if it's firing correctly. The way it was explained to me is if you're coming back from injury, it's a really unique and interesting way to recover.

Sorry, makes me look terrible.

CLARE BODEL: Now that we know someone hasn't stolen your identity.

Q. What are the specifics of preparation for next week, and how does it differ from a typical tour week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'd say flight is a big thing. A lot of it's just feeling comfortable with the window, maybe playing the ball a little bit further back. Wedge grind, a little bit less bounce on a wedge.

And then turf conditions, I think the clubs, depending on how much it rains, the club is going through the ground a little bit differently than maybe back home. Other than that, and then green speeds are a bit slower.

So other than those few things, I'd say that would be it.

Q. You talked earlier about how last year was more just target and swing, and when you came back from the injury, are you a little surprised you just didn't pick that right back up, or was there maybe even a possibility that you favored it some and got into some bad habits?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'd say bad habits. It was still new, the way I was moving the club last year was still new, and the bad place I got the club to this year was new. So

I've played plenty of -- or hit a lot of bad shots from a certain place but it was home for me. I've been playing from that, call it short and laid off and shut. I've played a lot of golf from there. So I was, you know, playing at home with it, missing my shots at home with it.

So as soon as I come out to a tournament, I already know, it's like my DNA. So plug in how I've overdone the club getting too far across and getting short. This is a spot I've never played from.

It's hard to create some sort of learning curve in a season that you're trying to get back into. So just a bad -- a bad matchup for me.

Q. What do you remember about Portrush and how do you think it suits, and going back there next week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I just remember it being the hardest rain I've ever played in. Almost to where you're like, wow, we're still golfing, you know. That's sort of what I remember.

But I remember a few holes, not any one specifically, but like I said, I always enjoy the challenge. So looking forward to re-learning the course.

Q. Are there any lingering effects from the injury, or a hundred percent?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I feel a hundred percent. There's definitely stuff we look out for to make sure, you know, just in terms of tee to spine mobility, things of that nature, make sure I'm moving good.

Q. I know this will be a little esoteric but is there one part of your game from last year to this year different?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just bad across the board. I mean, I guess no would be -- there's a lot of parts. There isn't just one.

Q. You know that we always like to talk about the Ryder Cup on this side of the Atlantic?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Sure. We like talking about it back in the States, too.

Q. You told us last year that you wanted some of the players' functions cut back. It's still up in the air but how would you feel about a playing captain? Do you think a playing captain is possible if that's the route Keegan goes down?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, clearly he's earning it. If

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you ask him, he's playing the best golf of his career. We just want our best 12 playing. You know, I think that's sort of what it really comes down to. So he is just flying up the qualifying, that standings leaderboard. Would I be surprised if he got into the top six and wasn't even a conversation anymore? I don't think I'd be very surprised and I don't think he would, either.

You know, if he does, it's going to be a fun situation for himself but I think he's surrounded himself with really good vice captains. I don't think he's going to make a decision he regrets.

Q. Do you see any obstacles if he was a playing captain?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, you'd have to, the responsibility, you have to prepare and practise and get your head in the right place. It would probably be some sort of co-captaincy. It wouldn't be that; on paper, he would still be but at the end of the day, they are big shoes to fill and to do it all alone would be really difficult, even if he wasn't playing.

Q. You've touched on obviously the reasons why, the injury and stuff but golf is very fickle and forgetful. Last year, you were almost top dog and start of the year, it was Rory this and Rory that, and then it's been Scottie Scheffler this, Scottie Scheffler that. Not ego, but just competitive fire, how much do you want to be in that conversation again; don't forget about me, I'm one of these guys?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't go to bed at night saying, you know, please talk about me, you know. It was nice to see my photo out by the toilet. That was heartwarming. Summed up how I feel about what's going on right now. (Laughter) I actually chuckled when I saw that one.

But no, I don't play for those reasons. I really just want to play good golf. I mean, I'm pretty content with myself. I definitely feel happy when I'm -- frustrated, but in general, what would make me really happy is that I can just play freely. I think the obstacles of trying to play really good golf and then playing bad golf and then just fiddling all day long is really what drives me nuts. It's why we love the game but it's what's driving me crazy.

So if I can just get out of my own way, that would be the thing that would make me happiest right now more than even winning a tournament. That would just be the result.

Q. You mentioned you were in chase mode. What exactly are you chasing?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, just playoffs, trying to get, you know, get into some sort of contention to try and feel something again, other than upset. I think I've just been angry-ish. That's like been the biggest emotion of this is frustrating, versus why we love playing to be in contention and kind of see what you can do.

But you know, that part's been humbling. So you know, it's a battle, and I'm going to try and win it.

Q. You talk about belief. Do you believe you can win this week? Is that what belief is like?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, yeah, for sure. Like I said, I haven't really showed a lot of signs but when I'm playing really well, I believe I can win every tournament. And it shouldn't -- you know, that's a separate belief. It shouldn't be too attached to how you're playing. I think that's just how your mentality should be. I'm going to hang my hat on that one. I'm dying on that hill, Doug.

Q. One more. Because you mentioned Scottie a minute ago. What he's done in terms of the World Ranking, I'm sure everyone has aspired to be No. 1 at some point. Is that something you just kind of put aside for now?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I remember talking about some sort of mountain and climbing up it. This is a steep, steep mountain now. Yeah, I was really concerned about it when I was firing at a high level and I feel like I can kind of win every week and right now, like I said, small victories is where I'm battling. You know, if we can move my photo away from the toilet it would be awesome (laughter). I'm just kidding. You can leave it there for the next ten years.

If I can play 72 holes without fiddling with my golf swing this week, that would be a massive win, and wherever I finish, I finish. That would be a good place for me to get to before I play next week.

Q. What headline would you go with, alcoholism or the toilet?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: The writers are pretty creative over here. We'll see what you got, Doug.

CLARE BODEL: On that note, thank you, Xander.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I can't wait for this afternoon.

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