

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Saturday, 31 July 2021

Saitama City, Saitama, Japan

Kasumigaseki Country Club

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

Q. Talk about the heading into the final round of the Olympics with the lead. Talk about how that's going to feel.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's been a fun week, in a good position going into tomorrow. Today obviously you were picking on me, I hit my first fairway on 8. That summed up my day. I need to go hit the range, unfortunately. I'll be as quick as possible in here.

Q. Considering how you're hitting it off the tee, did that surprise you from what you went through on the range and do you feel like you got away with one today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Golf is funny, you kind of have to fall back on parts of your game when other parts aren't working. I think I feel like yesterday I wouldn't say I was firing on all cylinders but things were clicking kind of coming home and, man, was it a different day today. So I'm going to try and get some better feels on the range going into tomorrow.

Q. What club was it on 18?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That was a 9-iron.

Q. Speaking of 18, how good is it to end on a shot like that and a hole like that when you're tied for the lead three way and then you birdie to separate yourself a little bit?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's a great hole. It's just tough. Today was a little bit easier with the wind down off the right. Kind of favorable for my tee shot. Once I was able to get squared away. So once that hole is into the wind it's got some teeth.

Q. When you talked yesterday about staying in the moment, when there's like 10 guys within three shots of the lead, does that help you stay in the moment?



XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's good practice. Yeah, I think based on what we talked about last night I thought I did a pretty good job. Today could have gotten away from me, I could have had a bad attitude or whatnot, but hung tough, fell back on certain parts of my game to hold me tight.

Q. One early comment, on some of the par putts early that could have kept it from going the other direction.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, your putter doesn't know how bad you're swinging it, it's a completely different part of the game. So I made that joke to my caddie on 9 saying, if I can roll this in, it's ugly, but we're getting it done right now. So I would like tomorrow to be a little bit more fun all around.

Q. Seeking that first win since Kapalua, is there something that you maybe figured out that you're eager to put into practice maybe mentally tomorrow for handling trying to win again?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. I think I just been trying to get my head in the right space. I haven't really been in contention in quite some time, so clearly being more patient and kind of hanging tight and not really letting too many things bother you has been helping. So I think tomorrow I've been in that position a few times now, which is always a good thing and I think the more I can get in that position the better I'll be and I'll just have to fall back on some old experience tomorrow.

Q. Hitting the range in a few minutes, how active will your dad be in that process, considering you're in the midst of competition versus how much is it you trying to find feelings for tomorrow?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Fortunately, he's been my only swing coach, so I can tell you it's probably one of four things. Hopefully I don't have to hit too many balls to find, to run through all four of those things. And he may have seen some things, that's why he's out here for these moments. When I clearly wasn't able to sort of figure it out myself I need sort of an eye to let me know if I missed something. So we'll just do a little tune-up.



Q. Would it give you some confidence tonight knowing that despite driving it like that you're still top of the leaderboard and still in the place everyone wants to be?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I mean the confidence just basically comes on I put a lot of pressure on certain parts of my game and they kind of held up so that's always a good thing. All I had to do was miss a few putts and I would be two or three back right now. But when you're trying to win you got to do some weird things sometimes and I was able to do that today.

Q. Did it feel any different to you today from leading another tournament?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: In all honesty, no. I think tomorrow may feel a little different. There's a little bit more on the line than what we normally play for and you're obviously trying to represent your country to the best of your ability. So that's why I'll be on the range tonight.

Q. Obviously a lot of reduced entourages for athletes out here because of the COVID protocols. How important is it that you're able to have your dad as your coach here so you can go and work on something this evening?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's nice. I've been sort of self-physioing and I haven't really -- I've seen my dad every day, but we haven't really worked on a whole lot, so I'm sure he's excited -- I figured I would hit it bad today to give him something to do.

Q. Hideki is playing after COVID, this is first time after COVID, so how is your impression of his game and play today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, he seems to be fine. I forgot, I was made aware that he had COVID but teeing it up out here he seemed strong and seems normal and he seems himself. So luckily he wasn't hit too hard by it.

Q. Can you compare -- you played with Hideki at Masters week on final day, so could you compare what of his game at the Masters game and here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, he obviously was firing on a lot of cylinders when he won the Masters. I think he's maybe not as in his realm of perfection, maybe he's not hitting it as good as he would like to, but he's one back and the same can be said for him, he didn't have his best stuff potentially too and he made some nice putts to stay in it. So we sort of played -- unfortunately we fed off each other

in the wrong way and we're going to be playing tomorrow as well, so hopefully we can get off to a better start.

Q. I would like to know your feeling to play with Hideki because at the Masters you played last group on the last day and unfortunately you didn't do so well. So what's your motivation this time?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, you just had to bring it up, huh? No, it's all good. Yeah, it's good. Hideki's a great player, he's our current Masters champion. I plan on wearing that jacket some day as well and whenever you play against the world's best you happen to see them a lot. So we're playing together tomorrow in the final group and I assume we'll be playing in more final groups for years to come.

Q. Basically following your group today there's a lot of people in blue shirts, a lot of Japanese people. Do you feel like you are a villain in any way? Are you like they're not necessarily cheering for you or did you feel supported out there?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, I feel supported. They clap and they applaud whenever I hit a nice shot. So I mean, hey, if I was Japanese and I had our best showing trying to win a gold medal, I would be pulling for him too. But unfortunately I'm not, so I'll be pulling for myself.

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