

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Tuesday, 30 July 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

USA

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

MARK WILLIAMS: We welcome Xander Schauffele to the media center here at the Men's Golf Competition of the 2024 Paris Olympics. You're no stranger to Olympic golf, Xander. What's it feel like to come back to a tournament three years later?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Feels like a brand new tournament. I think with the build and the anticipation of fans and I think just coming to and from the hotel, you just see people everywhere. So the feel of everything and willing I think you're starting to get the real feel of a lot of what the Olympics is about.

So I'm going to a swim match tonight which I'm looking forward to to get some more motivation and good vibes.

MARK WILLIAMS: Obviously coming in here on a heater, winning a couple majors this year in your most recent event at The Open Championship. How do you prepare for this event after a season like that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: The same way. Yeah, just try to keep doing what we're doing. Last time I played, I didn't know the course either. So I've seen a little bit -- I saw a little bit of Troon going into there and saw a little bit of Le Golf National coming into here.

For the most part, played 36 holes now in preparation and going to play nine more holes tomorrow. Getting a feel for everything and the speed of the greens and things of that nature.

Q. A question a lot of guys have received over the last however many months is how do you rank a medal with a major, with the players, with other wins, and we asked Jon Rahm that this morning and he said that's actually a great question for Xander since you've won majors now and you've won a Gold Medal. Is there an easy way of explaining where it all sits in your mind?



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XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Not really. It is a good question but it's tricky. Golf was in the Olympics and then it was out of the Olympics. So I think a lot of the kids were watching Tiger, or if you're a little bit older, you're watching Jack or Arnie, the older legends of the game. You're watching them win majors.

It's kind of different. For me it's very personal, my relationship with my dad, the relationship my dad and I have with golf, a lot of is sort of surround his teachings of when he was trying to be an Olympian.

Then the majors are sort of what I grew up watching. They are two very different things to me. I think the Gold Medal, it's been marinating nicely. Maybe in 30, 40 years, it's something that's really going to be special as it gets more traction and it kind of gets back into the eyes or into the normalcy of being in the Olympics. It's still so young coming off of, I don't know, what was it, like 1903 was the last time it was in the Olympics? Or something like that.

Q. Doug knows all that information.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Is that correct?

Q. 1903. It's always in '04, '08, that kind of stuff.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: 1904 maybe.

Q. Probably some virus back then you were thinking much.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, maybe. Thanks, Doug.

Q. I have a follow-up before Doug gets going. In the last three years, if you can roll your mind through the last three years, the Olympics being such a personal thing between you and your dad, was there a moment the last three years where that weight really sank in, something really kind of clicked, I guess?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: We have the police here with Dougie, so be careful with how you ask it or say it.

I'm not sure. I think when I look back to being on the



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podium, it would have been really cool with fans but it was really intimate having my dad be the only person that was there with me besides Austin.

So when you hear the anthem and you come off green and I'm able to sort of share the medal with him, it was kind of as cool as it gets for me, being something that I can deliver to him that he's always wanted. I think for starters, just being an Olympian is something he always wanted, so that was already a huge delivery just in that sense.

But I'm not sure. We haven't -- there are times where my dad and I, it will just be my family and we will reminisce a little. It's always a warm feeling.

Q. Spinoff on Sean. You had already won some good tournaments before Tokyo. Not a major yet. Was that the greatest thing you'd done in your career until -- it's still individual, I guess.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'd say so.

Q. Anyway. Second question. Do you feel more like an Olympian this year than did you in Tokyo just because of being able to go places more than just lodging to golf course?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Good question, Doug. I'm not sure. I haven't really thought about that to be honest.

To me, it's still new. I am one. But to me, I don't know, I grew up watching gymnastics or diving or swimming or track in the Summer Olympics. I watched more summer Olympics because of my dad.

Golf, it's an interesting game. It's an interesting sport. You're not sprinting across the finish line where we're sort of playing four days and it's a little bit longer of a race.

I'm not sure. I think once the fans are here, maybe, versus Tokyo, before I can compare the two.

Q. You went nowhere last time?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: We weren't allowed to. Some people got in trouble for trying to sneak around.

Q. Did you watch other sports from your room?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it was in the hotel room. It was all in Japanese and I can't really speak any Japanese. It was tricky. Is.

Q. Hope this isn't too long a question. Can you take us through the transition of your dad being your

primary coach to his role now? I know you had spoken about it before those last Olympics a little bit about wanting to make that transition. Did you delay it because what have meant that to him, and just take us through the reasons and why now.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Stall I short with the delay part of it?

Q. You spoke about transitioning away from your father to another swing coach before the Olympics. Did you delay that decision because you knew what those Olympics meant to your dad and that would allow him to be there?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, I mean, my dad, starting off, just like every kid, your parents, you have your foundation and you have the people that helped you get to this point. All of us pros know how big of a team effort it is to getting us up here to get us competing every week and to get us playing really well.

My dad was no different. He was wearing, call it ten different hats as we would call it. One was being a dad; another one was being a coach; one was being concierge; one was transportation. The list goes on, mental coach, swing coach.

I'm 30 years old now, and once you have success, it's always my goal, I want my dad to be happy and I want him to do what he wants to do. I don't think -- he's going to turn 60 this year. I don't think he wants to sit on the range, 95 degrees and watch me pound golf balls all day. I wouldn't want to do that when I'm 60.

We'll see, I guess. As the years have gone on, I've been trying to take hats way from him just so he can relax a little bit and enjoy his life a little bit more since he's helped me so much.

There's no real delay, I would say. My dad was the first one to tell me, "We'll see how far we can get as a team in this game of golf." He's like, "I have no clue how far we're going to get." For me to be a consistent top 10 player in the world with my dad as a coach is a huge credit to my dad for what he built and what he made me, I guess.

Chris is someone I've known for quite some time. It was a pretty easy transition. He's a really good communicator, and my dad has kind of known him for a bit, too. So once we linked up and had conversation, it was a pretty smooth go, and luckily the changes were implemented quickly and obviously have bore some good fruit.

Q. Did you winning that Olympic medal ease that

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transition for your father? I was standing next to him. He was bawling.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: If you look at the majors, I think he still feels very much a part of it. He was pretty much bawling through the last two. No matter if he had ten hats on and he has one hat on to no hat; he's always going to have one hat being my dad. But since he has two hats right now, he's still very much a part of my team and he's always going to be my dad and he's always going to be very proud. I'm very lucky to have a good relationship with him.

Q. As you reflected on those two major wins, is the difference in winning and not winning subtle or is there something that you feel you've done a lot better than you had been doing before?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It feels subtle. You know, I think since I've been working with Chris, there's been a few answers that he's had. You know, my dad and I have talked about it. There's some answers that we need -- or some questions we had that we didn't really have some answers to, and Chris has got a really good background in biomechanics and has been coaching for a very long time. All really good coaches, I've seen a lot of different things, and they are more likely to have an answer.

My dad has only coached me -- he was a teaching pro but he wasn't teaching any pros, really, for that matter, more kids. My dad loves working with kids. That's why -- going back to the early part of this, my dad is the "I don't know how far I can take you" type. That's why he had that feeling. That's why it's really cool that we were able to make it as far as we made it.

But yeah, I think it feels subtle, the changes, and yeah, always refer -- even when I wasn't winning, I just said, I was going to keep putting myself in position until I got comfortable. I was very uncomfortable still at the PGA but surprisingly more comfortable at The Open.

I look back now on all the majors that I played in, the one I won and all the ones I lost, and I think they all played a part in my success.

Q. Did you spend the last week, did you play any golf last week, or did you spend more time celebrating, and can you just -- to the extent you want to share what you did --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, sure. I don't really drink much alcohol. So three days in a row drinking was quite a feat for myself, and the recovery that was also slow.

I wear like an Oura ring or WHOOP, whatever you want to call it, I wear an Oura ring and for me, tracking my sleep every day. Took a while for me to get my scores back to where they normally are, put it that way.

I was in Portugal with Collin and we had a really nice time there. I think each of us played golf for three days. Yeah, it was fun. Didn't really -- we had all our girls with us and we had nice team bonding, I'd say. Had fun matches on the property there. It was a really, really chill -- as chill as I would have wanted it, especially after a really tough stretch.

Q. Scottie had a lot of complimentary things to say about you and your win at Troon, and he also drew some similarities with the two of you, and one of the things he said is if you'd lost by one instead of winning, he wouldn't have known the difference of how you carry yourself. Is that all about emotion? Is that all about a steadiness of emotion on and off the course, or is it just on the course?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I try to be consistent through and through. You know, something my dad talked to me a lot about -- I've heard Scottie talk about how golf doesn't define him, and he just wants to be the same guy with wife, with his kid, with all his friends at home, and he pretty much is the same guy. We just played nine holes today. He's very ho-hum and he's the same guy. Just flights every shot he hits.

For me, it's not too different. My dad a long time ago was saying, you can't really be someone else on the course and not that person off the course. That was a lesson I tried to learn quickly, and it was some adjusting to do but for the most part, I try to, like you said, be steady pretty much on and off the course to the best of my ability. There's a lot of decisions to be made while I'm on the course.

So usually when I'm off, I try to let my wife make some more of those. I'm all tapped out on decision-making.

Q. In Tokyo, when you made the 4- or 5-footer to win the Gold Medal in Japan where you have history, and looked like you just tapped in in a casual Wednesday game. Do you ever express emotion, and do you find it weird when you watch the other Olympic sports and how much passion they show and then look at what you guys do out there?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I internalise a lot of it. If you had a heart rate monitor on me at the Olympics, it would have been thumping. It would have been moving. I may look calm on the outside, but at the end of the day I'm trying to get the job done the best way I know how.

I've just never been a guy -- maybe if I'm in a casual environment, I'll maybe run my mouth at you, but it's golf. This is a gentleman's game. So I'm not going to be running my mouth at any of my competitors while I'm playing against them. That's more for my friends at home or a fun money game like today.

It was a five-foot putt in Tokyo. I knew I had a pretty good chance of making it, and I just needed to read it right. As I'm not sitting there thinking about how I'm going to celebrate this thing. I'm sitting there thinking how I'm going to make this putt so I can win the Gold Medal. That's all that matters.

It was a relief when I made it. And so you know, I have my moments where I'm by myself where I'll feel very happy, very excited and elated, but it's very much internalised while I'm competing. I don't have the quick spike to do a fist pump or throw my arms up or do something like that.

At the PGA, was utter relief because the ball went in and I was stressed out.

Q. There was a lot of talk before golf came back to the Olympics of what was the right format. Do you think what we have right now is the right format? And then tied to that, there's some discussion about a mixed-team event, I think the IOC is deciding early '25 whether that's something that will be offered in '28. Thoughts on either of those?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I feel like traditional, as I get older, I start to look at things, I'm probably more traditional than not. So I have no problem with a 72-hole format. It seems to be fine.

I think having a match-play event would be kind of weird. So that's just my take on that.

Then with the co-sex play, I'm a big advocate of don't knock on it until you try it. My only issue with it would be sort of the run of events; it being two weeks in a row. If you take it for what we have now, we are playing this tournament, we have one week off and then we have three weeks in a row for our Playoffs. It would be sticky to do two tournaments in a row and because of that, you may lose some guys.

Q. They talked about a 36-hole --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's still more golf. Even if we were to play -- it would be one day in between maybe and then I start 36 holes, and then you get back with four days to go, three weeks of Playoffs in a row is a lot.

Q. Is your dad here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: He is.

Q. Have you been to the double-wide trailer in Kauai?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No. His container, I have not. I told him I'm only going to go when there's structure up because I'm not going to stay for the container.

Q. When you were growing up, you mentioned watching the Olympics. Did he make you watch the decathlon? Are you a decathlon expert?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No. One of my trainers in San Diego, she actually works with a heptathlete. When I was in San Diego more -- I'm in Florida now so I don't see her as much. When I was in San Diego, she was helping a heptathlete and maybe more aware of what was happening.

With my dad, I was always aware of it. I'd turn it on but I always liked to watch what everyone else liked to watch, the 100-meter, the 200-meter, the hurdles, long jump, high jump, pole vaulting, that kind of stuff. We wouldn't turn it on for just that one event.

Q. Nobody ever really gave much thought to the qualifying for this since it started but with Bryson not here, it's sort of come up. Just wondering where you stand on that. Should they do it different or is this just something that needs to be resolved to make that work?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, my goal was to qualify for this team. I don't really -- you know, I'll look at the requirements and as long as I'm in it, then I'm going to try my best to qualify for it and that's what I did.

In terms of making it better, I haven't put a whole lot of thought. Bryson obviously played really well and has played well in the majors overall, and won the U.S. Open in fashion. So I'm not sure. I'm not sure how to include or rank events and those things. That would be for someone else to figure out.

Q. Did you have the same teammate for your money match today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I did. We lost. We actually got crushed today. Beat him yesterday, though. So we're all square. One more round.

Q. Have you bumped into the equestrian since it's

next door to you guys?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: My wife and Austin's wife were feeding the horses yesterday. It wasn't the racing horses, but yeah there's a ton of horses on property there. I know the equestrians are right next door at the Palace. I'm not into horses, but I'm imagining it's got to be the sickest venue of racehorses if I was into it.

MARK WILLIAMS: Appreciate it, Xander

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