

PGA Championship

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Valhalla Golf Club

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: 2024 PGA champion Xander Schauffele is with us now. Xander, first of all, congratulations. How does it feel to hoist your first Wanamaker Trophy?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It feels amazing. Just a wide range of emotions for me. Very satisfying win. I really can't wait to get back and celebrate with my team.

Q. You said this week that not winning makes you want to win more. How determined were you to become a major champion?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I mean, I've become very patient not knocking off any wins in the last couple years. The people closest to me know how stubborn I can be. Winning, I said it earlier, is a result. This is awesome. It's super sweet. But when I break it down, I'm really proud of how I handled certain moments on the course today, different from the past.

Q. How tough was it with that battle with Bryson already posting 20-under?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I assumed -- my goal was to get to 22 today. I told Austin when we turned, if I could get to 22, I think someone is going to have to beat me.

I really did not want to go into a playoff with Bryson. Going up 18 with his length, it's not something that I was going to have a whole lot of fun with.

I was able to capture that moment there, getting up-and-down on 17 was really big, and then that chip there on 18 was big for me, as well. I just kept telling myself I need to earn this, earn this and be in the moment, and I was able to do that.

Q. What were your emotions like when that putt was on its way on 18?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I was pretty nervous. I walked

up, I saw a little left to right. I kept reading it, kept kind of panning. Started to look right to left to me and I thought, oh, my gosh, this is not what I want for a winning putt. Fortunately, it was uphill, it was six feet-ish. I ended up playing it straight. It did go left, caught the left side. Just so much relief. When it lipped in -- I don't really remember it lipping in, I just heard everyone roaring and I just looked up to the sky in relief.

Q. Can you walk us through your second shot on 18, including what you thought when you saw where it finally finished.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, 17 and 18 were kind of weird for me. 16, I hit a really good drive, had mud on the right side of my ball. Had an 8-iron in, wasn't able to be super aggressive just because of the mud there. Kind of hung it out to the right. Mud didn't affect it.

17, I just didn't hit it high enough. I hit it hard enough, just not high enough, and it kind of hit the lip in the bunker there, wasn't a great lie. So really happy with that.

18, I just kept telling myself, man, someone out there is making me earn this right now. I just kept grinding. I get up there and just kind of chuckled. I was like, if you want to be a major champion, this is the kind of stuff you have to deal with. So I dealt with it, and happily was able to push that thing up. My only concern was sort of shanking it from more of a baseball swing.

Q. Your major record before you got here from the outside always looked deeply impressive. Did you look at it that way, or were you more apt to look at it as lacking?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't think I'd ever look at it as lacking. I looked at it as someone that is trying really hard and needs more experience. All those close calls for me, even last week, that sort of feeling, it gets to you at some point. It just makes this even sweeter. I told Todd Lewis, he asked me how I felt about the week, I said, it'll make my next win even sweeter. I know it's a major, but just winning in general this is as sweet as it gets for me.



Q. You've had the narrative thrown at you for at least the last few months, maybe the year. I know you said it wasn't bothering you, but let's be honest now; how annoying was it to hear from us over and over again, when is it going to come, and how did you use that as fuel?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Definitely a chip on the shoulder there. It just is what it is at the end of the day. You guys are asking the questions, probing, and I have to sit here and answer it. It's a lot easier to answer it with this thing sitting next to me now, obviously.

It's just fuel, fuel to my fire. It always has been growing up, and it certainly was leading up to this.

Q. You always, at the beginning of your career, fed off the underdog status. You almost had a lull when you became elite somewhat winning. How did you get back to believing the underdog again?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I referred to it earlier. All of us are climbing this massive mountain. At the top of the mountain is Scottie Scheffler. I won this today, but I'm still not that close to Scottie Scheffler in the big scheme of things.

I got one good hook up there in the mountain up on that cliff, and I'm still climbing. I might have a beer up there on that side of the hill there and enjoy this, but it's not that hard to chase when someone is so far ahead of you.

Q. I know as an athlete you always have to believe in yourself and believe that you're going to win, but was there ever a moment that you maybe doubted that this major championship win would come when you look at all the great players out there who don't have major titles?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I believe in positive self-talk. I will tell myself, I'll speak to myself. I just kept doing it. When you believe something enough, it'll happen.

I never really -- it starts to wear on you, I'd say, and that's kind of what I told Austin. I really want to make sure I make the right decisions. I don't want to get impatient. I believed in what I can do, and this is just fruits of it.

Q. How key was it for you to post those back-to-back birdies after the lone bogey that you had on 10?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's not like -- I've made a stupid bogey before and I've hit a really good shot after that. Today I finally made those putts. I finally had enough pace or it lipped in or whatever you want to call it, it was

my moment, and I was able to capitalize on some good iron shots coming in.

In those moments, you can kind of feel it, and in the past when I didn't do it, it just wasn't there, and today I could feel that it was there.

Q. Following up on that, what did you tell yourself after the 10th? And when you got up to the 11th green I believe Viktor had pulled even at the top and there was a scoreboard --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I was looking at it. Typically -- someone me like has pretty much tried everything, to be completely honest, that hasn't won in two years. You try not to look at the leaderboards until the back nine, you try not to look at them early, you try not to look at them at all.

Today I looked at them. I looked at them all day. I really wanted to feel everything. I wanted to address everything that I was feeling in the moment.

I thought I had the lead, so I when looked up at the board I was like, oof, I saw Hovie was at 19, so I was back into chasing mode, and I knew that putt was really big in the tournament.

Q. What were the moments that you felt today you handled differently?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I didn't get frustrated. On the first hole I just kept telling myself, just be calm, be patient, put a good stroke on this one. That went in.

On 3, I thought I hit a good putt, it looked like it kind of bounced to the right in some sort of mark that I didn't see, that I didn't fix, and it lipped out.

Made that good putt on 4. Missed that one on 3.

Then on 5, I left that short.

I just kept telling myself that -- just weather the storm.

I knew that birdies had to be made, so there was some sort of aggression that I knew coming into today. It wasn't like a tournament round where I could kind of sit back and shoot 2- or 3-under. It just wasn't going to be enough. I knew that I needed to have some pace on my putts, some more aggressive lines coming into pins.

That putt on 5 -- sorry, 6 was big for me. That par putt was big.

Q. When people would call you the best player never to win a major, how did you view that statement?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just noise. That's what I think. I thought I was. Not that people saying it made me think that. I just felt like I've done enough work, I'm good enough to do it. I just needed to shut my mind up and actually do it.

Q. Your golf swing is a little bit different maybe than it was a year or two ago. How did those changes on this golf course this week help you sit next to the trophy?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, all year actually. It's been -- this is probably the most comfortable I've felt with some of the changes that Chris was able to implement. They weren't big changes, just getting the club a little bit more on plane up top was key. Shoulders maybe a little bit steeper. I tend to go a little bit flat and a little laid off.

I felt like last week -- there was some intimidating tee shots there. I was able to hit some good drives. I pulled on that this week, knowing that the fairways are soft, so if you hit a good drive, it's going to pretty much end up where it goes.

Yeah, it's been amazing working with Chris. He's been awesome, and definitely a contributing factor to me holding this thing today.

Q. Was there a moment where you felt the magnitude of the tournament? Was there a certain point in the round where you felt like, all right, this is big, this is a major, this is do-or-die time?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: On 6, I felt like 6 to 7 was a really big stretch for me. I saw a bunch of guys putting that thing in the morning. There was mud on my ball. It was like into the grain, it was uphill. I saw DJ actually in coverage putt it up to two feet, and I was like, oh, that doesn't look that bad. Then I bobbled my putt up the hill and it started bouncing early, and with the Zoysia it's pretty dangerous to do that. I really calmed myself. I just said, greens are a little bit bumpy, just put a good stroke on it, and the rest is history. I was able to roll that one in, which was really big.

Then that putt on 7, too, and that sort of calmed me a little bit.

Then I was actually pretty calm when I made that putt on 9.

Then 10 I was a little greedy trying to hit that shot. I'd say that early stretch for me was really big.

Q. What will it mean for you to go back to Paris and

the Olympics now as a major champion?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just a cherry on top. It's totally separate to competing in the Olympics. It definitely helps with the qualifying process. That was my goal, obviously, was to qualify. The U.S. Team is a strong one. It's a hard one to qualify for. I imagine this win probably secures me into qualifying for the Olympics. That's a whole different ballgame, winning that one. But definitely be able to pull some confidence from this thing.

Q. You talked about wanting to celebrate and looking forward to celebrating with everyone who was here. They were obviously super excited for the win. Can you tell us who is here and how influential or great have they been for your life and your golf?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. My uncle is my agent. He's been with me from the beginning of the year. My brother cooks for me. He's not a professional cook, but he can make some tasty food, so he's been willing to help me. Hopefully, he stays out with me a little bit longer. He just got engaged.

My wife, she's sort of the rock in my life. She's constant for me. My two dogs. I had an old buddy and his girlfriend travel down from New York. I think you saw probably Max's caddie Joe was there. He's really close with Austin. I'm good buddies with Joe, and Dave, Taylor Moore's caddie, as well. Those are the people that I saw coming off the green, and then Chris was there, as well. He kind of hung around and was here for it, which was awesome.

Q. Your dad has been such a part of this journey. Is it a little bit odd to not have him here in the biggest win, and how much is he in your head as you're battling today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, he was. He crept into my mind yesterday during an interview. I just said, I'm going to have to sneak back to that, commit, execute, accept. That's something that he's engrained in me since I was about nine years old. I was actually able to call him when I was standing, waiting to walk onto the 18th green. He was a mess. He was crying on the phone. It made me pretty emotional. I told him I had to hang up because I had to walk down. I couldn't show up looking like the way I was.

Yeah, my parents have -- they're not here this week, but they know how important they are to me. My dad, his goal -- he's been my swing coach and my mentor my entire life, and his goal really was to -- just like any good dad would want, just to set your kid up for a successful future. He really meant that. He was like, what capacity am I going to help you this week. He sent me positive texts throughout

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

the week, all week, even last week, as well.

Now that I'm working with Chris, he feels like he can kind of take his hands off the wheel. He trusts him a lot, I trust him a lot.

My dad is at that stage in his life, I really want him to be happy, and I know this is going to bring him a ton of joy where he's at in Hawai'i right now.

Q. Do you remember him ever crying about anything in your golf?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: My dad is actually -- he's referred to as the ogre, but he's a big teddy bear. Steve Stricker wins a tournament and he's crying. My dad is sitting there right on the couch crying with him. That's the kind of guy he is.

Q. You had a wonderful career, and I wonder, as you reflect back on the back few years, what do you feel has been the biggest hurdle to overcome to get to this point, to this magnificent moment in your life and career?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I'm a big believer of getting the right foundation, the right people around you, having a good team around you. I believe that if you put in the hard work and you let yourself do what you think you can do, you're going to have some fruits to the labor.

To be specific about it, I'm not really sure, to be honest. I've felt like I've been on this sort of trending path for quite some time. I really had to stay patient and keep the self-belief up, and I was able to do both those things.

Q. I know one of your sayings has been a steady drip breaks the stone. I imagine this is what it looks like --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's actually what my dad texted me last night. In German though. I had to ask him what the translation was.

Q. Do you know how to pronounce it in German?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I can look it up, but probably not.

Q. I imagine that's just something that you guys have shared is his sayings over the years. Is that kind of true?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, yeah. There's been some famous German philosophers, and my dad, he was a bit of a reader growing up. I'm sure that's where he got a

lot of them from. He's definitely put them in my brain.

When I hear the U.S. versions of them they sound super foreign. When I hear one, it's kind of like, oh, that kind of sounds like this one I know, but that's just my dad being my dad and coming from Germany.

Q. Why weren't you looking forward to a battle with Bryson in a playoff?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just 18. It's like a driver, pitching wedge for him, or like a 9-iron maybe? I don't even know. If he tomahawks a draw off the water it's literally going to be like a driver, 9-iron maybe -- you can ask him -- 8-iron. It's just one of those things, if you run that stat in your head, who has the advantage, it's the guy who hits it further. If we're playing like a long par-3 or a short par-4 or something like that, maybe I'd feel like I have an edge, but I kind of calculate those things in my head and I knew it was important to take advantage of that.

Q. Does it add anything to this victory that you just posted the lowest 72-hole score in the history of a major championship, or you wouldn't care whatever the winning score was?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, it's just the weather that came through. Valhalla is a big property, and the weather really -- and the fog and all those things. If every day was like today, I think the greens would have been firmer, the fairways would have been firmer, it would have been harder to hit them, they would have been rolling off into the rough. Just had to take what the course was going to give me. Just getting to 21 just had to be done, and for it to be a part of history is obviously pretty cool.

Q. Your ability to put last week behind you quickly this week, there was a focus about you. What kind of factor was that in getting this done?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I actually used last week as sort of fuel. It was some of the best ball-striking I've had in quite some time, shaping it right to left, left to right. I knew that this course was sort of -- you had to do those things. You had to hit it far, you had to shape the ball correctly, and it was going to be sort of a -- it turned into, not a putting contest, but whoever can hit it closest from the fairway with their irons from distance, because it was just kind of plugging on the greens. I kind of used that as fuel, and it calmed me a little bit knowing I'm coming into a major in good form.

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