

TOUR Championship

Wednesday, September 1, 2021

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference



TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: We'll get started. You're a past champion of this event, 2017. Can you talk about your excitement to be back at a tournament where you've won?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. East Lake's been very kind to me. I've played a lot of good rounds here and it always is a nice feeling being on property. Obviously I was hoping to be a little bit higher up in the playoffs, throughout the playoffs, I should say, getting to this point. But I'm hopeful to make up as much ground as possible.

THE MODERATOR: Your excitement just to be back at the FedExCup playoffs, what it means to be at this final event, the continuing stretch in the course of the season. It's been a great season for you. So thoughts on coming to a place like here.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I was trying to say that a second ago, just saying how much it means to be here at East Lake. It means you've had a pretty good year being one of the final 30 guys and it's definitely a goal for everyone just to make it back here. Whether you're pleased or not with how or what you've done all year, you can kind of hang yourself up on that and say, it was good enough, and it's definitely a good accomplishment.

THE MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. How many holes did you play today? Did you have a match and if you did, can you tell us what happened? Because we have been bored waiting on you.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I played nine holes. I had a match with Pat. We tied. Very anti-climatic. So that was it.

Q. Speaking of Pat, he had some interesting thoughts on the Player Impact Program, and you guys are a little bit cut out of the same clot and then I've yet to see any TikToks of you or anything like that. What is your feeling, do you know what you're ranked? Would you like to find out? And what is your overall view on it?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'm not sure what Pat said, in all honesty. We kind of just played and we had a few, he had his whole team out there, and I had most of my team out there, so we didn't really talk about anything that way. I would love to know what was said.

Q. You can go read it, but, yeah.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. You know, it's, I was one of the first to say I sort of felt like it's created an opportunity to, I wouldn't say, like, push for bad behavior, but it's sort of -- let me think here. I'm not trying to step on my own toes -- but I think it's potentially created this sort of mentality out here to sort of get likes or get certain things and I think us players, we don't know where we sit on the list, so you just kind of push and push and push and hope that you're on the list. I have no clue where I am on this list. I can guess who would be in the top-10. I don't know, there's a metric of five things. You know, we have been informed by the TOUR, which has been nice, but it's sort of outside of what we really know, so maybe my agent knows better than me and just isn't telling me because I would be disappointed in the result. But usually wins solve certain problems and I think if you win enough you're bound to be on that list, so that's sort of how I have tried to approach it.

Q. One last thing on the playoffs. You've been around these long enough to know that every week counts in terms of coming into the TOUR Championship and are you're disappointed about your play last week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I was pretty pooped. My brain was doing scrambled eggs. I like to pride myself on attitude and having a good one, and it was, man, was it a hard one for me last week. I was not in good form.

So it was an expensive week of some. It was a good learning lesson. I knew I was going to be tired. I did Scottish. I did the British or The Open Championship. I did Japan, to Memphis, to straight through. So it was, I was aware, with playing the Olympics, I'm glad I was able to go over there and do what needed to be done. I can be happy about that, but it also was back and I was pretty exhausted last week and I think my attitude really, man, I really needed Webb Simpson there with me to hold my hand because I was struggling last week.

Q. Big five days ahead with the TOUR Championship

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then the Ryder Cup picks on Monday. I had a Steve Stricker question for you. What's your relationship like with him?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's fine. I think Strick and I know each other better than I probably would have anticipated just based on I played with Stricker in that Monday qualifier where him and, actually, Mario, his caddie at the time or for that event, we played 36 holes together. So that was a real treat for me. I got to know Tiz. I got to know Strick. I got to sort of watch him play and try his hardest because he wanted to qualify for his hometown event at Erin Hills.

So since then, I've sort of kind of talked to him during certain weeks, and he gave me a lot of confidence in some of the words he said to me after I had to go to a playoff there, and it's sort of, I think, that U.S. Open really kickstarted my career, in all honesty.

Q. Given his personality, what would you expect out of him as a captain?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think people see Stricker, the guy who may cry in an interview after he's won a tournament, but playing with him, there's a fire burning, and I think he is a really nice guy, but at the same time, I didn't know him very well until I played with him for those 36 holes and you really know a guy when he really, a top player, when he really wants to do something, and watching him compete and his fire and his competitive edge that he showed when he wanted to qualify for Erin Hills, and I think he won the qualifier or came in second or something like that, really showed to me that the guy's got some stuff under his sleeve.

And I'm really excited for him to be the captain on the Ryder Cup team and I think he's going to do a really good job and I think he has, he's not going to get pushed around with any political situation whatsoever. He's going to put his foot down, which is something I respect a lot.

Q. You played a practice round with Patrick and of course he's got this lead in a format that you guys really don't see. What are your thoughts on that two-shot lead or 10-shot lead? Does it, I mean, it matters, I guess, to an extent, but sort of how do you think about it as one of the chasers and how would you like to think about to have that lead that he does?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. That's the goal for the whole season is to have that lead. And at East Lake, it's not a very big one, but it does, I think, I don't really have an answer to sort of, I haven't really thought enough about or maybe not smart enough to come up with a correct answer

to come up with a correct or better format. I think there could be a better format. I know sort of why. There's been stuff that's happened in the past at this tournament that has pushed us to this format, and I think it's good for viewership. Everyone knows where everyone stands. There's no confusion with points and whatnot. So I think from a viewing standpoint, it makes a lot of sense.

I also think that with that two-shot lead potentially, if Pat plays really good golf, there's nothing that anyone can do and I think that's also, he would deserve to win regardless, obviously, if that was the case and it would be all said and done.

But I think, we talked in the past before and pat's someone that came in second place and ended up finishing in the 20s, I think, or 20-something. I also think that's a bit harsh, in all honesty. I know it's playoffs and we're trying to make it similar to other sports, but at the end of the day, and I understand people's, devil's advocate, I understand people's opinion on that, but at the end of the day, golf isn't other sports. When you make it to a finals or anything, and you lose, you finish in second place, you know what I mean?

So it's like, it's sort of tricky when you come to this tournament and you can be in the top-5 and then if you have sort of a weird week, because it's the back end, for whatever reason, it's golf, weird things happen and you fall all the way to 25th, to me, personally, I think that person deserves more than sort of what they got in the end. I think it's a bit harsh in terms of, in a golfing sense to sort of punish them that bad.

Q. How many back are you starting this year?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I have no idea. I'm at 2-under. There we go. It's a lot. It's sort of so much to where I just need to put my head down and it really doesn't matter what happens. I just need to be as clean and as perfect as I possibly can be and it's probably still not going to be enough, but I can fly up that leaderboard if I do that.

Q. You're not giving him strokes in your practice round today?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I thought he had to give me a couple strokes after his performance last week. He beat me by like 20 shots, so I was trying to edge him for a few, but he wouldn't budge.

Q. Is there any way that you and Patrick are not playing foursomes together at Whistling Straights?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm sure there's a way. Not one

that I would like to see. I think historically someone, Keith Mitchell came in the locker room the other day asking about the history behind the Ryder Cup, and of course, I didn't know any of the questions, but there was an interesting question that came up to me and that was sort of, who in the U.S. team has played the most together? And the answer was Patrick Reed and Jordan Spieth. They're the two that have ran the most together. To me, I don't know how successful they were running together, but I just think, on the European side, it was, I can't remember. It was two -- they had a prolific run basically on the European side. Keith Mitchell was telling me. I don't know enough of the history.

But, to me, I feel like if Patrick and I can continue to play really well and we can continue to be on teams together, we could be sort of a team that would kind of almost make history in terms of we get along really well and I think we can do really well together and we sort of mesh. And we didn't play perfect golf over the Presidents Cup, but it was a really good learning lesson for us, and I think we both went 3-2. Which isn't great. But we learned how to put points up on the board and I think if we could continue to run together, we would learn how to win and be a sort of strong team that the U.S. can rely on.

Q. I believe you guys were 2-0 in foursomes in Australia. That's not the easiest format and that's why it would make sense if you guys played together. I'm just curious, do you recall how it came together that you ended up playing four matches together that week? Did you ask to? Did it just sort of happen in practice?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think we asked to and it sort of just happened. We were really tired one afternoon and I think Freddie and Zach came up to us in a cart and said, Are you guys ready to run this afternoon? And we were exhausted and we looked at each other and go, Yeah, we would love to. So I think that was our foursome. We were losing that match and then we were down early in the foursomes match in the afternoon and ended up turning it around coming, we finished strong, winning that match. But I think it kind of just, we asked for it and then it kind of worked out with how everyone else was placed on the team.

Q. As you know it's an odd format, you're going to start eight shots back and Thursday morning. That said, given your history at this golf course if you had one place to start eight back would this be the place you would pick?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I guess. I think so. I mean, I would have to play a really hard golf course. I just, people

have asked me sort of what it is about this place and I've had first timers come in and ask me and I just tell them that you just, you can't fake it, you really have to be on top of your game. I've gotten in so many fights with my dad on the range here because I know how good you have to be around the property in order to be successful. This course really demands it and you can't really take any holes off. So if I had to pick a place, yeah, but if someone else sort of has the same mentality, then, man, the rest of the field's out of luck, or someone else starting ahead.

Q. Wanted to go back to Pat for a second. I know you both are Californians and I have no idea what the age is, I think he's a little bit older than you. I don't know if you guys played in college. But how did this relationship evolve? When did you guys first kind of start spending time together on and off the golf course?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I went to Long Beach State, so I know his coach, Jamie Mulligan. I played against Pat and Preston in college. There's a time I played with Pat actually at the old Fry's course, at Gilroy. My coach -- Pat was like No. 1 amateur in the world, I was a nobody. I think I shot 78, he shot 65. Pat was pretty much the same guy. He had me down for like a 71 or 72, he really just wasn't even watching me play golf, it must have been hard for him. But I told him, I was like, I actually shot like 78, I didn't shoot 71 or 72. I brought that up to him before and he started laughing and was like, Yeah, sounds like something I would do. I just sort of -- it was more so I just kind of knew everyone around him, have the same physio out here on the road and we just started, we sort of like to compete and play golf in a similar manner and ended up just we enjoy each other's company and we just play a lot of golf at tournaments.

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