

Sentry Tournament of Champions

Tuesday, January 5, 2021

Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA

Plantation Course at Kapalua

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Xander Schauffele

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thanks for having me.

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome the 2019 Sentry Tournament of Champions winner, Xander Schauffele, into our virtual interview room.

Xander, you won in 2019 and then you lost in a playoff last year. Just talk to us a little bit about how special this tournament is to you.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I always play well here, so I think it makes it that much more special. But I think being in Hawaii at the beginning of the year, typically have the family out -- I got Doug Ferguson is waiting in the lobby. Should I allow him in? Okay. I almost kicked him out. (Laughing.)

But, yeah, it's just, everyone has low expectations sort of, I mean, at the beginning of the year, probably more so than they admit, versus kind of middle to the end of the year. So I played well here and I just really enjoy coming here.

JOHN BUSH: Just, before we open it up to questions, let's talk a little bit about your goals for this year. The success that you've had over the last four years on TOUR, with two second place finishes and a third place finish in the FedExCup, just how much would it mean to finally win the FedExCup and is that your main goal going forward this year?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's definitely up there on the list. I'm very much so a day-to-day guy. I don't like to look too far ahead. So I've been day-to-day since -- I use that as a trick against my dad and other people who try to make me more goal oriented, just so I can kind of slack off. But being day-to-day sort of works more than not for me in the past couple years and it kind of keeps me grounded and not looking too far ahead.



So I got COVID and I got sick and all this stuff happened to me not too long ago, so I haven't really had time to sort of reassess my list of goals that I usually do on my phone or written down and just happy to be here and healthy as well.

JOHN BUSH: We're glad to have a healthy Xander here with us this week. We will open it up to questions.

Q. Can you walk us through what started on seven days before Christmas, how bad was it, what was going on in your mind, and when did you get your negative test?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: So I, my girl got it on the 16th. It was a bit of a scare. She woke up, it was a Tuesday, I believe. It was a Tuesday morning when she woke up, wasn't feeling -- sorry, Wednesday morning she got tested, Tuesday night she wasn't feeling great. I had a Callaway photo shoot on Wednesday. It became sort of a thing. I got texted, my agent got texted midway that she tested positive for COVID, so it was a bit of a scare at the photo shoot for everyone. Jon Rahm and Phil were there.

And I went and quarantined in a hotel away from her and my family for a couple days and then I came, because I woke up sort of -- felt totally fine for a couple days and woke up sick as a dog and dragged myself to the clinic, tested positive, and fortunately was able to quarantine at home with my dogs and my girl. So it was not very fortunate. I don't know how she got it. We traced everything. No one around her got it. My family didn't get it. So it's a weird deal. It's a bit scary just because there's so much unknown facts about the whole COVID process, I guess. But like I said, just happy to be here and slowly getting my strength back day-to-day.

Q. When did you get your negative test and how much have you been able to play and get your strength back, how close are you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: So the process was I just, I submitted my positive test to the state of Hawaii. They -- along with an exemption letter from Dr. Hospel here with the TOUR and that was enough to get me admitted into,



once I landed into Hawaii.

So I actually haven't been tested. It's kind of nice. I don't have to do the nose swab every week. I can just walk up and grab a lanyard. So take the positives out of it.

Q. How much have you been able to play?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I played, I got out on the 29th. That was my first day back and I played on the 1st. That was my only 18 holes and I played nine holes each day here. So minimal golf for me for the most part, which sucks, but it's nice to be playing again.

Q. Two questions: One, as it relates to fans and no noise, et cetera on a golf course, do you have any hope for when that might change? And more specifically, do you feel like you've made any type of an adjustment necessary to play without them in terms of your own adrenaline, energy, whatever you want to call that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: As soon as possible would be my hope. I think that's everyone's hope that I talk to. It's just good for our sport and our game and I think it just, it's better for competition, really. It sort of is that X factor that tournaments don't really have right now. It's sort of an inside competition amongst us. But when there are fans there everyone seems to -- it's just like everything just kind of feels like practice. Obviously once the gun goes off we're much more focus and whatnot, but in terms of preparation and things like that it is nice to have fans out. And what was your second question?

Q. I haven't asked it yet so you haven't missed anything yet.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You said you had two questions.

Q. I did. I'm getting ready to ask you the second one, which is going to be a killer because it goes beyond your day-to-day thinking. But as you look ahead generally as it relates to the majors -- and there's some courses that you've never seen before. Kiawah Island would come to mind as a place that you've never heard of. Is that something that you would go to ahead of time or do you find yourself just willing to show up and put the work in and go from there?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: If it's convenient enough, maybe I'll pop in. I haven't been one to sort of travel to play tournaments -- or courses. I like to prepare. I know when I'm playing well. I know when I'm rolling the ball well, chipping well, hitting it well, hitting my numbers. So golf is

pretty simple when you're playing well.

So I think when I'm not playing great maybe I'll show up a little earlier just to get a little more comfortable, but for the most part I -- I mean, I haven't won a major. I've played well in them. Maybe I do need to pick up the practice. I'm still trying to learn how to prepare the best, in all honesty. I ask veterans. I try to look at how guys prepare. But we have kind of figured something out with me being prepared to play, but for the most part it's still open to other ideas, I guess.

Q. It's only been four years, I guess, with you in the majors, but have you gone to a place ahead of time outside of Augusta or have you even gone to Augusta?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I went to Augusta once with my caddie. It was about 45 degrees and hailing. Still played, which he was very upset about. But we dragged around -- all the notes he took were absolutely washed up in his book. It was an experience that I was looking forward to for a long time.

But I haven't gone back for an early practice round since. So, no, to answer that question.

Q. Welcome back. My question is pretty simple: What are your impressions of the course here one year after the major refinements that were done prior to last season's, the 2020 event here? And if you could go back even further maybe to 2019, how much has the course developed to now? What are your impressions now?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: The course is in immaculate shape. It definitely looks like not too many people have played on it due to the whole COVID lockdown. So everything is very green, very lush. The greens are in incredible shape.

In the past years there may have been a few brown spots here and there, but it is one of the wettest parts on the planet here, so water is definitely not something they need too much of.

But it's a little soft, I would say, but I think the greens that were new and replaced were, or are now more settled in and maybe rolling better and a little bit more soft or more relatable to the other greens. So I think all in all, the course is looking great and it's definitely ready for competition.

Q. Glad you recovered. It sounded like a bit of an ordeal. Can you tell me with Christmas, if you were able to do it, the best gift you gave and the best one



you may have received was?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, what is the best Christmas gift that I gave? We're not really a big Christmas family. My girl's family, they have sort of, it's becoming more of a thing for myself just because it's special to her. So I didn't do anything outrageous. I didn't do nothing too crazy. But I can't think of anything overly special that was given back and forth, in all honesty.

But we did gifts, it was weird, man, we did gifts on like the 30th, I think. We had a Christmas tree up in our little foyer area in our building and it was nice to sit around there five days later.

Q. It's lucky you got to do anything at all, mate.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah.

Q. Despite all that, you feel pretty comfortable that you can contend again after a couple good years here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'm going to have to fall back on good memories. And I tried to walk up a few holes today just as a test. Definitely not in great shape, in all honesty. I took like three weeks off and then started golfing for like four or five days and then got COVID and had to quarantine for 10 days.

So kind of in a weird place physically, I should say. But mentally, I can fake it until I make it. So I'll have to fall back on some good memories from the past couple years.

Q. That gives you that underdog status you love so much.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I just like to sleep in that territory there.

Q. Even though you had a really good solid year last year, is it weird being at the Tournament of Champions without having won last year?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Officially, yes, it is very strange. I joked, I got COVID and the reason I am here is because of COVID, so there's always a couple ways to look at it. But, yes, it is very strange to play in a Tournament of Champions without an official win.

Q. Would you think you would, some people would say you might get an asterisk if you would win. Would that feel goofy or would that just be wrong?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. I got an asterisk for winning the TOUR Championship that counted in

certain things and not in others. So, you know, I'm all about entering weird categories, I guess. This is what I do.

Q. I think it was last year here that you had mentioned Webb's strokes gained attitude and I'm curious, what did you take from last year, other than the few runner-ups, and more frustration from ones that got away or confidence of being in contention and kind of how does that shape this expectations for this year?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I think last year was a good mental year to sort of build off of. It was one of my more consistent years on TOUR, even though I didn't win a tournament. I still think Webb is our leader in strokes gained attitude, so I'm still chasing him down. It's nice to have a leader of the pack, someone to chase. So it's just, to build off consistency is difficult, but if we can sort of give ourselves more looks like we did last year then keep knocking on the door until you knock it down is what they say, so I think that's sort of the mentality we're in.

Q. I'm really hung up on COVID thing. I just can't picture you quarantined for 10 days. I don't need a blow by blow of all 10 days, but how in the world did you pass the time?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I have two dogs and so they were going stir crazy. The first four days were very much on the couch and in bed. I live in a 2,000 square foot condo, so it's not like we have a whole lot of space to sort of stretch out or run around. But the first four days were bad. A lot of Call of Duty for about four nights. Watched some Hulu movies, started watching Fargo. Just, yeah, TV shows, having people -- good thing was, I'm lucky to have family, my brother lives six minutes away, we have a little foyer area and we'd lock up our dogs, throw them in there, my brother would take them on a walk, he would drop off food, water, everything we needed. So just fortunate my family was there to take care of my girl and I. But it was a bit, I think those last three days were really hard for me, because I just wanted to go out and golf and kind of get ready.

Q. No books?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I had two books that I looked at. I just ended up turning on my PlayStation. That was the only way to be social and socialize with a few of my friends. That was kind of it. So I figured I would go for the console versus the book.

Q. Have you been using Whoop yet?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I use an Oura Ring now.

Q. So it's similar. Have you been watching the data?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I, I saw the data when my heart and my heart rate and everything temperature and respiratory rate decided to go through the roof. So it was cool to see the numbers in real life, it wasn't cool that it was my number, they were my numbers.

JOHN BUSH: Xander, we appreciate your time. Best of luck.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thank you very much.

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