

The Sentry

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Kapalua, Maui, Hawaii, USA

Plantation Course at Kapalua

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome 2019 Sentry champion, Xander Schauffele, into the interview room here. You've obviously played well here. Can you talk a little bit about starting your season off in Maui?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's a special place, as always. I think this year is a little bit more unique with what happened. You can kind of feel it while you're here on property and on the island. I think everyone that's competing and everyone that's here with the event just feels super fortunate and I guess happy to be here and hopefully help out.

THE MODERATOR: Speaking of everything that took place here, Maui is a special place to you and your family. You've been giving back here with the recovery efforts. Can you talk a little bit about what you guys are doing?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I mean, I would say the islands in general are dear. I grew up on Kauai as a baby, from 0 to 2. Unfortunately, I don't remember a whole lot. But, yeah, obviously I was spurred on by my family to sort of make an effort here through the Maui Strong initiative to give back. I'm super happy that the TOUR was allowed to play. I know it's a bit rough and I think everyone's been relatively sensitive coming in and everyone is trying to do the right thing. I'm hoping the event can sort of generate a lot of awareness and just bring some eyeballs on sort of what happened and hopefully raise enough money.

THE MODERATOR: On Monday, you held an incredible junior clinic with some families that were affected by the fires. Can you talk a little bit about what that meant to you to be a part of something like that.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, anytime you're with working with kids, it makes you feel like a kid again. They're very blue-eyed and just happy and reminded me of when I was a kid trying to hit a golf ball, just really nervous to hit in front of people and then really excited once you get the ball airborne. I think in that moment sort of forgot what happened and what was happening and was able to sort of laugh and smile. So if I could provide a little bit of relief in

that way, that was awesome for me.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up for questions.

Q. I was at the clinic. It was super cool. I had a great time covering that. Tell me about, if you would, how aware is the whole group of players here? I don't want to ask you to speak for other guys, but is the level of knowledge of what's gone on -- obviously, you have to drive through the devastation to get here. How much would you say in general are the guys aware of how important this week is to, obviously, the fire survivors, fire relief efforts, Maui's comeback, all of that, if you could? I know that's a really wide-angled question, but how aware are the guys of all that stuff?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I want to say very aware. I know I'm not the only individual sort of making an effort. I know there's a few guys off the top of my head that I can think of that are either working with first responders doing sort of birdies and eagles, a dollar amount to go to charity, you start naming it. I mean, guys will get creative on how they can help and sort of which initiative to tack onto.

But overall, yeah, when you drive through from the airport, it's sort of like you don't really believe it until you see it, which is brutal. I don't think the governor and everyone else or the mayor would have sort of allowed us on this island if he didn't think it would be beneficial. So I think that's sort of what the TOUR stands for, is to give back and to make big charitable strides in moments like this, so I'm happy that we're able to support that.

Q. Does it kind of warm your heart that the PGA TOUR is all about charity, has been forever, but, man, when it's on island for a guy like me, I live here, and you see it from Sentry to you guys to the governor, the government, is this what the TOUR is? You've talked about it to me a couple times now. Is that what the TOUR is all about, do you think, mostly?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, there's been a lot of talks of other things happening, other competition and things of that nature, but growing up and sort of watching the TOUR, obviously you watch the top players compete and the sort



of Cinderella stories that occur, whether at any big event, but for the most part, when we sat through orientation, the TOUR and everyone that organized that had really spoke about the charitable efforts the TOUR does to give back and using us players as entertainment to push that forward.

So, yeah, I think sort of this is a really good way for the PGA TOUR to sort of show what it can do, and Sentry being an awesome sponsorship coming in here and sort of backing everything the TOUR is about is really cool as well.

Q. How do you feel about the state of pro golf entering 2024?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's tricky. Every day you wake up, you pretty much -- or me at least, I can speak to myself, I really try to help wherever I can and try to be effective, but when it comes to my personal golf, I really try to just dig in, really try and be selfish, really try and focus on what I can do to get better at playing golf. That's sort of why I love playing golf.

So a lot of distractions. It's been like that for quite some time. Everyone sort of has their opinion and everyone floats around, but I can just speak to sort of what I've been trying to do and that's really dig my head in the sand and try to get back to sort of letting the clubs talk.

Q. Is there anything that you're rooting for when it comes to the two sides coming together or not coming together or what that might look like?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Sort of similar to back, I guess, what was spoken about maybe a year or two ago, was sort of just having, like, a very clear outline of what's on the table, I guess. Whatever happens, as long as we're sort of aware of what we're doing as players, whether it's having representatives speak on our behalf or informing us or whatever that really looks like, but just being in the know, to an extent, and really feeling comfortable with who is sort of leading the charge whenever things are set up.

Q. What's your level of satisfaction now in terms of how much you know and how much you should know?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's really tricky, to be honest. Things are set up the way they're set up, and I think everyone's trying their best with how things are set up from 50 years ago or 60 years ago or 40 years ago however long ago it was really setup. There's some faults in there and I think some holes were poked into the system and now I think new things are trying to be set up again for the next 30, 40, 50 years, and I just want to be more a part of

the solution there than sort of digging into what's going wrong.

Q. I heard you gained a little bit of distance, made some club changes, driver, 3-wood, irons. Can you just walk through some of those changes?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, a new line of Paradym woods came out. They're kind of -- I would call them siblings to the old line of Paradym. Same as the irons. The irons are still the TCBs. So again, it seems like a sibling. It feels like I'm looking down at the same iron. The construction's just a one-piece versus sort of a two-piece head, so they sound a little bit more pure and solid.

Then the golf ball is identical. I think they just stamped a new logo on it. So it seems like there's a lot of new things in, but for the most part, I think that the woods are probably the biggest thing.

Q. How much bigger or stronger are you than when we last saw you? Was that an emphasis of yours?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I spoke about, in the past, how it's a fault of mine and an area I need to work on and, hey, it was hard for me. I took Bahamas off, which was tough. My caddie and wife and everyone that's part of my little crew that goes down to the Bahamas was obviously very bummed out for me not playing down there because it's like a vacation for everybody, except myself. But I took it off to sort of create this 10-week block for myself, and I really wanted to focus, again, myself, and put my head in the sand, and figured I might as well be as disciplined as possible and try to make some sort of gain in the distance department. So, yeah, I feel healthier. Also, last year I got hurt here, so...

Q. Is that related to the decision a little bit?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think so. It was a bit of a wake-up call. It was a bit of a sort of a freak accident almost, what happened, at that time. It was my first injury, and it was a big eye opener for me. I feel like I may have been more disciplined this time around than in past years to try and actually achieve something this off-season.

Q. Quick digression. When you talk about the Bahamas was Maya's sister supposed to come, too, and does she hate you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, no, that's funny. You know too much. Yeah, she would have cruised out if I played, but we hung out for the holidays in Vegas, so it's all good.

Q. I wanted your thoughts on one thing as it relates to



the Saudi stuff, for lack of a better word, everyone's going to have an opinion on what they think. One thing I keep hearing from a lot of different guys is getting everybody back together again. Do you see that as one of the bigger sticking points in terms of, A, any kind of a free passageway back and forth, or B, bringing back players who got more than the guys who stayed? Do you follow me?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I follow you. Yeah, I think it's better. We're entertainers, at the end of the day. I love what I do for work, and I'm obsessed with my job, but at the end of the day I am a small piece of a big puzzle, and I think everyone wants to see that puzzle sort of whole without missing pieces. I think the product is probably better if all together than sort of split up. I don't have the metrics on what that looks like or anything, I couldn't tell you ratings were worse or better, really. I really put my head in the sand when I tell you that.

Q. Would it be difficult to get everyone back together without some sort of penalty?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm sure there's some smart people out there that have some ideas on how to do it correctly. I'm not one of them. You're going to bother some people more than others, a lot of people feel like they're owed something. So, when you take sort of everyone's opinion into play, I think you just need someone that's really smart that's going to create a fair pathway back for everyone to play again.

Q. Player of the Year related, got us to wondering how if players professionals think the same way the media or the public does, in terms of what do you rank as important to measure a guy's year? Is it statistical consistency, is it strictly wins, scoring average, in your eyes how do you prioritize what's important in evaluating somebody?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, that's a good question. I haven't really thought a whole lot about it.

Q. (No Microphone.)

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You usually are, but... Looks like I'm not the only one. Overall performance, it's tough. Who ended up winning?

Q. Scottie.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Scottie won? Yeah, I mean it's a tricky one, when you look at consistency, amount of wins. Who was the low scoring average?

Q. Scottie.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: There you go. So that was probably a correlation there, I guess. But Jon won the Masters and, I have no idea, he won four times? Scottie won twice. Overall, I would say obviously being low scoring average and having such a big lead on being No. 1 in the world was done by, basically he felt like he top 3'ed or 4'ed every week he played. So I don't really know. I think everyone -- that's another thing about opinions. I think some people look at wins, some people look at majors, some people look at scoring average. I, honestly, couldn't care less.

Q. Did you vote?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I must have missed it, to be completely honest. I didn't go into my portal. I'm sure someone from the TOUR is really upset about that, but I told you, this is the third time now, I put my head in the sand, man. I'm serious, I really have just locked out everything.

Q. Rookie of the Year, we won't ask about that.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Who won that?

Q. Eric Cole.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's really good. That's nice.

Q. Would you take that over Ludvig?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Geez, that's, thank gosh I didn't vote (laughing).

Q. What was your reaction to Jon Rahm leaving for LIV?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: (Shrugs shoulders.) I don't really have a whole lot to say on matter, to be honest.

Q. It felt really windy the other day over at the bay. It feels a little, at least as I was driving out, looked really calm, the ocean is pretty flat today. What do you think is going to happen, what do you hope happens this week, wind, less wind, middle wind?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I think when you ask for wind here on the islands it can be a bit tricky. You sort of, it's a fresh reminder coming out and being fortunate to play in the Sentry here, because you sort of forget what it's like to grind over one-foot putts when it's blowing 30. It's going to happen tomorrow and the next four days. But, yeah, I want it to play tough. I think it rained a lot leading into this

event and Mother Nature's been drying up the ground pretty good. Today the ball was already rolling in the fairways quite a bit. So, I think if balls are rolling around and the wind's blowing and balls are rolling in the rough it makes it just a little bit harder versus when the fairways are soft and easy to hit. So, the harder the better. Scoring's always low and guys are just going to shoot nothing, that's just what guys do out here. So, hopefully tough.

Q. How does the course look right now?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's in immaculate shape. It's really nice.

Q. The Olympics this year. We've talked about it as being probably the toughest U.S. team to make, even though it's not necessarily a team, but how much is that on your mind and how good are you at not thinking about it and just playing, head in the sand?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Head in the sand. That's good. My slogan this year, I guess. Yeah, it's definitely in there in my brain somewhere deep. Deep down. Really just want to get off to a good start. I'm honestly more worried about what my West Coast Swing is going to look like right now versus sort of five, six months from now. If I can take care of business, then I'll have to, you know, or if I play well enough, then I think I should be able to qualify for that team. It's going to be tough.

Q. Do you remember 2021 at the Open at Torrey Pines, were you close? I kind of felt like you were like right on the edge of being one of the four to go. Do you remember that at all?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Close to qualifying? I think I missed the deadline or I missed the cutoff or whatever it was. I was probably one or two spots out.

Q. No, no, no. For the Olympics. When the cutoff period for the leading guys go, you don't remember if it was close for you back then to making the top?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No. Head's just so far in the sand.

THE MODERATOR: All right, thank you so much, Xander.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thanks.

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