

THE PLAYERS Championship

Tuesday, March 8, 2022

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

HALEY PETERSON: We would like to welcome Xander Schauffele to the media center here at THE PLAYERS Championship.

Xander, welcome back. You're making your fourth appearance here. What are some general comments about being back here at TPC Sawgrass?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's sort of a -- it's been a weird tournament. One of my favorite tournaments, just been kind of weird with COVID.

And then I was talking with my caddie about what we did a certain year and we were sitting around like, man, it's kind of just been a scramble the past couple years.

I'm not sure other players feel that way, but I always love coming here and excited to play well in this tournament this time of year.

HALEY PETERSON: What is it you love coming back to this place and specifically this course?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's a really fun sort of finishing four or five holes there, and then if you can kind of put yourself in a good position on the front nine. It's just a -- overall I just like the entirety of the course and like the whole layout. It's just a course I really enjoy playing.

HALEY PETERSON: This will be your seventh start this season; already four top 25s. You've had two weeks off. How is your game feeling entering the week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's a little bit colder in Las Vegas. I think Sunday it's forecasted to be like Las Vegas, so hopefully that gives me an advantage.

Yeah, a much-needed two weeks off. I played four in a row there and needed to recharge.

Q. Collin and Rory were in here talking about how their perception of this tournament has changed since they've turned professional. Both have said it's grown



a lot in its magnitude. Do you feel the same way? How does a tournament do that apart from making it the highest purse in golf?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Gaining the respect of the players. I know it's ironic that it's called THE PLAYERS, but I'd say just having people like those two speak highly of any product will give it a lot of weight.

A lot of people want to win this tournament, not just because there is a \$20 million purse, but just because it's considered our fifth major, and majors are sacred to us.

Every year we come here the stands seem to be bigger, everything seems to be bigger. I've never been in this media room. I don't know if this is new. This seems pretty big here.

Overall you make big tournaments by just making everything more magnitude and more important. This is a very important week for us.

Q. I'd just like a few comments on what you think about the course as it relates to comfort level. Are there shots that visually make you uncomfortable? And if there are, how do you approach those?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I think it's very wind dependent. You can kind of get a north wind out here. I think it's north, that sort of -- there's a certain wind that you play out here where you hit 2 into a cut, that's kind of a strange wind.

18 plays more down, but 2 is kind of into a cut. That's kind of a weird wind for me. You just have to sack up and hit the shot at the end of the day just like everyone else.

But overall I played really well here when the tournament was in May, and it was just because it was -- it played much shorter, more strategic, firmer, faster, just a different looking golf course.

Now it's lush, the rough is up, thick, the ball is stopping. It's kind of a different approach mentally, I guess, compared to if I had to play off memory.

Q. With Tiger going into Hall of Fame tomorrow, I'm

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curious as to what your earliest memory of him is and the influence that maybe he had on you and certainly the generation of all you guys around the same age right now.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It would be some sort of highlight of him fist pumping in red on some Sunday. I can't recall whether it was the Masters or really pinpoint one moment, but I've watched several of his highlights. Not super recent.

I don't want to give him that much credit now that I know him a little bit. Yeah, he's created what golf is today and we're all products of it. I've said it many times. He's to thank for even this purse being \$20 million. Tiger Woods has a piece of that.

He's transformed golf, and we're all happy that he's obviously -- I'm happy, but I think everyone was expecting him to go in the Hall of Fame at some point.

Q. Where do you keep your Olympic gold medal?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It feels like the last time I saw it was on the podium. My parents have it. They're just showboating around. I have no idea where it is in all honesty. It's in the house I grew up in.

I don't know if there's like a safe place now that I've moved out or anything like that, but I have no clue where it is right now.

Q. Typically Olympic champions have a period of time where they show it around for a while and collect stories of people's reactions. Did you do that at all?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Is that based on all Olympic gold medalists or just Justin Rose? Sorry, Rosey (laughter).

Q. I was not referring to Justin Rose. But nonetheless, did you do anything like that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I had it with me just a little bit. I think my coolest encounter was probably the -- I had to travel to Japan with it, and I had it in my backpack and I went through TSA, and I kind of put it in the back side of my bag that I travel with where my iPad goes.

So I took everything out obviously through TSA, and then the guy -- my bag got pulled aside. I'm sitting there, like what? I totally forgot that I had it in my actual bag just because I just slipped it in there when I was going to go travel, and the guy was like, there's something circular in your bag.

I'm like, I'm sorry, sir, you can take my bag apart. I have no clue what this is on your screen. He's ripping through the bag, and then I was like, oh, dangit.

So I pull it out, and he's like, wow, what is this? Is this like a replica or something? And I looked at him like, no, it's real. It's not real gold, it's plated, but -- and he looked at me and he's like, what did you -- is it yours or is it someone else's?

I was like, man, I guess I need to keep playing good golf. That was probably my coolest encounter with it that wasn't even kind of showing off with it.

Q. So then it was a good story.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, there's one. That's probably the only one I can think of.

Q. Since winning, have there been any tournaments or how often do you get announced on the first tee as the Olympic gold medalist?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I smile every time they say it.

Q. Do they do it a lot?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'd say more than not. I've played a few times since then, so probably realistically 50/50 maybe.

Q. We keep hearing the word as it relates to how the TOUR can get better or improve, whatever, "transparency." Do you agree with that, that they need to be more transparent? And if you do, in your mind what does that mean? Like examples or how they're not being transparent or something.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, that word is I guess not necessarily a blanket statement, but yeah, if I had to say how the TOUR needs to be more transparent, I think certain players have never really asked the TOUR to be transparent, to be fair.

When it comes to -- I guess you'd have to ask specific questions to the TOUR of what you would like them to reveal. Like I said, when you just say transparency, you'd like the TOUR to be more transparent, it could mean anything.

From my point of view, I feel that the TOUR has done a better job of kind of letting us know sort of the money that comes in, that comes out.

They're not giving us like a full-blown P&L report, but giving us an idea of what kind of happens with the purses and what they make and certain deals and how tournaments are run. I think that's kind of been more revealed.

But to be fair, I don't know if any player has ever asked those questions to the TOUR, either.

Q. Have you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, I've just been so worried -- the time I can remember being on TOUR, this is probably the first time I ever feel more comfortable on TOUR, you know what I mean, so I was worried about, like most guys, keeping your card and playing really well and trying to win tournaments.

It is an interesting space that we're in with all these conversations, and I'm sure it'll come to an end at some point.

Q. And have they started on this, in terms of showing how things work and where the money is coming in from, would you say that's fairly recent?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, but it's like I've never asked them what was happening before. Maybe other guys have, so I can't really speak to that and I'm not aware of it.

But yeah, I'd say guys are asking now and they're happy to share.

Q. Do you actually go to player meetings?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: The ones I have to go to, yeah. Yeah, we have mandatory ones where important information is talked about, and I've been to all of those.

Q. I take it you weren't super surprised not to be in the top 10 of the Player Impact Program.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Well, I mean, I hold myself in high regards, but yeah, I was never really fond of the whole program, and I'm still not super fond of it.

But yeah, it is what it is.

Q. Did seeing the list of the 10 guys who won, did that grow your sense of frustration, or what were your thoughts upon seeing the 10 guys who did win?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Nothing, I guess. I really didn't think much, to be completely honest. I've seen the list. I wasn't surprised when I saw Tiger as No. 1 and then all the

boys that have been really, really solid on social media and have a lot of interactions online. They were probably deserving of winning that money.

Q. If it keeps growing and the fund keeps growing, could you see yourself diving in?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, I'm willing to try to make my swing better from a draw to a cut and working on that, but I don't know if I'm ever going to be a guy to sort of pump himself on social media. I've really enjoyed being unplugged, not having any social media on my phone. You can't really put a price on that, but at the same time if they keep pumping the money in that sense, then I'm sure -- hopefully us players can get together and find a better way to do it since someone like Collin, the No. 2 player in the world, and Pat is No. 4 and half I is 3, the likes of those guys maybe aren't being rewarded the money they should be.

Q. How long have you been unplugged, not had social media on your phone?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Quite some time now. It's been nice. I don't get to see anything you guys write about, which is cool. But yeah, it's probably been a year or more actually.

If it's super important, someone usually texts it to me, so that's how I get my info.

HALEY PETERSON: We will conclude today's press conference. Thank you, Xander, for joining us, and good luck this week.

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