

Valspar Championship

Tuesday, April 27, 2021

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Charl Schwartzel

Press Conference

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Charl Schwartzel to the interview room here at the Valspar Championship. He is making his sixth start at this event and he is our 2016 champion. Charl, if we can get your comments on being back.

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, it's great to be back. Driving in here, seeing your poster on these lampposts, brings back some great memories. I haven't been out on the course, but playing at a little different time of the year, but I'm sure the golf course from what I've heard is in great condition.

JOHN BUSH: Obviously you're coming into the week in excellent form. If we can get you to take us back to Sunday, I know it was a disappointing finish for you and Louis, but just an excellent and exciting day of golf. If we can get you to comment.

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, you know, just teeing off with the lead on a Sunday, that's what we -- that's a great position to be in and I thought, especially me, I haven't been in that position for quite awhile and I started, I felt very comfortable very early on in the round, I was very happy with the way that I played. I was happy, Louis was happy with the way he played. I thought we both played really solid. We gave ourselves a lot of opportunities, so if things did go our way we probably could have, there's a lot of ifs and buts, but we had enough opportunities to close, to seal the deal there if we made a few more putts. But we battled it out right to the end and we just, we played well, it's, yeah, when you get that close and you don't win it obviously always stings and I'm sure every now and again you'll get that feeling. The last few days it's been a little, I've been a little bit down, but in the big picture, there's a lot of positives for both of us. We played real good in a difficult format. It's a very high-pressure format.

JOHN BUSH: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. If you could just talk about what the state of your game is going forward and mostly I wanted to see if you could look back to last summer at Harding Park,



there was a putt you made on Friday to make the cut and I just wanted to see the significance and the emotion and what that meant to you.

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, so regarding that putt, obviously I was injured for so long and then playing on a medical I needed to get -- I basically needed to make the cut to secure my playing privileges for the following year. So I think that's why the reaction on that putt. That was, in a way, it could be a turning point later in my career, you know? Because I didn't want to go into the Wyndham having to play really, having to play good to -- that would have been a lot of pressure. So that putt really was, that emotion was just because I knew that I secured my playing privileges.

I think my game, regarding my game, it's come a long way from there. I've been trending in a really good direction. I'm feeling healthy, which is a big key for me and my golf swing to me feels like my old golf swing. I lost it there for awhile because of injuries and because of things, but my golf swing's back and I feel in a way it could be even a little bit better because I've got a lot more control over the golf ball. I can shape the ball both ways, I can hit them on demand, I can hit the shapes under pressure. Where I used to not really go to a shape under pressure, I would just hit it hard and straight. I feel very comfortable moving the ball around. I've got a driver that I'm driving the ball good with. In a way I eliminated the left side and that's the way I used to play when I played at a top level. I'm doing that and that's where Sunday last week was great for me. Playing under a lot of pressure, drove the ball good. That makes the game a bit easier if I'm playing from the fairway.

Q. More than a year into this you've been dealing with the testing every week whenever you play out here. Just curious what you think of the TOUR's notification last week that you won't have to do that anymore, if you decide to get vaccinated. Are you good with that, are you fine with just getting tested every week still or where do you stand?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Well I'm getting vaccinated so that I don't have to get tested anymore. Because I've just -- the testing takes up a lot of your time and I'm sure that



it's costing the TOUR a lot of money, but my whole family has been vaccinated and I still have just got to do my second shot next week and then I'll be done. So, you know, I don't really think that -- I don't know how fair it is if they're taking the testing away, because you are forcing people to take the vaccination and then telling them, well, you got to go pay for it yourself if you want to play. I suppose it's a Catch-22 on that one, but yeah, from my side I'm going to just take the vaccination and get this thing done.

Q. What's your sense? Are you finding that your peers are of the same attitude as you or is there some hesitancy?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Well, the South African group that I'm around, we're getting -- Louis has done it, Brandon has done it, I'm not sure about -- I'm sure the guys will -- I think the guys will eventually just do it because I think, especially being an international, I still want to go visit South Africa and I think probably in the long run you're going to have to do, you're going to have to have your vaccinations to be able to travel around or it will make it easier, I think.

Q. Wanted to know how much of an interested spectator you were at Melbourne in 2019 and with the Presidents Cup down there and if you still have the aspirations to rejoin the team in a year and a half with Trevor?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, for sure. Like I was injured at that time but I was glued to the TV watching the guys play and I love those team events and the guys came close. It was going either way there on Sunday. And that's exciting. Yeah, I would love to play on another team or another couple teams, hopefully. Yeah, I feel like the guys are getting a little younger that's playing in the Presidents Cup team and the guys are playing more on the U.S. soil and I've got to think that it's going to become the internationals are going to start becoming a bit more of a factor than what they have been the last couple years.

Q. Did just the youth of that team and their exuberance did that reinvigorate you as one of the veterans that could rejoin them potentially in the coming years?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, look, any team I think needs veterans. You need the young guys that's fearless and then you need the older guys that's been there and seen how a lot of these things play out and yeah it's important to have the mix. And it's important to have the best team. Whoever it might be. If I play good enough and I deserve to be on the team, then I deserve to be on the

team and if I don't, I don't, I'll be there supporting the guys. It's something that I've really enjoyed playing in and I've got quite a passion for it.

Q. Random question, we see Stewart Cink out there with his son caddieing for him, we see Phil Mickelson and Dustin Johnson both using their brothers on the bag. I was wondering if you've ever had a family member caddieing for you and what were the pluses and the minuses of doing that?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: I have. My brother caddied for me. I won three times with him on the bag. I think my record's probably the best with my brother on the bag if I'm not mistaken. I won the Valspar with him too. I think the chemistry, if have you a family member like your brother, there's a different feeling on a golf course. It's not as -- I don't want to say it's not a, it's not as much as a work relationship as you do, but it's a little different. I don't know how to explain it. But there's a different feeling and I think for a lot of these guys it's more, a lot of these relationships between caddies is just really how you feel out there. Most of them are probably good friends too. My brother has got a family back in South Africa so he needed to go back, so that's just the reason why he's not out here anymore.

Q. Is that your little brother or big brother?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah, he's three years younger than me.

Q. What was his first name?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Adrian.

Q. Is he a pretty good stick or is he not really a golfer?

CHARL SCHWARTZEL: Yeah he was a professional in South Africa for probably six years or so. He can play.

JOHN BUSH: Charl, we appreciate your time best of luck this week.

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