

Valspar Championship

Wednesday, March 19, 2025

Palm Harbor, Florida, USA

Innisbrook Resort (Copperhead)

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Xander, the decision to play here this week and the challenges of this course.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, just a last-minute signup. Just need to get more reps. As I feel sort of better and better, just need to get some reps under my belt. Competition golf is not the same as trying to play golf at home. It's been a process and I'm pretty determined to play better. High bar was set after last year, and coming off of that season I expected a lot of myself, and I still do now, even though it hasn't really looked like that.

Q. You said a minute ago that it's been a little harder than you thought. Is it because the layoff took more out of your game than you would have thought or maybe just the injury itself was harder to come back from than you thought?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm not really sure. That's why I thought -- that's why I said it's harder than I thought. I didn't think it was going to be this tricky. Maybe I'm being a little impatient, it's been two weeks of tournament golf for me, coming off of pretty much zero golf. I think my, I played Sentry and then before that was the Zozo, so the layoff felt more than just that six weeks, it feels like I haven't golfed in quite some time. I have expectations and I think my team has expectations and just try to be professional through and through. But that includes shooting better scores.

Q. I think I asked you on Friday, like sort of are you being hard on yourself, and you were pretty hard on yourself. When you get away from it a little bit and perspective do you have to sort of maybe just lower your expectations a little bit knowing what you went through?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, maybe. Maybe, for sure. This is my first sort of injury I've ever dealt with. Everyone that I've talked to that was hurt sort of says ease your way back in, you can hurt yourself again. Those kind of things. So everyone's telling me to be patient. I think in assessment you can be as hard as you want. When I'm

playing out there my expectations aren't through the roof, I don't think. I'm pretty happy with a drive that's in the fairway right now, and I'm pretty happy when I hit a good cut or good draw. But when you're assessing yourself I think it's important, if you want to elevate your game, to be harsh. It's easy to be biased and think you're doing okay. So, yeah, that's kind of where that maybe what seems to be a harsh assessment came from.

Q. There's also no rehab starts in golf, right. You can't go down to the minor leagues and work it out.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I mean, based on how I played I think I would have gotten my butt kicked over there, too. So it's fine. Sometimes you just got to, you show up and see what you got and I've been doing that.

Q. What do you mean when you just said before you can't hurt yourself.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Oh, just like when people come back from injury whether it's a wrist or a rib or a knee or something, whether you're trying to train or push through something, people feel like, you know, you never really know if you're fully healthy. That's when I meant. As I said, my scans are good, everything's clean, so it's -- me playing three weeks in a row is a lot coming off of six weeks, but that's what I meant by I can't hurt myself.

Q. Do you imagine this to be your last start before the Masters or will you do one more?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think everyone around me would like it to be, yeah. I mean, I need to play better tournament golf. I think the Masters is demanding, Augusta National's demanding, and you imagine you would like to, you would rather play good golf going in there than not. That goes for every big tournament. So there's only a few guys I can name off the top of my head that have played 12 events and won a few of 'em, and I'm not one of 'em. So I can save that for later in my career.

Q. What has it been like playing the last two weeks under the pressure of trying to make the cut, something that you're not too familiar with?



XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I've been familiar with it, yeah. It was a fresh reminder. Definitely got the juices flowing. I think it's something that I noticed also from a personal goal is, it's important for me to play as many tournament rounds as possible, so making the cut allows me to play two extra rounds on the weekend, versus sort of being rusty and only playing Thursday, Friday. So it was definitely, I was close both times I played and it was definitely something in front of mind when I was out there.

Q. Playing better beyond the results, is there a specific feel that you're looking for and how often are you feeling that feel?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I would say it's been kind of a mixed bag. I've kind of had stuff all over the place. I feel like I'm cramming for a test, and when I'm out there I feel like I'm still trying to study almost, not really just taking the test. Today, whether it was a few swing videos that were taken, sent to Chris, I just didn't look at 'em. I need to start looking -- what my dad taught me a long time ago is look at the ball and react to the ball and not to how your swing looks. I think I've gotten a little too nitpicky on swinging the club correctly and trying to get back in a good pattern when I was playing really good golf. Sometimes when you just focus on the task at hand versus the result you can get yourself there.

Q. Are you still on a pitch count on the range?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I did blow that out of the water last week. Didn't feel amazing after it, to be completely honest, but fortunately got a good team around me to reel me in. I'm trying to be smart about how I'm going about things, and I definitely feel, I feel like a kid again. I feel like I want to hit a million golf balls and sit out here for until 8 o'clock every night, but I got to be smart about it.

Q. Years ago you talked about being influenced by J.J. Spaun's career at SDSU and getting there. What was it like seeing him on that stage last week and what impresses you about him and his game?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I was pulling hard for J.J. I knew it was going to be tough. I thought he may have had an advantage if they played that night on Sunday, he was playing really nice. It's always hard to come back out the next morning. I'm sure there was a lot of -- based on what I heard around the course, a lot of people weren't pulling for him, but the Aztecs always pull for each other. And he's always been impressive to me. I think it's just a matter of time before he gets comfortable. And I heard he's talked about his family and he's got two little kids now

and his wife Melody is great, so I think it's changed his perspective and he's kind of being a little bit kinder to himself on the property.

Q. What are a couple characteristics about his game that have impressed you through the years?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just solid through and through. I think his putter's sort of the trigger club in his bag that allows him to go super low or not. He's always hit it really well, he's got such a simple swing. Yeah, I think he's just, you know, switched the putter up a little bit and he's starting to putt really nice, and there he was almost winning one of the biggest events we got.

Q. TGL next week, you guys against Atlanta in the final and going up against Pat and those guys, what are you looking forward just to about that, and any trash talk with Pat ahead of --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I don't think Pat's going to give me a whole lot of trash talking back, that's usually a one-way street when we're together. I think Billy, it's almost impossible not to hear Billy when you're out there. Billy will be the big one you got to, you know, don't let him get too fired up or he's going to run all over you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports