

FedEx St. Jude Championship

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Memphis, Tennessee, USA
TPC Southwind

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Xander Schauffele to the media center for the 2024 FedExCup St. Jude Championship. You're entering the week at No. 2. Can we get some comments on you making your eighth consecutive Playoffs appearance dating back to your rookie season.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. Different feel than my rookie year. Feel like an old man now. A lot of young really talented players out here. Happy to be here, coming in in a pretty good spot. Better than years past. Looking forward to the week.

Q. Just recap your season for us, two major championship victories, 12 top-10 finishes. What can you say about this year for you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's nice to break off some wins. Major championships are always a bonus. You always dream of doing it, and to do it twice in one year is really special.

Over the moon when I let my brain go back to that time. But I'm too busy thinking about how I just finished my last event there in Paris. Maybe it's a good thing, maybe it's a bad thing, who knows. But I've been trying to get ready for these Playoffs.

Q. You mentioned you're in even better form than you were in past years. This is a course that's given you a little bit of trouble. What's been difficult about it for you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's a hard golf course. It's not the longest of courses, so you really have to be in position often. There's a sneaky lot more water than you'd think, too. I think it's one of those courses if you're slightly off and you feel like you want to press, kind of what happened to me Sunday in Paris, one of those types of courses. Guys can make it look really easy if they're on.



The greens are pure, conditions are really good, and if you're hitting good putts and good shots, you're going to shoot 6-, 7-under out here. If you're just a little bit off on a few of those par-3s you're going to hit it in the water. Difference of hitting it 10, 15 feet from the hole or hitting it in the water. There's a few holes like that out there and it can really penalize you.

That and being it being Bermuda, I grew up on the West Coast, and I'm hoping that me living in Florida for the last year has helped me a little bit on this sort of grass.

Q. Given your position in the FedExCup, what's the balance this week given the heat, et cetera, competing here and keeping an eye on what's coming?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, and then we go to 6,500 feet and then back to Atlanta where it's really hot and going to have to learn a golf course it looks like, based on photos.

My team is talking to me about managing things correctly, being smart about it, and to me, I'm just -- in my head, I'm sitting there thinking, if you're trying to win this thing, trying to be the best player over the course of this year, you're going to just have to do better and be better than everyone else. I'm not really too worried about -- I've got a really good team around me making sure I'm eating the right things, doing the right things to stay in good shape physically and mentally, but when push comes to shove, you're going to have to be a dog at some point.

Q. As dominant as both you and Scottie have been, you'll go to East Lake a couple behind. Are you particularly happy that it's there given your record there and you'll only potentially be a few shots back at worst?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's always been my goal to go in there -- Andrew Green has redone the golf course. I know he's a big fan of taking trees out and sort of changing bunkering and going back to what the course used to look like.

I'm not sure how the course is going to look. The photos look majestic online, the few shots of the course. The



photographer did a nice job taking those photos at that time of day. The course looked like it was in a fairy-tale. But it looked different. The greens are going to be different. You look at like a Colonial where they're new, greens are concrete, balls are bouncing everywhere. That's not how we're used to playing East Lake. We're used to being rewarded if you're in the fairway and you can't bounce a ball up any hole because the kikuyu is going to stick, and I think they changed the grass around the greens and on the greens.

I'm looking at it like I'm going to be there for the first time mentality.

Q. You mentioned your recent Olympic experience. You took home the gold in Tokyo, Scottie took it home in Paris. What's the transition or continuity you get back from Olympic play back to PGA TOUR play?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It was an unbelievable experience in France. I think everyone that's talked about competing Tokyo versus Paris, Tokyo had so much potential. I played in Japan the first time we went, and being on that first tee with Rory and JT and we were looking around and it felt like a major championship with nine, 10, 12 rows deep on the first tee. Was so bummed out that COVID hit and we weren't able to have fans in Tokyo.

We got rewarded with a lot of really good fans in Paris. Starting on Thursday, the atmosphere was unreal. I had Matthieu Pavon playing behind me, and it was chants pretty much all day long.

It was a really, really cool stadium-like feel, and coming back to play on the PGA TOUR, it's just different. It's a different pace. It's a different crowd. There isn't the sort of patriotism that is attached to it that sort of brings everyone into it, kind of sort of back to your individual feel almost.

Q. Going to altitude next week, with launch monitors, is there something you're able to make an adjustment on Tuesday and Wednesday or have you had to do work at home with TrackMan and try and get your numbers now? How does that work?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: On-site is the easiest. You can try to -- if you change the altitude on a Florida course where it's zero feet and hit an 8-iron that goes 215 yards, you're not going to really believe it. I think it's going to help to sort of have your brain see it, your eyes see it and have your brain realize, okay, that ball actually flew 225 yards downwind and it was an 8-iron or something like that. I heard there's a few 90-foot drops over water, par-3s that are 220 yards, and you're sitting there like is that an 8-iron

or 5-iron? It's going to be interesting for everyone.

Q. Sawgrass is a golf course, medium length, a lot of doglegs, a lot of trouble. Is it at all comparable to here? You've had a better record there than here. If so, why?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's a fair question. Slightly different, I'd say. I played really well at -- I've played well both times now, fortunately, when it was in March versus May. One was really firm, dried out. I just remember Webb killed everyone that week. I think he was up like nine shots at one point.

It's different. This always seems to play a little bit softer, but very much in the fairway. If you're in that rough out here, you're going to hit -- I think today I hit a few wedges that went -- sand wedge that went like 145 yards. You don't really get to practice that. You just have to get used to it and feel it and trust that the ball is going to do what it's doing, bouncing around coming out of that Bermuda.

Q. Do you just chalk up that final day at the Olympics as a rare bad one for you? Maybe not bad but not --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It was bad.

Q. You've obviously had a lot of good ones of late and a strong year. Can you just chalk it up to you're not going to always have it?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. I mean, I'm stubborn. I'm always -- my team would be the first people to tell you that. They ask me how I'm doing, I'm fine. I'm always fine. But I was probably more tired than I thought I was.

Yeah, I take pride in finishing strong, and to do that was -- I was pretty bummed out. I went from thinking I could have a good look at gold to maybe silver, then to bronze, and then to, wow, I'm just spectating now. That's sort of what happened the last seven, eight holes of that tournament. So that was a bit of a bummer, especially with how the fans were out there. It must have been such a cool feeling to be in the hunt with important shots coming down that stretch, 15 to 18.

Yeah, I look at it, I just want to identify. Sat down with Chris already, sort of identified what happened. I don't want to get back into my old habits that I've been trying to get out of in these last two or three months working with him, and I think some old ones sort of slipped in there. When I tried to put my foot down, it got worse, and I paid the price for it heavily.

Q. How does it feel or how did the feeling compare to

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other tournaments maybe where you were disappointed after the last round? Did it feel worse or the same? Is any tournament where you thought you had a great chance and weren't able to do it?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's weird; I'm not going to lie. It's the weirdest feeling. I was watching from the sort of family section, the podium, and when Scottie was up there and our flag was raised and he started crying up there, I was butt-hurt about my own round, and then I was sitting there like, yeah, this is pretty cool.

I'd like to think I'm not -- I can be rational most times, but I felt so emotional in that state to where I was butt-hurt about how I played and then sorta proud and happy that Scottie won it. It's such a -- it's hard to explain, the swing of it. Then out here this week playing with him these next two days and we're all just trying to beat our heads in. It's a funny feeling.

Q. Does that pride that you felt extend to the fact that you won a gold medal three years earlier, that you got to do that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Maybe. I'm not sure. I think it's just being American. You see your flag being raised and your National Anthem played, and you're sitting there sort of humming it in your head, and you get that sort of feeling that we don't really get too often anymore.

Q. I was wondering if maybe you ran out of gas a little bit in Paris. But are you rested now, and is there an excitement to the Playoffs starting?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, of course. I was already thinking of how I can sort of rest and get back into sharp mental -- a mental state just for these last three weeks is going to be the biggest thing. Just being able to focus, and you expect your body to make the leaps with the heat and then the altitude and the heat again. But to me it's part of our job. We're supposed to be preparing for that during the off-season and all year long.

I remember Rory has won the FedExCup so many times now, and I remember a few times when it was really hot in East Lake I was playing with him and I felt so overheated at times, and that really pissed me off, and he was just kind of cruising through, and I was like, man, this guy is in much better shape than I am. So it was something I really tried to work on to get in a little bit better cardio shape so I'm not feeling like I'm going to explode at East Lake. You see guys look overheated all the time this week and at East Lake. It just happens when it gets hot.

Q. Cigar of choice after the British Open? What did

you smoke and how many?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I just smoked one. I smoked one with my dad.

Q. What was it?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know what it was. This guy actually I know, there's a blender shop we used to go to at San Diego State. This is really random, but we'd always be hung over going to this blender shop to get a banana smoothie to make yourself feel better, and the owner of it was actually out at Troon and gave, I think, my dad or Austin cigars, and those were the ones that we had, oddly enough. We didn't have any with us.

Q. You didn't have any with you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's a weird thing. You don't want to jinx yourself by bringing a lot and then you do bring it and it's awkward. There was a time I think when -- for one of the team events I had a bunch of cigars and we lost, and I was like, should I give them away or -- can't smoke them.

Q. But you can't remember what it was?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think it was some sort of Monte Cristo. It was nice. I could have smoked something terrible and it would have been amazing. I'm not too picky.

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