

The Ryder Cup

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Kohler, Wisconsin, USA

Whistling Straits

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, and welcome to the 43rd Ryder Cup here at Whistling Straits. We are with Xander Schauffele. Xander, curious, obviously the lump sum of the year you're playing as Xander; one week a year you're playing in the team dynamic. Are the highs in a team dynamic any higher than you experience individually, and likewise are the lows any lower when you're dealing with a disappointing match result or something like that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I'm still playing as Xander, I think, under Team USA. To answer your question, I feel there's obviously pressure to play well, and I think as a team we share that. If you're just from previous experience from a Presidents Cup that I've played in, a loss is heavy, and you just want to do well for your teammates, but I feel that you can almost be uplifted by your teammates, as well.

You know, I think it's sort of whatever you make of it, but it is nice to have teammates. We always -- all the guys on my team are enemies most of the year, but for this one week we all share our thoughts and we're all pulling for each other, and we want the best for each other because we all want to win. We stand under one flag and for one cause. Just try and win this thing.

Q. Do you feel like a rookie?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, not really. I mean, I am a rookie. It's my first appearance. I'd say I know -- knowing most of the guys on the team, knowing pretty much all the captains on the team helps me feel more comfortable. I've never played this property, but having some of -- most of our team compete in that major championship not too long ago, so they share their thoughts, and that makes me feel more comfortable.

Overall I am one, but I don't really feel like one.

Q. Pairings aren't out, we don't know who you're going to be with, et cetera, et cetera, but let's just say you might be paired with Pat, and I'm just curious, how much did that flight going to the Presidents Cup, those

20 plus hours that you guys were playing cards, have to do with the bond that you've created?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Not much, actually. We didn't talk a whole lot while we were playing gin. We spent a lot of time together during that, but we were pretty much drinking coffee just to stay awake and playing because we both didn't want to lose. It was more of a competitive thing just like us playing.

Yeah, we've become close. We just took a trip to Napa together with our significant others, and it was a nice time to sort of kickback and relax. Obviously we were there celebrating his FedExCup win and my gold medal from a long time ago.

So it was nice to sort of share that moment together.

Q. It looks like everybody on the American team is talking about ping-pong. I know you are kind of a decent player, but there has to be other teams that bond you together, to make you enjoy being together this week and playing together. Can you talk a little bit more about those other things? You can talk about ping-pong if you want to.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, it's just we do dinners -- I'm sure -- there's a lot of functions is what I'm learning, to a Ryder Cup. Last night we spent time in a barn together, which was a cool setting. There's small talk, sort of talks that we're not really used to having at normal tournaments since we normally have our own teams with us.

Once I see those guys at the course we kind of disperse and go back to our own teams at our own homes type deal. It's cool to sort of get to talk to each individual about anything, non-golf related, and spend some time at dinner. That's sort of how I grew up. Dinners were sort of a time to get to know someone and kind of chat, so it's nice to talk to them, see what they like to get up to.

They can't hide when their significant other is next to them fact checking them, so it's nice to get to know everyone a little bit better.

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Q. Dinner in a barn, was it a restaurant in a barn?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I don't know. I figured we were in Wisconsin so it seemed very fitting. Yeah, it was a nice dinner, nice setting. I think it was maybe a catering type thing, but it was very enjoyable.

Q. Steve has talked about trying to be overprepared this week. Without giving away any secrets, but in your mind can you give an example how there hasn't been a stone unturned?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, we have our scouts -- I'm sure everyone has their scouts, they do certain things. It's a very generalized name to give them, and they provide certain information and they kind of check off any box that maybe the captains didn't even think of or didn't check off.

They sort of go back and forth checking to see what they think is right and what they think is wrong and things like that.

I feel that they feel very comfortable in their picks and how they're arranging everything.

We came out early, about a week ago, to sort of get comfortable, and I think that did help me sort of not feel like a rookie. When I think of rookie I think of my rookie year, and I feel I show up to properties and I was texting certain guys I knew on TOUR, where is registration and where is the locker room, and things like that.

So small things like that make you feel very comfortable. It worked for me. It was nice to know where the first tee was, it was nice to know where to go, it was nice to know where the locker room and sort of the team cubby was. I feel like in that sense it made me feel good arriving on property.

Q. I take it the first time you would have ever played alternate-shot with Patrick was in Melbourne. Can you talk about how long it might have taken just to get used to that format, when you started feeling comfortable? Obviously you had some success with it there.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, obviously it's just more equipment-wise. You know, you have to switch golf ball. I kind of just go his way. Our balls are actually pretty similar now, which is nice.

I think he's been playing the same ball since I think the Presidents Cup. It didn't take that long. I think we sort of became very comfortable with each other and sort of friendly and that sort of helped -- we're very transparent. I think if I hit a bad shot or he hits a bad shot, we don't really

care. We both know we're trying our hardest.

I think we were so tired when we went into our third match, I think, or it was an afternoon match and basically that afternoon match solidified us playing all five at the Presidents Cup.

And I remember him coming up to me on the first tee and he had a coffee in his hand, which is something we don't do, so it showed how tired he was. He said, Hey, if I don't talk to you it's not because I'm not pulling for you. I'm just trying to conserve some energy and I'll walk ahead and things like that.

I was like, That's great. It doesn't bother me whatsoever. We just understand each other pretty well, and I think that helps us play well together. Even if we're quiet or whatever you want to call it, not talking, we just know we have each other's back.

Q. Is the golf ball something that could be a big issue if it was widely different, something that you'd have to spend a lot of time overcoming?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, some guys are high-spin guys, some guys are low-spin guys. Typically you either alter equipment, meaning your clubs, or I guess club your golf ball. You either go one direction with how you want to sort of combat what kind of player you are.

If you have two guys that are on the opposite sides of the spectrum you can get kind of a mess, especially when the breeze picks up out here.

Q. How European do you feel? And who's your father supporting this week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You're that guy, huh? (Laughter.)

Yeah, you know, it's funny, I am -- I guess I almost stand alone in my family. My brother was born in Stuttgart, my dad was born in Stuttgart, my mom was born in Taiwan and grew up in Japan. International, as I like to say.

Yeah, I think I'm the only natural born citizen in my family, so I can say I'm proud to be an American. I was the only one born in the U.S.

For that reason, I feel very American. I just feel like I've been exposed to a lot of other cultures so I understand them very well.

I think my dad is just rooting for me. I don't think you'll catch him saying he's rooting for Europe at any point, but



let me know if he does. (Laughter.)

Q. Is the gold medal in the team room this week? And since bringing it home stateside, what's been the most meaningful moment you've had with it or the most meaningful scene?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's not. It's too individual. It's about the team this week, so it wasn't going to make an appearance. I don't even know where it is. I think my mom might have it back home, unless my dad secretly has it on him out here.

The coolest moment for me honestly was back in Japan. I was able to share the gold medal with my grandparents. They somewhat snuck them into the hotel and they happened to be next door to me in the hotel so I happened to see them, which seemed completely legal in Japan.

It was cool to see them. Just seeing their reaction. It's hard to surprise someone that's 80 plus years old. Just to see the joy on their faces. Obviously they're happy to see me and spend some time. That was probably my favorite moment of sharing it with anyone.

Q. What are your impressions of the course then having been here a couple of weeks ago and just getting around it a bit yesterday?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it kind of has a -- what is it called, the place we played? I didn't play very well at it. It kind of has a Kiawah-ish feel off the tee. A lot of blind spots where you're kind of aiming at a gorse bush or aiming kind of left center of a bunker.

Overall since I've been here I've played really well in practice. I'm already a fan. Depending on the wind, obviously. The course is named Whistling Straits for a reason.

So we haven't really played it in -- I think my first round we played on Monday a week ago. It was kind of breezy for five or six holes off the coast and that was pretty intense, but so far, I think today will be a really good test.

It's going to be 62 degrees high and blowing, so I'm excited to go out and sort of get some practice in today to get a different condition.

But if the wind lays down, it's very scorable.

Q. From your, say, high school and college days and what have you, where was the Ryder Cup on your must-watch TV programming? And was there any part of you that ever wondered why the Americans didn't

win as much as you maybe thought they should have?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'm not sure. Going back then, no, it was not. I kind of watched golf to fall asleep on a Sunday afternoon at 3:00 p.m. I'd watch football, practice in the morning with my dad, and then watch football at like 1:00, Chargers game, 1:05 on CBS, and then my dad would turn golf on and I'd fall asleep and I'd wake up for the Sunday Night Football Game.

That was kind of my childhood. Not that I didn't love golf, but really that was sort of the program -- once you hear Jim Nantz's voice, you just kind of -- you know what I mean? It's kind of nice.

Yeah, the Ryder Cup, I've seen highlights. I honestly haven't really seen -- as a kid just like any other kid, you see Tiger in red, and he wasn't wearing red at Ryder Cups unless that was one of the team outfits. Those were kind of the things I dreamt of as a kid.

In terms of Ryder Cups, only when I was in college I was probably very aware of it. It was sort of major championships, PLAYERS, Ryder Cup, and then I learned about the Presidents Cup shortly after. Those were kind of the order of how my dreams were stacked up.

THE MODERATOR: Well, thank you, Xander, for finding us, and have a terrific day and great week.

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