

Genesis Scottish Open

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North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

CLARE BODEL: We welcome with us our defending champion, Xander Schauffele, I think for me, I'd like to open by saying, how does it feel to be back.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's always nice to come back to a place that brings good memories or that you have good memories at and this is one of those places for me. Always nice to be on this side of the pond.

CLARE BODEL: And how did your game compare comparing over here? You played here and won, but how does it compare playing links golf and how do you enjoy that sort of setup?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's definitely a challenge, growing up in the US and coming over here and learning to play links, playing the ball down in severe wind and bunkers and taking your medicine when you do get in the bunker and things of that nature. It's always a challenge and something I enjoy doing.

Q. Last year was three tournaments in a row. Best golf you've played in your life?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: From a results standpoint, I would say yes. Us pros hang ourselves up on how many wins we have this year, and golf is a game of losing unfortunately. I guess if you look at it based on that in terms of results, then yeah, it would be a really, really good stretch for me.

Q. Have you had another time of your life that you actually think of as your best?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'd like to think that I haven't tapped into that yet.

Q. What do you feel you did well last year and what do you feel the strength of your game was over the four days?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it was really windy. You have to position yourself correctly around the property. So



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you know, it's hard to hit a lot of greens. When you do miss a green, you have to miss in the correct spot. You just know some fairways are almost impossible to hit, and like I said, some greens are impossible to hit, so you have to think your way around the property. You have to be willing to hit some uncomfortable shots around the day and through the course of the week.

Q. With one eye on next week, firm conditions is one thing, but do you want to get tested in the weather as well over the next four days? Would that be beneficial for next week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I don't look too far. More of a day-to-day kind of guy. I don't look too far ahead. I planned to be here and prep for next week, but my eyes are set on this week and mainly for tomorrow.

Q. Obviously the hearings were yesterday. I just wonder if you had any kind of reaction as to what we heard and what we learned from the papers that were released, and the general feeling of where we are at with some pretty uncertain times at the moment?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, first and foremost, sort of being on property here, it's my job to play golf. I did watch in all honesty, maybe ten, 15 minutes of it. I had to go see the physio and the trainer and get dialed in for today and the rest of the week. We were sent a document, a 276-page document and a link to the hearing. So I will do my homework. I saw the hearing. I clicked on it. It was about three hours and I clicked on that about 10.45 p.m. last night, and I quickly exited out of it knowing that I wanted to get some sleep in preparation for the tournament week.

I will listen to it and I will probably not read it all to be completely honest because it's not my forte. It's hard for me to comment on everything I heard because I don't really know a lot about what was talked about and what happened.

Q. But just on a general point, the uncertainty that is around the future of men's professional golf right now, is that unsettling?



XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, I think if us players can stay together, sort of stay unified and have the right goals in place for the future, then it would be less unsettling.

I would say for the most part, most of the players on the PGA TOUR are together and sort of want to be informed and want to have a say in sort of what happens. Right now, you know, with this hearing and everything that's going on, these are just sort of steps in the process to getting, I guess, not what we want but more transparency and sort of getting a seat at the table. It's a for-members organisation and that's what it should be.

Q. 56 years ago, Jack Nicklaus and Gardner Dickinson and some other guys decided that they needed to do something different, and they pulled away from the PGA of America and that's how the TOUR started. Is there a possibility that you guys collectively consider saying, maybe there's a better way, or maybe it's not the current path, the PGA TOUR?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: We would need so much more information to make that decision, and also, we're no experts. We're really good at hitting golf balls and making big decisions of that nature, of that gravity, is just not what we are good at. For those reasons, we need help.

Q. Jordan was just in here, and his concern went outside of not being able to answer all the questions -- his concern is basically the fact that the communication -- or Monahan's communication doesn't seem to be as it was during COVID -- the management and you guys. What's your feeling on that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, pretty similar. Like I said, it's a work in process. Usually when things aren't great, there's always something good that can come from it.

So my hope is that there isn't much communication right now and things are a little bit unsettling and there is a bit of a divide between management and the players, if you want to call it that, and my hope is that a positive thing coming from that will be more communication, more transparency, and sort of understanding which direction the TOUR will go with us being sort of the ambassadors of it.

Q. Have your feelings or trust level in Jay changed?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thanks, Doug. (Laughter) Yes. Yes, they have.

Q. Would you like to elaborate? How much work do

you think Jay has to restore trust with the players?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: We got a memo that he'll be back on the 17th. If you want to call it one of the rockier times on TOUR, the guy was supposed to be there for us, wasn't. Obviously he had some health issues. I'm glad that he said he's feeling much better. But yeah, I'd say he has a lot of tough questions to answer in his return, and yeah, I don't trust people easily. He had my trust and he has a lot less of it now. So I don't stand alone when I say that.

Yeah, he'll just have to answer our questions when he comes back.

Q. Out of sheer curiosity, do you remember exactly where you were when you found out about this deal?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: My wife woke me up. I was laying in bed with my French bulldog. We were having a nice little canoodling session, and yeah, my wife woke me up in a pitch black room and informed me of the news.

Q. Do you remember your immediate reaction?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I had one of those, like I don't know who looked worse, me or my little guy. I asked my wife to tell me where the news was coming from, what source it was. It was so early. I just remember laying there and I wanted to go back to bed, and then I was kind of like laying there, one eye, I was like -- then my phone just started going off. Unfortunately I had to wake the little guy up and had to get my day started.

Q. What was the dog's reaction?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: He was sleeping.

Q. Is there a sense that you guys are getting a break from all the off-course focus that has been so much a part of your day the last few weeks? Do you get a benefit playing a course you know, a course you've won well and playing in a different country, playing a different type of golf?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I'd say the best players in the world typically are pretty good at compartmentalising and separating one from the other. When there's something important to do, which is usually hitting a little white golf ball. That's what we do. When we are in tournament mode, for me, at least, my brain sort of goes off and focuses on the task at hand, whether it's a putt, a chip, a drive or an iron shot.

So yeah, it is kind of refreshing. It is kind of nice, and we



are in a completely different time zone than we are back at home. If you just turn your wi-fi off and aren't willing to read any articles, you can just sort of escape, like you alluded to, sort of escape from everything that's going on to the best of anyone's ability on this side versus being sort of back in the US.

It is unsettling at times but to me it's just part of the job, I feel. Us players have a certain responsibility being a member of the TOUR, an ambassador of the TOUR and golf.

I love my job. I love my golf. Not everyone likes their -- you guys hate asking -- or maybe most of you guys hate asking really tough questions. Might be a part of why are job that you don't like and dealing with all this off-course stuff is probably wouldn't be my favourite but it is part of the job and something that we have to deal with.

Q. Do you feel any little peace or little harmony that this merge brought?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Do I feel peace or harmony that the merger brought? I try to be glass half-empty, half-full, but when it comes to stuff, thinking half-full, obviously I would say piece and harmony is definitely the opposite of what the announcement brought to us players for the most part.

But like I alluded to or said earlier, I think in any tough situation, something good will happen. It may not seem like it when you're stuck in, knee-deep in some of that. But for the most part, I do expect some good things to come from everything that's happened, and hopefully it's some of our players getting more of that transparency that we have been asking for for quite some time.

Q. Your first links test?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Birkdale was my first Open.

Q. That was a quick turnaround in terms of getting in at the last second.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I can't remember, it's so long ago. You can tell me.

Q. I don't know the schedule, but getting out here -- what was it about links golf that you really picked up on?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You just don't have to be perfect. Not that you have to be perfect anywhere else, but I guess sometimes when you play parkland golf courses, you know, it's calm and balmy almost, and you know,

you're teeing off in the afternoon and you see someone's shot, 7-under on the front nine, and you go out in the afternoon and you're 1-over after five holes and feel like you're going to lose the tournament.

In links golf, there's way more variables that come into play with the weather and it just can play a lot harder, I guess. If you can sort of right the ship and play steady golf, you know, 7-under won last year. If you knew 7-under was going to win before the week started, you would play the course differently. But you have an idea with the forecast, you see rain and wind and things of that nature, and you understand that and you don't have to be sort of perfect or shoot ridiculously low scores to contend and win.

Q. Secondly, I'm sorry, but when it's the last major of the year, and you haven't won one yet, does it add any type of urgency to it or do you look at the fact that you're still 29 and you have a lot of years ahead?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I really want to win one, as much as anyone else, maybe more. I just need to keep walking my path. It's been different from anyone else's that's my age or won a bunch of them. I'm just trying to stay patient. After you feel sort of let down after certain tournaments, you go back to the drawing board, and sometimes that's not the best thing. We've been close many times and I just need to get myself in those situations more and more and I guarantee that I'll win one.

Q. What was your takeaway from L.A.?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I was playing really, really good golf. Sort of my body got a little crossed up starting on Saturday. I started hitting snap-hooks which is something I haven't done in quite some time, and of course the course started playing a little bit harder at that moment as well and I got myself in some pretty bad stuff swing-wise and body-wise.

Mentally I stayed okay because I knew not to panic. But after starting off so well and being in such a good spot, feeling untouchable almost -- golf is funny. It really knocked me down pretty far with that Saturday, Sunday, sort of how I felt about my game.

After a week like that, I was kind of looking more towards the future than dwelling on what happened, and more so, how I can make sure that -- you know, any sort of check or system of check that I can put in place to make sure I don't get so out of whack like I did.

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