

Genesis Scottish Open

Tuesday, 9 July, 2024

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference

CLARE BODEL: Xander, welcome back to the Genesis Scottish Open. Since we last saw you, you picked up another big trophy. How does the game feel?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Feels like that win was a long time ago. I love coming here and I love coming overseas, playing across the pond and slowly acclimating myself and yeah, just excited for the week.

CLARE BODEL: How does it feel playing in front of the European fans and the Scottish fans? What's the difference?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, just an appreciation. Not that all fans don't appreciate golf but there's a deeper appreciation here. They know what a good shot looks like. Like when you hit 140 yards from the pin, they know when you've that's a good shot and they clap, and that's always nice.

Q. A lot of us were surprised about Keegan. Were you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's surprising. You typically expect someone that's a little bit older to get selected as a captain. I think a lot of people were banking on Tiger to do it. He obviously has a lot on his plate.

So Keegan expressed his love for the Ryder Cup publicly, which we all saw, and I'm sure -- I haven't talked to him or seen him yet, but I'm sure he's over the moon and is going to do a great job.

Q. Obviously with the age that Keegan is, there seems to be a notion that this might be a theme for playing captains. Do you see this as a new breed?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: The younger captains that I've selected are just more likely to be playing. I think when you select guys in their 50s, it's less likely, their 40s, it's less likely they will be playing.

Yeah, if Keegan is in a really good spot coming in, I mean,



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Tiger was a playing captain in The Presidents Cup. He was telling us about how much stuff he has to do besides playing. So knowing Keegan and how good of a job he's going to want to do, he's going to love doing the press and talking about the tournament and the Cup and proud to be an American, all those things. It's going to be really interesting and fun to see.

Q. On the Ryder Cup, do you have any reflections looking back at what happened last year, and what was good and bad about it? And being here, how important is it that you're here this week in terms of Troon, and are you playing the best golf of your career at the moment?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, two pieces. Answer the first part.

Thinking back to the Ryder Cup, I remember getting throttled, that's about it. The atmosphere -- if I try and think of the positives from the week. The atmosphere, our team locker room, those are the things that were really fun. Just being sort of arm-in-arm with my teammates was awesome all week. Then the fans were awesome with their chants as always. So from a golf standpoint, getting throttled is never fun but it is what it is and wore it on the chin there.

The second part of your question was about Royal Troon; is that correct? Some of it, the game is always funny when you come across, you feel bad, and it's just a personal thing. You don't ever, like, land and feel like you're at full speed and striping it and seeing everything correctly because of the time change and a few things like that.

So I'm aware of it and willing to stay patient, and you know, just need to get some good flow in the next day and hopefully on Thursday.

Q. Your journey the last few years, nice high with the PGA Championship, but how important was the win here at The Scottish Open?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, that was unique. I was coming off no wins, similar to what just happened. I didn't win for a couple years. I was able to win stateside, and



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then to travel over here straight after and win again, it was really cool. I was super proud and something I'm still proud of, just to be able to win, of course, but also in completely different country is a really tough thing to do and a testament to sort of consistency and good game planning.

So it was a big win for my team and myself, and those back-to-backs are important.

Q. What are you looking for this week going into next week and The Open?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Overall acclimation. Hitting the putts a little bit harder. When you're playing chips, trying to position yourself on holes, even though you're short-sided, as long as you're into the wind, you have to start thinking that way again.

And then the lag putting is really hard. You'll be on the front of the pin and the pin will be on the front, and you have 50 feet, you pace it off, and you're, like, dang. Whereas back home, pin to front of the green you have 15 feet or 18 feet. Getting used to those small things.

Q. Touching on the Ryder Cup, with Keegan's captaincy, watching from the outside, seeing on TV, seems like quite an intense character. Is that what you get?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: He is so laid back off the course. If you get him in like a dinner setting or something, he loves sports. He'll talk about sports all night long if you like. He's very passionate individual.

On the course, he's intense. That's just how he competes and how he is. I'm sure as a captain he's going to have sort of a mixed bag. He won't be afraid and will get everyone going. I don't know if he's coached or captained any other teams in his life, whether it's his kids' teams or something like that, but when someone is really passionate about something, they usually do really well.

Q. Can you talk about what makes playing in front of European fans special, as opposed to American fans?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think I touched on it earlier. Just a deeper appreciation. There's a lot of golf that's being watched very closely. It feels like, you know, in the U.S., a few times we get a lot of rain and wind, the course is pretty empty.

So it could be blowing 25 and rip and rain here and people will be right by your side in shorts and tee shirt and loving every second of it; maybe a bucket hat that's waterproof. That's the appreciation they have for golf, and it's

awesome to have fans wear the weather with you.

Q. Because of our lack of success in Ryder Cup -- (people are saying) -- they see almost a reset. Do you read the same thing into that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: When you lose that many Cups overseas, you definitely start to get in your own head.

Just like I didn't win a tournament for two years, you look in the mirror and start going, what's wrong here. That's a little different, but they are going to point every single direction.

But at the end of the day us players didn't play well. I haven't watched a lot of Cups overseas where both teams played well and it was super competitive and teams got beat. Myself, I felt like I played awful. I felt like I didn't show up until the final round and it was already way too late to play good golf at that point.

I think having someone that's a little bit younger, I'm going to look at it, I'm a glass-half-full guy. And I think him playing and knowing sort of the trends on tour, you start to see a lot more recovery centers here. You start to see a lot of things of that nature of how we practise and stuff.

I feel like Keegan would understand sort of when we need to get up, when we need to practise, and when you need to do this and hopefully dodge anything you don't have to do and maybe that will help us.

Q. You said you didn't really show up. You're probably going to be on that team. Will you take more responsibility going into Bethpage than you did going into Rome?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, I don't think so. I feel I tried to prepare as best as I can. I just think overall preparation moving forward if we are going to try to win these things overseas, that needs to change. That's been the common trend.

In order to get ready for The Open, guys come and play the week before and their entire team was playing the week before in those tournaments. I feel like we didn't show up early enough. It's on us. It comes at a time where guys want time off after a long season. And to jump right back in or to keep practising, that's sort of the tussle that we have as pros. And being in the States, it's much easier; it's a quick flight wherever you go.

There's going to be some preparation differences moving forward for our team.

Q. A lot of people think that the captaincy is deeply,



deeply important, and some people think the captains aren't that important and it's the players that are more important. From your position as a player, what are things that a captain does that makes it easier to play good golf?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just take everything off your plate. Player pictures and certain mandatory things that you have to do. But in terms of sort of the nicknacky stuff, just try and take away as much as possible for the player.

For me, my obligations, I'm doing media right now, and I only have one other thing that's like 15 minutes this week. But Monday and Tuesday I'm pretty much practising all day and training when I need to and seeing my physio when I need to and all those things.

When you get to the team things, it's the same for both teams, don't get me wrong, but a good captain will try and cut back that stuff as much as possible and make the week as easier as possible.

Q. Is there a captain that's really nailed that job?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I really enjoyed all our captains in different ways. I think we just played better and when we were in the States, we were more comfortable. Going over there, there's this uncomfortable feeling when you get over and getting acclimated.

Q. You've got an incredible record at East Lake. I wonder why that was? What is it about that course that seems to suit your game?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's just hard. It's a really hard course. Doesn't seem like it when you're there, and then you start hitting it off-line. Some of the rounds I really enjoyed were where I hit four fairways or three fairways for the day and able to shoot under par, and it was about to do my head in when it was happening.

It's a tough golf course and the greens are really fast. You have to position yourself. You feel like you can shoot low and then you start to get too aggressive and then you start making bogeys. The greens are perfect. I don't know, I kind of -- my rookie year, I was really blue-eyed going in, just happy to be there. After having a rough start and ever since, I started to play really well.

Q. I wonder if you can elaborate on that phrase you used a few minutes ago about hopefully you can "dodge anything" you don't want to do. Can you tell us what you don't want to do in a Ryder Cup context?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Oh, I mean, there's so many

things I don't want to do, you know what I mean.

Q. Just list --

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Taking a bunch of photos all dressed up. I would be the first guy that I need to flee quickly. It just seems like it's all these little -- even like team dinners or things of that nature, we can have them sort of quick and inside versus having to go out, dress up and all those things.

It's just small things. I think there's two or three dinners that we have to go to that are kind of mandatory-ish, and I think if we cut it down to one or two versus three that would be a really big deal.

I don't dress up and go out to dinner. I play 24 events, and I don't think I dress up and go to one dinner in all those 24 events. Plus my wife, she's amazing, maybe for an anniversary or something like that. She knows when I'm here, it's to keep my head down and compete and that's what I try to do.

Q. Are any of you actually thinking, great, another dinner tomorrow?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, like I said, everyone has to do it. Along with the rest of the U.S. side, we're nitpicking.

I think the most important thing to take away from what I said here, I know it's media is that we're going to have to prepare differently. I think that's maybe heading over earlier as a team together. Not three months earlier or one month earlier. Just a week early or five days earlier, whatever we can agree to. I think that will make a big difference.

CLARE BODEL: And on that note, thank you, Xander.

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