

# U.S. Senior Open Championship

Wednesday, June 22, 2022  
Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA  
Saucon Valley C.C. (Old Course)

## Bernhard Langer

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: So we're happy to have Bernhard Langer here, 2010 U.S. Senior Open champion. You've won 11 senior major titles, first all time.

Does this feel like a U.S. Open for you here at this course?

BERNHARD LANGER: Absolutely. It's a gem. It's a beautiful golf course. I had never heard of it before even though they've had majors here before, but I haven't spent a lot of time in Pennsylvania besides my son going to Penn the last four years in Philly, so it's not far from here.

The beautiful -- the golf course is magnificent. It's beautiful. It's in great shape. It's challenging. You have some undulation. You have extremely difficult greens with lots of slope and very severe -- I don't think we're going to have many straight putts. Every putt is breaking, and not just one or two feet, sometimes ten feet or more.

So it's really demanding. Off the tee you've got to hit the fairway because the rough is very punishing. If you hit the fairway, then you've got to hit the right quadrant off the green sort of thing to have a hope of birdie chance.

Otherwise, you could end up three-putting, maybe even four-putting. So it's a really excellent test of golf for anybody.

THE MODERATOR: So in some ways, it's like a U.S. Open; we're just adding the word senior onto it.

BERNHARD LANGER: Absolutely. It's 200 yards shorter than maybe the young guys might play it, but I would say it's a very similar setup to what I've seen in the U.S. Open.

**Q. Are there a couple holes indicative of what you're talking about in terms of combining the length, the accuracy required off the tee, and the struggles you might face on the green?**

BERNHARD LANGER: There's a lot of holes. Many of



them, not just one or two. One of the most severe greens is probably No. 11, the par-3 that can play anywhere from 220 to probably 180 in distance uphill, and the green is extremely severe. You have to hit it in the right spot. If you don't, there's going to be lots of three-putts, and as I said, maybe worse.

That's just one example. There's holes where some creeks, water comes into play, where it runs across the fairway. If you don't hit it in the fairway, you may not get a 9-iron to the ball or an 8-iron to even get it over the creek, not even thinking of reaching the green.

And then you have to lay up. There's a lot of that. You've just got to hit quality shots from the 1st tee all the way to the 18th green. That's just how it is.

**Q. For guys 50 and older, does that present more of a challenge for four rounds to be able to put that together, that kind of stress for 18 holes, four days?**

BERNHARD LANGER: It shouldn't be. That's what we've done all our lives. At times you might lose a little focus, a little concentration, especially when the temperatures go up in the 90s and it's very hot and humid and you walk a hilly golf course four days in a row.

Your stamina may not be what it was in your 20s and 30s and your focus might wander just for a few minutes, but that could be an all-deciding factor.

Most of the guys have really worked out all their lives, and if not all their lives, the last 20, 30 years. They realize fitness is a big part of it. Hitting the ball further is a big part of being successful, and knowing all of that, there's very few players in the field that are not up for the task.

**Q. At this point in your career, do you still have goals? What else is there to do, in your mind, with the rest of your golf career?**

BERNHARD LANGER: I always have goals. I always want to be the best I can be. I can't control anybody else, how they play, but I know if I play to the best or near my best, I have a chance to win on any golf course or most golf courses.

That's my goal, to just be the best I can be, to play near



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flawless golf. It's not going to happen. I'm not a perfectionist. I know if I would shoot a perfect round I would have a score of 36 because I can reach every hole in two on average. We know that's not going to happen. Nobody's even going to come close to that.

But at the same time, I still make mistakes every day. I hit bad shots or bad putts or make mental errors or misread greens or this or that. There's always room for improvement, and that's the goal, to improve myself. If I can do that, I know I can win championships.

**Q. Are there certain things you have to do both mentally and physically as you get older in life to get ready for these championships?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, yeah, you always have to work on those areas. The physical part gets harder and harder because, as we age -- you know, I'm not as strong as I used to be. I'm not as flexible as I used to be. So I'm hitting the ball a little shorter.

So you're trying to prolong the process of aging and hope that you can push it further back. Mentally there's some guys that are naturally strong mentally; others need a lot of help.

So it just depends where you fall in that category and how much time you have to invest in it.

**Q. For those locally who are maybe coming to their first Senior Open, can you talk briefly about the state of men's senior golf and what they should expect out here?**

BERNHARD LANGER: The guys that qualified for it?

**Q. No, the fans that are coming out.**

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, the fans? Hard for me to say what they should expect or whatever, but I would think they're going to be surprised how good the golf is, how far these guys still hit it.

People have this idea of senior golf, they're playing 6,800-yard golf courses. That was 20 years ago. Like what is this course, 7,000-something and a par-71 or even more than that. If you make it a par-72, we would be into the 7,200, 7,300 yards, and no elevation so the ball doesn't go any further.

That's a long golf course, especially with the rough we're going to be facing and the tough greens. It's one thing to be hitting, whatever, a 3- or 2-hybrid into a green which is flat and big, but not with the undulation you have. You hit a

great shot to 40, 50 feet, and then you're struggling not to three-putt. That's the difference.

But they're truly going to enjoy watching the various players come from all over the world to participate in this great championship, to see the different swings. Some are very unique, and some are very classic.

And just see the various approaches of the guys. Some are short and straight. Others still bomb it. It's fun to watch.

**Q. How much do you tinker with equipment and balls these days?**

BERNHARD LANGER: It's been an ongoing process, I think for many years. I just saw some hickory shafted irons when I registered for the tournament and persimmon headed drivers. I went, man, I used to play those. Not just for a day or two. I used to play them for many, many years.

It looks scary looking at a persimmon driver. Nowadays, I haven't played one in 30 -- I think I was the last one winning the Masters with a persimmon headed driver in 1993, so that's 30 years ago.

Equipment's come a long way from lighter to bigger to better ball, and then the guys are working out. They're all athletes -- most of them are athletes now compared to they used to go to the bar and have a few drinks; now they go in the fitness center and work out.

**Q. When you see Steven Alker's success this year and you know his journey, all the years that he toiled on different pro tours. Why do you think the switch just turned on all of a sudden that he's winning?**

BERNHARD LANGER: I can't answer that because you'd have to ask him. He would know. I think he was a solid player all his life, but something must have happened to take him from solid to extremely good.

Right now he's dominating. He's up there week after week contending for every time he plays. Whether it's a major or not, it doesn't matter. So something happened there. I'm guessing confidence plays a big part of it because success breeds confidence, and confidence breeds success.

So it's a positive cycle. Many golfers are on the other cycle. That would be my guess. But you look at his swing, it looks technically so good and he has all the shots. He's a good putter. He hits it long off the tee, straight off the tee. He hits great irons. I'd be surprised to hear that answer anyways myself.

**Q. How much do you look at scoreboards as the tournament goes on, and how has that kind of changed as you've had success in your life?**

BERNHARD LANGER: I pay attention to the leaderboard, but I'm not constantly -- it's not my main focus. Maybe more so the last nine of a tournament or the last six if I'm in the hunt, because then it could be a big part, whether I need to be aggressive to make up shots or if I can play more conservatively.

If I have a four-shot lead I don't need to make birdies and eagles. I can play to the middle of the green and make pars and pretty much push the other guys to make mistakes.

**Q. The winner of this championship at the end of the week did what well to win it here this week?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Is going to drive the ball well and putt well. That's as simple as that.

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