

U.S. Open Championship 2024

Tuesday, June 11, 2024

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Pinehurst Resort & C.C. (Course No. 2)

Xander Schauffele

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Welcome back to the interview area. We are joined by PGA Championship winner Xander Schauffele.

Xander, just talk a little bit about coming here now as a major champion.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's a different feeling. Obviously a great feeling. Just a completely different test. I like to look at each week individually, and this is going to be quite the test of golf.

Q. Talk about what you've seen so far out of Pinehurst in terms of what it may present in terms of that test.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, very much along the lines of a U.S. Open. Obviously not the traditional one with sort of really long grass, rough and stuff like that, but true test of a U.S. Open where par is a really good score, and 5 sometimes isn't going to hurt you, either.

Q. You've played incredibly well in U.S. Opens, top 10s, top 15s, seven in a row. What is it about that test that brings out the best in you?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just what I bring week to week, just a little bit of extra patience. You have to ramp that up a little bit more during these weeks. All U.S. Opens seem to feel -- they're unique in their own way, but they all feel like par is a great score, and you really have to just plot your way around a property.

I was here a week ago, and the way the course is just for a little tune-up, just to way the course is playing now is significantly different already.

I can only imagine what it's going to look like in two days.

Q. What about the areas around the greens, types of chipping or putting or fairway woods or rescues?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You kind of named it. Whatever you're really comfortable with. I hit a lot of putts today. I was joking with my caddie, we should probably get our

putter checked. I've never swing so hard on my putter for nine holes than I did today, just trying to get up and down mounds. There's certain spots where you feel like you have to hit it really hard, and you hit it too hard you putt it off the other side of the green.

Leaving yourself in a really good position is A-1, but even when you do leave yourself in a good position, the hole is not over yet. It's sort of half the battle.

Q. You've always talked openly about how we're all chasing Scottie. He's the standard now. Has getting the win changed your perspective for yourself knowing, hey, I can catch that, get to World No. 1?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I think I need some more work to -- I obviously believe I can, but Scottie is doing incredible things. Every week we play, he seems to build a bigger lead, and somehow make the mountain even taller for all of us to climb. That's all he's been doing, and hats off to him for being so consistent and playing at such a high level for such a long time. I believe I can do it, but it's going to take some time.

Q. One of your greatest strengths is how all around you are. Is there something you see you can push yourself to get to another level or is it just sharpening little things?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, just sharpening and trying to find some spots. I'm sure there's some weak spots that I'll look at once the season is over to try and touch up on, just to try and make up some ground.

Q. We know about the green surrounds. What are some of the other points of emphasis that Pinehurst No. 2 presents as a challenge?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think if you look off the tee, there is no rough, but you have these sort of bushels and dirt all around every fairway. You can try and -- you can elect to hit a long iron and run it down or if you try and take driver you can be a little bit more aggressive.

The spots get really tight when you hit driver, just knowing

ASAP sports . . . when all is said, we're done.®

that the ball will bounce, will roll, and then you sort of pick and choose your spots, do I want to be 3-iron, 7-iron to the middle of the fairway or 8-iron versus driver, maybe hit the fairway or sort of have to hack out, maybe catch a good lie in sort of that -- I don't even know what you'd call it, that terrain around the fairways, Andy, bushelly, I'm not sure what it is. Native area.

Q. What is your strategy around the greens? Are you going to putt, hybrid, chip? What are you thinking?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I typically default to putting just as a comfort thing. I grew up in San Diego, but the Texas wedge is definitely my friend. Just need to get comfortable there.

There's a lot of spots where people are chipping, so there's times where if you are trying to putt and you have some divots in your way, that makes putting difficult so you will have to chip or 5-wood or get some loft on it.

I'd say most times I'd probably putt unless you really need some sort of spin.

Q. A lot of players talk about golf courses that fit their eye. How does this one fit yours, and do you feel like that plays into your strengths?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, I'm not sure if it's just the big banners and the big stands, but it feels like a big championship golf course. I do tend to like that.

A lot of the tee shots look similar to me. There's no outstanding landmark on every hole. There's just some trees that line and then you see the native area and then you see some cut of a fairway.

But for the most part, I think the course, it'll really reward really crisp iron shots, and if you're a couple feet off, it might penalize you. I think if you can keep the ball in front of you, you can make it a little bit easier for yourself that way, or you're going to have to be a scrambling machine.

Q. What's been the biggest celebration you've had so far, and have you celebrated with your parents yet?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, my dad is still in Hawai'i. My mom flew out. She was in Hawai'i and then came back out to San Diego and she flew out here, so she's out here this week, which is awesome. We'll have some sort of celebration when I'm back in San Diego in a few weeks.

Q. Have you changed your goals now, now that you've got that major checked off?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just checked one box.

Q. Everything else...

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just a lot of unchecked boxes. I just checked one box, which is really cool, obviously a box very much at the top of my list. But still a lot more to do, obviously.

Q. Is there any kind of difference in the psychological feeling you have coming into this major now that you are a major winner?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I'm sure. Maybe. I haven't really teed off yet. But my big goal is always to be in the hunt. I think if I'm in the hunt on that back nine on Sunday, I think it's going to be really helpful knowing that I've done it before.

But in terms of sort of day-to-day or Thursday, Friday, Saturday, I don't think it's too crazy. You're just trying to get yourself in that spot, which I've been putting myself in a few more times this year than the past. Hopefully I can draw back from what happened at Valhalla as a positive there.

Q. Your run of top 15s here, it's been a wide variety of venues, from Erin Hills to Shinnecock and Pebble and all that. Is there one commonality in your good play in U.S. Opens?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Just plotting around a property. It's sort of, I guess, old-school golf a little bit. You play to the fat side of a green. It's okay to lay up on a par-5. Just everything that's sort of -- not against, but modern golf is sort of hit it as far as you can down every hole, get it as close to the green on every hole, wedge it as close as you can, get up and down on par-5s, that type of deal.

U.S. Opens, there is a 480-yard hole, maybe you did iron off of it because it allows you to advance the ball to the best spot to make par versus you thinking of making 3 all the time.

I think just a little bit of strategy with Austin, my caddie, that may give us a little bit of an edge. But for the most part just showing a little bit of extra patience.

Q. How much luck will be involved in week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It depends on your strategy. If you're out there hitting -- you can hit a driver. I played that practice round, and I hit pretty much driver on every hole just for practice, and I didn't end up in one of those bushels in the native area once. I feel like you can go an entire day

and hit it, you can be in three or four bushels.

You go from having an easy sort of wedge. It kind of reacts cart paths. If you get a good bounce in the native area, your ball actually sort of bounds forward versus it kind of plugging like sand because it's firm and compact.

It really just depends on your strategy, I think.

Q. You've often downplayed, Hey, a tournament is just a result, don't let things get too big. Is that a response to something? Have there been times in the past when you did let things get too big?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, not really. I think it's just sort of how my brain ticks. It really is just a result at the end of the day. You plug yourself into this equation, and you hope what you have is good enough. Most times when you make it too big in your head, you don't really show up or show out to the best of your natural ability. For me that's the case at least.

If I get too in my own head, I don't perform at a high enough level because I put too much pressure on myself, so I've learned to take a step back and sort of let it be and let myself play the best golf I can.

I think it's just a mindset that I've always had.

Q. Are you like that with everything or like in ping-pong are you going to get fired up?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Golf is a tricky one. It's not like other sports. I mean, you can, but you're not sitting there showboating, you're not going nuts, going crazy. Tiger was the best at it because it was so genuine, it was so raw. I think that's why we all felt it when he was doing it because he would use that energy, and it would just run through his entire round of golf.

If I was to do that, I would get super fired up and then airmail a wedge on one green and three-putt the next hole, and I'd do all this crazy stuff that I wouldn't normally do because that is just not how I play golf.

If you can let it ride, it's a good thing, I think, let it ride. But for me, I kind of know what lane I'm supposed to be in.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports.