

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW: BERNHARD LANGER
Thursday, November 5, 2015



PHIL STAMBAUGH: Bernhard, 63, 7-under par, matches the lowest first-round score in event history. You birdied six holes within a nine-hole stretch there midway through the round. Nice playing. Just sort of take us through your day.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, got off to a really nice start, hit most of my targets, hit fairways, hit greens and hit it pretty close. Then started to putt nicely, too. I might have made the putt on the first hole but it hit something and jumped up and came up short because it hit that. Generally was almost flawless for the first, what, 10 holes. Then I missed the green on 11, got it up and down though out of the bunker. Put two more birdies on top of that. Just played very solid until I got caught between my wedges. My sand wedge goes about 95 yards and my pitching wedge goes 122, so that's a huge gap of 27 yards and I twice on 16 and 15 I got caught right in the middle or even less than that and I couldn't hit sand wedge and I had to hit a tiny pitching wedge and hit pretty poor shots. But I got them up and down twice out of -- well, once I got it -- 15 was a good two-putt from way long and then 16 was out of the bunker up and down, 17 was out the bunker up and down. But up until that point I played extremely good golf, putted well, read the greens well, had good pace, balls were all going in pretty much in the middle of the hole, not just on the edges, so it was fun.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Can you just take me through your birdies?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, the second hole was a 5-iron to one foot. Then fifth hole, let's see, that was another 5-iron to about six inches. Then 6, that's a short hole, I hit 2-hybrid off the tee, 9-iron to about 12 feet. Then made a fantastic two on 7 where I hit another 5-iron to about 15, 18 feet, something like that. Then 8 was driver, 3-wood 20 yards short, pitched it up to eight feet or 10 feet and made that one. Then 12 was a driver, 6-iron about 15 feet, and 13 was a pitching wedge again about 12, 15 feet, somewhere in that range.

Q. You were putting with that long putter like you were determined to get every last birdie out of it.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, yeah, that's how it looks when you putt well. I know what you're referring to, but I've always said I'm going to stay with this putting method that I've practiced now for 17 years, I'm going to stay with it until the end of the season and then next week maybe the first time I'm really focusing on anything else and trying some different methods and see what I come up with within the next two months. But I putted well today, yes.

Q. Given what you've been doing here this season, this start today seemed like relentless, almost inevitable. We were sitting here watching birdie after birdie after

birdie and here you are 7 under. Did you do anything in particular to get yourself up for this or is this just went out and played?

BERNHARD LANGER: No, I just -- you know, I'm a Christian so I had my quiet time this morning and I just figured it's in God's hand. He's in control and I'm just to going to try and enjoy myself and do the best I can to glorify Him. That's really all. I'm playing to an audience of one, that's Him, and I felt tremendous peace today, I really did. That's when I play my best, you know, when I'm not bothered by anything, I'm just walking along enjoying the scenery and having a blast playing golf and doing it well. So it's the gift He's given me and I've worked hard at it and today we saw the fruit of the labor.

Q. Pretty good job.

BERNHARD LANGER: Thank you.

Q. No, that's a pretty good job to have.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, if it's like this, it's a great job. But for every one that has a career like mine, there's probably a hundred or a thousand that really, really struggle and we don't hear a whole lot about them because they just don't make the limelight.

Q. Have you given any thought to how you're going to handle this transition to the new putter? I mean, have you got a strategy developed yet or you're not even thinking about that yet?

BERNHARD LANGER: I've thought about it a little bit. I've gathered a few putters, different styles, different lengths, different grips. My first thought is I'll probably go back to what I did before I went to the long putter, which was what Kuchar does, holding the putter against the left forearm that way, and Soren Kjeldsen in Europe does the same thing. I putted that way for seven years and I won a number of tournaments including the Masters, and if you can putt on the Masters greens and win with a grip like that, I would think I could do it in other tournaments but we'll see. There's other options, that's just one of the options.

Q. Why did you get away from that? It was successful. Did you just find that the longer one was even better or was there something else?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, I probably had some trouble at some point and wasn't satisfied with my putting, so I just messed around with a bunch of other things and I really thought I would never go to the long putter because Sam Torrance encouraged me to go to that putter two or three years before I went to it and I tried 10 putts on the putting green and he gave me a couple tips and it felt awful. I said there's no chance I'm ever going to end up with this and then I did. If you practice something long enough, you can probably conquer most things.

Q. Do you think that you do this by yourself or would you work with a coach?

BERNHARD LANGER: I don't know yet. Mostly by myself. I can't see Willi Hofmann, my German coach, come in for two months nonstop and working on my putting. I think that would be a little boring and expensive, so no, mostly myself. I might get advice here and there, but I've been around long enough, I've seen all sorts of grips and techniques and this may be the time to try something different.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Touch on the Schwab Cup for a minute, it's close in the race but it's not close in the tournament now after Round 1. Do you sort of keep an eye on (inaudible) or do you just focus on the lead and staying ahead?

BERNHARD LANGER: I'm going to keep an eye on it but the key is I've got to play my own golf, I've got to play my game and that was my mindset going into the tournament. I've got to play the best I can and if I do really well, then I might end up in front of them, and if somebody else is better than me, so it may be it. It's not life and death. Obviously I would love to win, but in the end it's a game and I'm here to do well in the tournament. If that means I finish ahead of Monty and Maggert, fantastic, but if not, all three of us had tremendous seasons, we all deserve to win the Schwab Cup, but there's only going to be one winner in the end.