

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW: BERNHARD LANGER
June 22, 2016



MODERATOR: We'd like to welcome Bernhard Langer into the media room for the American Family Insurance Championship. Bernhard, maybe just get us started, it's been a pretty good year so far with two major championships including one --

BERNHARD LANGER: Pretty good, what do you expect? You guys are tough.

MODERATOR: But, you know, you won 28 tournaments on this tour which moved you one step closer to Lee Trevino's 29, but maybe just talk about the year so far.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, it's been a tremendous year, to have won three times and out of -- how many have I played, eleven or ten, which is pretty special, two of them to be majors. And I had a chance at the PGA as well, the other major, finished third there. So it's been a really good year especially pleased with the anchoring ban that was put into effect in January. Wasn't 100 percent sure how that was going to work out but it seems to be going pretty good. So very happy with the year so far, trying to stay healthy and enthusiastic about the game and winning helps to be enthusiastic. It boosts your confidence, and as I always say, winning breeds confidence and confidence breeds winning, so it's a good combination.

MODERATOR: I know we talked briefly on the way over, you did have a chance to play the course yesterday. What are your observations on this University Ridge Golf Course?

BERNHARD LANGER: Course looks very, very nice, especially the back nine has got some beautiful holes to it and the whole course is in phenomenal shape, really, really good. Has a nice combination of long and challenging holes and a couple that are a little shorter, so it's a combination of everything. You need all the clubs in your bag. You have to drive it well, you've got to hit good iron shots, and obviously the short game is always important. But a lot of undulation changes which makes it tough, especially when the wind blows because you're hitting down into the green or way up and you've got to calculate all that into club selection and the whole thing. And when it's windy it makes it even a lot harder because you're in the trees and you can't quite figure out which way the wind is blowing, if it's whirling or if it's consistent. So there will be some tough, challenging shots. You don't want to short side yourself. A lot of the greens are sloping in from the edges so if you're in the bunker or you miss the green over here and the pin is four from the right, you've got no chance getting it near the hole. So you've got to be aware of that and play smart and play well.

MODERATOR: You are sitting atop the Charles Schwab Cup lead again I think by over \$700,000, but just maybe comment on that?

BERNHARD LANGER: Nice place to be, I think. All of us playing this tour would love to

win the Schwab Cup. I've been fortunate enough to do it three times and would love nothing more than to win it a fourth time. And so far things are going very well, but we all know we have a new playoff system at the end of the year and so we get reranked and you really want to be hot the last three weeks basically, but it probably helps to bring a few extra points into it. So my goal is to just improve my game as I've tried year after year and get better at it, have a better understanding of my technique, my swing, my own game and how to bring my best game to any golf course, any venue that I play and challenge it.

MODERATOR: Questions?

Q. Can we talk about the anchored putter ban and walk us through the thought process to stay with the long putter and to adjust your stroke that way? It looks as though a couple of guys have done that as well?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, for me personally -- I can't talk about the other guys, but for me personally I've spent several months trying any and every putting grip, style, lengths of putter, weight of putter that you can imagine, literally hours and weeks and more hours and just on and on. And, you know, there's a couple alternatives I could fall back to, but in the end when I've tried about everything and anything and when the season came around it was kind of clear to me that it's most comfortable to just not anchor at this point and that's what I've done. I've tried one or two times a different grip which wasn't bad but wasn't quite as comfortable, so I went back to what I've been doing for 17, 18 years, and seems to be working for the most part. Doesn't mean I'm making every putt. I keep missing putts as I always have been, but just by -- people think just by anchoring you're going to be a great putter. If that was the case everybody would anchor. And we never had more than 10 or 15 percent of the golfing population anchor, so --

Q. Do you feel you stuck with it also because of the weight of the putter and the length of it felt good in your hands versus the other things you tried in your experiments?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, it probably felt better because I've been doing it for 18 years, hours and hours. You put that into hours, that could be thousands and hundreds of thousands of hours over that period of time the way I putted. So it's not a surprise to me that it feels better because that's what I've been doing. And that's why, you know, if I ask you to change your grip or change your swing, it's not going to happen in a week or two, I guarantee you that. It's going to take a while and probably similar with a putter.

Q. With the success that you have had this year, two Majors, three wins, at the top of the standings, do you feel like you're the favorite coming in here? And, if so, how does that affect your mentality when you get out onto the course?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, I should be one of the favorites but there's probably 40 others, 50 others. Almost anybody that tees up has won tournaments as a champion. That's why it called the Champions Tour, there's only 80 of us out here on a regular basis

and only the best of the best get to tee it up. But looking at the last nine years of me being out on this tour or eight years, I've won more tournaments than anybody and more Majors than anybody in that period of time, so I should be one of the favorites. Does that affect me? No, not at all. It's a compliment and I know it's a different venue, a different day, another week. Just because I won two weeks ago and four weeks ago means nothing really. I've got to take every shot at a time and play this golf course and the challenge this faces.

Q. Especially at the Masters, but you've shown that you can still compete when you play out there and in some ways kind of a hero to people who are getting up in years. What sort of feedback did you get off of that and then the success that you've been able to sustain out here?

BERNHARD LANGER: I got a lot of great feedback, especially the last three or four years in the Masters because I was in contention I think three times out of four, which, you know, people love to see one of their same age group, whatever, guys do well and they love the underdog to do well. And at my age I'm certainly the underdog playing against the 20 and 30-year-olds who hit it way past me. So I've had some fantastic feedback and great comments and encouragement and it's wonderful, I think. It gives them hope that they can get better and I say that almost every week. I still I can get better at this game and I think I've proven it to some extent and that gives everybody else hope that place the game, whether they do it professionally or just for fun.

Q. Bernhard, can you speak to how important maintaining your physical appearance and staying in great shape? You're one of the guys that hasn't changed significantly looks since the regular tour as you look around. How big a factor is physical fitness out here on this tour?

BERNHARD LANGER: It's hard to say and hard to put into percentages, but I believe whatever you do, if you're reasonably fit, if you work out, you just have more energy, you feel better, your concentration is better, you function better, you can go longer, all that. So it's got to be a benefit. How much I have no idea. I mean, we saw last week at the U.S. Open Lowry doesn't seem to strike me as the athlete as such, but he hung in there and there were a lot of people probably pulling for him just because he doesn't look like a Dustin Johnson. But I think in the long term we look at players like Gary Player, for example, he represents to me the perfect athlete. He's worked out all his life and it pays off. I mean Gary is 80 or somewhere thereabouts and he can still make a full shoulder turn and do some stuff that some 50-year-olds can't do. So he's my example and/or my golfing idol and I think working out is good no matter what as long as you don't hurt yourself and overdo it.

Q. I know this is the first time at the venue, speaking of your experience in the different venues for the Champions Tour. Obviously the whole week has to come up yet, but what's your thoughts, early indications, the city? It looks like it's going to be very successful, Steve's sponsorship in terms of the Champions Tour. Any initial thoughts on your reaction?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, we have a new sponsor, we have Steve Stricker involved, I think that's a great combination. We're in a new market. We've never been to Madison, I don't think. I can't remember seeing a PGA Tour event here in this city. So all that is very exciting, I think. I believe the people in the area that live here will support it tremendously because they don't get to see us very often, and all that seems to be a win-win-win situation. So it should be a great tournament, great success, and hopefully we'll get to come here for many years to come.

MODERATOR: Okay, any more questions? Okay. Thank you, Bernhard.

BERNHARD LANGER: All right, you're welcome.