

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
February 24, 2021



XANDER SCHAUFFELE

RACHEL NOBLE: I'd like to welcome Xander Schauffele into the interview room here at the World Golf Championships-Workday Championship at The Concession.

Xander, different course for this event this year. How do you go about preparing for a new course like this?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Kind of same as always. I think different in terms of tournament play than what we're normal or I guess accustomed to. I think the biggest difference is coming from the west coast to the east coast, coming from poa annua to Bermuda greens. The course is definitely running a little different than last week just purely based on grass type. It's been a lot of extra putting, chipping, trying to get acclimated to the grass.

RACHEL NOBLE: After last week's T-15 finish, you've now finished in the top-25 in 16 consecutive starts, currently No. 4 in the world. Just some comments on the consistency of your game right now.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's kind of a weird stat, I guess. I mean, I'm kind of trying to win each and every week and have been closer at times than other times. I guess consistent golf is always a good thing. My team and my coaches and I, we try to be as well-rounded as possible and I'd say it kind of shows that we've been working on the right things. It's kind of, I guess, a nice pat on the back in a weird way. Obviously us pros sort of give ourselves credit when we win golf tournaments, but if you can make a stat in that kind of department, I guess it's kind of cool, too.

Q. Xander, I know you've gotten close to Tiger over the past couple years. When you kind of hear about the injuries that he sustained, what was your reaction?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Kind of the same as everyone else's, a bit shocked, just a -- yesterday was a really weird day. I think the mood was very somber on the putting green. Everyone was sort of, you know, talking about it. Everyone's head was down. It was very -- a gloomy day, I would say, for us golfers, and I think everyone kind of felt the same way.

For me personally, I talked to him during the delay on Saturday at Genesis. He had just arrived that night. He was in good spirits. So for me personally, it was kind of extra weird, just because the last time I talked to him -- it's not like I talk to him a lot, but I did talk to him for 20, 30 minutes with Dustin Johnson. And he was in good spirits. He was talking about his next MRI and sort of looking forward into the future. And for something like that to happen, it's terrible. I like to take the positives out of every situation, and I think the fact that he came

out alive after taking a look at that pic of the car wreck is sort of what I would like to take out of it.

Q. You guys are pros obviously and you're used to compartmentalizing. Jay Monahan today kind of suggested this might be actually a difficult week for guys to play just because Tiger is an idol to many of you guys. Do you feel that way at all?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, if you want to talk about compartmentalizing, I think he was the best at it. We all kind of learned from him. He played some of the best golf with so much crazy stuff going on in his life, injuries and all kinds of crazy stuff.

Yeah, I think Jay's right. It's kind of strange to share the same idol as everyone else out here, but we all do for a good reason. He is the reason a lot of us are playing golf and the reason a lot of us do what we do.

It is -- it is quiet. I can tell you it's very quiet on site for the most part.

Q. And just super unrelated and one more before I let you go. You're one of the few players that actually played in the NAAs in 2015. What are your memories of that week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: You know, Austin, my caddie, knew I played here. I have no recollection of what I shot. He told me what I shot and --

Q. It wasn't great.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It wasn't great. So me trying to beat Webb Simpson in the strokes gained attitude part of the game, I couldn't remember anything about the golf course or what I shot, so I knew it wasn't going to be very good.

Q. Xander, if I can go back to Tiger for a second, I'm just -- obviously nobody knows what will happen from here. Everybody's hoping he's able to, first of all, be healthy, but the possibility of him coming back. He hasn't played had a lot of events in the last couple years, and I know you're fairly new on the scene, but does this make you reflect and think about what it might be like with him not out there playing anymore and what that may be like for the Tour and for you guys who are getting to know him a little bit now?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I think it's not the way we wanted him to not play golf obviously, but him taking sort of the golf TV and commentating on TV, it was sort of a -- watching him play with his son at the PNC, it was sort of a -- I guess I would call it a back-end move in his career in terms of becoming a father, spending time with Charlie, commentating, sort of mentoring guys like Justin Thomas. He was becoming that guy that -- he became more approachable to us, which was really cool for me personally and a lot of the younger guys out here.

Like you said, the big positive is that he's alive. There's so much speculation right now, and I hate speculating, but I would really hate to see that if he wouldn't be able to play golf again. I think he's had some incredible comebacks and I think this would be, by far, the most epic comeback if he was able to come back and play golf again.

Q. Xander, I wanted to ask you on a different note about the concession, and I'm talking about the one in the 1969 Ryder Cup that inspired the name of the course you're on this week. First of all, do you have any idea what I'm talking about? Some players haven't, and that's cool. If you do know, I want to know what you think of it, if you can see something like that happening in today's game in a Ryder Cup or a Presidents Cup and whether conceding a putt like that is something you would do.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's a good question. I am aware of the Nicklaus/Jacklin concession of a three-footer on the last hole to halve the Ryder Cup. I'm pretty sure those are all the facts I know of that matter. Golf was a gentleman's game, I still think it is a gentleman's game. You can call it more competitive now because more people play it compared to that time.

Can I see it happening now? In all honesty, no, not really. Would I be the one to do it? I don't know. I think it's a really honorable thing what Nicklaus did and it was sort of the true sign of golf at the time, and it was a gentleman's game and Jack was a gentleman and his actions there. I think it's just a different time and it's sort of a different deal here where there's, whatever you want to call it, more blood between the teams and us getting our asses kicked so many times, I don't really see a concession happening, in all honesty, again.

Q. Let me put you on the spot. If there was one player, and it can be American or European or whoever, who would do it? Who do you think that might be in today's game?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's a good question. Well, I took myself out of the equation there, so it wouldn't be me. You know, I feel like for some weird reason, Rory's one of the most competitive people that I know, but he sort of has that knack for history, for golf history and that knack for sportsmanship. Maybe I'm completely full of it, but I maybe could see him doing it. I wouldn't want him to give me the three-footer, but I just really don't think it would happen in today's day and age.

RACHEL NOBLE: Looks like that's it for questions, Xander. Appreciate the time and good luck this week.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thank you very much.