

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
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XANDER SCHAUFFELE

JOHN BUSH: We would like to welcome Xander Schauffele into the interview room here at The CJ Cup at Summit.

Xander, we'll start with the fact of just what the last few months have been like for you, obviously winning the gold medal, also on the Ryder Cup team, wrapping up the PGA TOUR season. Can you just put into words what that has meant to you just with the success you've achieved?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, very American. Born and raised in the U.S. and definitely I feel like I've been representing my country pretty well, so a lot of red, white and blue that I've been wearing the last couple months and I've been trying to wear to the best of my ability.

It's something that's been new for me. I didn't really have an opportunity to play on team events or to represent the United States. I think it's been pretty special to wear the red, white and blue in different countries or even on our soil. Pretty fun, pretty fun sort of time for me, but also very unique as well.

JOHN BUSH: And now you're making your fourth start at The CJ Cup. You finished runner-up last year. Just talk a little bit about the state of your game coming into your season opener.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I was able to take a little bit of time off after the Ryder Cup. I had to sober up obviously after my episode there in Wisconsin, so I'm feeling much better, much more alive. And the game sort of -- you know, I haven't really played a whole lot, but I'm pretty excited to sort of get back into the competitive swing of things.

JOHN BUSH: And then you just had a ceremony with Mayor Goodman out on the 18th green, received the keys to the city. I know that means a lot to you. If we can get some comments on that as well, please.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: There it is. Apparently it gives me all the power in Vegas, so I'm pretty excited about it. I can go to slot machines, any hotel I want, shopping, the whole nine yards. The mayor was telling me all the perks of it, so feeling pretty powerful as of right now. It's been cool. It's an honor to receive the keys. My in-laws live here in Las Vegas. It's a place I visited a lot prior to living here and I feel quickly adopted by the state of Nevada and happy to call myself a Nevadan.

JOHN BUSH: Well, you've just become everyone's best friend all of a sudden. We'll open it up to questions.

Q. Xander, congratulations on the big year. As a Las Vegas resident, I'm curious what went into your thinking of moving here? I know you got married and that probably played a part, but why did you choose Vegas and what do you like about living here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, the move was easy. A lot of it had to do with the in-laws. Maya's my wife. We were dating for seven and a half years when we got married and I'm very close with my family and she is as well. So in fairness, we have a place in San Diego to see my parents and now we have a place in Las Vegas to spend time with hers. Wherever her parents were, they were in Austin, Texas, a little bit and we used to go there for Thanksgiving and Christmas, so wherever they were going to end up, we were going to follow so that's basically what we did.

Q. If you have a place in San Diego and here, do you consider yourself a Vegas resident now?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah. You know, we have a house here not too far from the Summit and it's very nice. It's quiet, it's very dark at night, no streetlights. I really enjoy sort of almost the tranquility of peacefulness up on this western side. I'm not one to go to the Strip much. I think when some friends come into town, that's sort of where they want to gravitate towards, but I'm typically one to sort of be tucked away and quiet with my wife, my dogs and I. That's sort of what we like to do. I very much enjoyed spending time here.

Q. Great. And then as far as golf, the Olympics were big for you and the Ryder Cup was big for you, but how about just PGA TOUR events in general, how did you feel? You've played Tour events, and what are your goals for the new season?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: That's a good question. I feel not that I failed on the PGA TOUR season, but I didn't really accomplish what I wanted to. And I did get worse in certain categories throughout the year, but I was able to step up to the plate in sort of, I guess, tournaments that don't count for the PGA TOUR, or to a certain extent, I should say.

It's an interesting feeling. I feel like I've had success, but then again I missed out on a lot of things that I wanted to accomplish on the PGA TOUR.

So a weird sort of, weird space that I'm in mentally, but overall I think celebrating the Ryder Cup win with my teammates sort of got me over the edge of feeling like I failed this season.

Q. That's a lot to unpack, being in the weird mental space. I don't even know where to go with it.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Hi, Doug.

Q. Good to see you, Xander. In what areas did you decline, do you feel? Every area as you look at kind of your performance stuff?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I drove the ball worse. I mean, the scouts from the Ryder Cup let me know that from pretty much 80 to 140 yards, I got worse, I performed worse. So I told them thank you for the kick in the rear end to be better. I usually don't look at my numbers that soon, but we were at the Ryder Cup and they had all the numbers and I'm guilty of wanting to know what they are, so I just asked them and that's what they told me.

I did do things really well, but I also felt like I lacked in certain areas. But for the most part I finished strong at East Lake, so that kind of made me feel a little bit better, but for the most part I just never really put myself in the right position enough, I guess, or as much as I wanted.

Q. You talk about events that don't count, which I know what you mean, but when you look back at Tokyo and consider the fact that it was important to you, important to your family and you delivered, how much do you take away from that more than that super heavy gold medal?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, more than anything. We've spoke about this before, just the fact that I was able to win, win with the lead. You know, whether it was a par-3 contest out here on Tour, me winning with a lead, I just had to get over that hump and I was able to do it.

And the magnitude of the event in Tokyo, obviously with my family and my dad and everyone there and me wanting it more and more and more as I would fail in final groups, there was a lot of pressure sitting up there. So for me to be able to pull it off, especially in that fashion, something I wouldn't really think of how I would win, was a good feeling.

Q. One last one and I'll maybe hang up, but when you -- if we get back to the counting events, if you will, I think there's been, and the Tour put out a thing, you had like eight runner-up finishes since Kapalua, which is just a matter of record, how do you distinguish between the positives and negatives of that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: It's a process. I'm just really competitive, so I take a lot of those things personally, so you have to fail to succeed. I wish I was a quicker learner. We talked about that as well. I consider myself a slower learner in certain things and I've been trying to increase that curve, but as much as I finished second, I feel like I'm sort of getting into the mental space where I could rattle off eight wins, I wouldn't be surprised. I'm trying to get myself to think a little bit differently.

Q. Xander, we've talked a few times about strokes gained attitude and whatnot, but I want to unpack what you said on the mental game, too. What's the evolution continuing there, because obviously you started using that underdog mentality, you realized you had to sort of put that to the side. Where are you at now?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Evolving slowly. I think that I've -- I'm trying to still figure out what

would be the best for me. I've done a little bit more reading, I've talked to -- not to anyone specifically, but I've spoke about the matter a bit with my team.

It's interesting when you look for help, you always find what worked for someone else and those are the only examples they can give, and when I give advice, it's sort of what I've experienced. So for me to really just be very critical and honest to myself when I do have those personal conversations with myself, whether it's in the mirror or a dark room, those are sort of those key moments for me. And I feel like being super transparent in those moments has sort of shed some light on the important things and the things that I do well.

So I'll sit there, the Olympics, for example, I feel like I was aware that I could win a gold medal and I was aware of how much it would mean to everyone. I told myself, wow, if I'm able to do this, I will have a gold medal around my neck. I let my brain go to that point and then I reeled myself back in quickly.

So in the past I used to try and bury things and try and not think of them. So in that instance, whether it's me reading something in a book or something, it's allowing myself to get to that future point where people try to get you away from, I let myself get there and I try to use enough triggers to get me back to reality so I can compete.

Q. So I guess are you sort of going away from the elite sort of athlete who finds a problem, if you will, to become the motivation? Michael Jordan always did it for a long time, I know Brooks is the one guy who likes to have a chip on his shoulder. Are you trying to get away from that more often or would you still like to use it if it's there? For instance, we talked about the nontour wins, can that be a motivating factor?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yes. I'm very competitive, I hate losing. I think everyone out here hates losing. I think I'll always have a chip on my shoulder just sort of the way I was brought up and sort of raised, but there are times where if you have a three- or four-shot lead or a six-shot because you're playing so well and you've worked on your game so much, having a chip on your shoulder, who are you going to swing at when you have a six-shot lead? Everyone's behind you. So you do have to adapt and I think adaptability is something that's really key out here if you want to succeed at sort of every level.

Q. Xander, three of your wins have come in these no-cut kind of limited field events, and a bunch of your high finishes, that sort of creates this narrative that you're guaranteed four rounds and maybe you can kind of freewheel it and you're just more successful in events like this.

Do you think that's people kind of digging too deep for something and that's kind of nonsense, or do you think there's something to that?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think there could be something to it. I feel like early on in my career I missed, shoot, my first nine cuts on the Korn Ferry Tour, I missed a bunch of cuts on the PGA TOUR in a span. So I played mini-tour events, I've played at pretty much every

level, which I think I can use to my advantage down the line, but I was never sort of this winning kid, or I never really had like an easy time running through tournaments.

So I think if I am playing well and I do get in these no cut events, there's a chance that mentally or subconsciously I am sort of freewheeling it, like you said. I'll take more risk and not really feel any pressure to pull it off because I know there's no penalty in the end.

Q. You said before it took you a while to sober up after the Ryder Cup. Was this a multi-day hangover situation?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I mean, yeah, since college, it was -- I'm speaking for a lot of people that I talked to, we all let it hang loose there in the end and we all had a really good time. Yeah, my wife said she hasn't seen me this bad since college, so you can speak to that.

Q. Xander, I was curious, since you're living so close now, how often do you get to play Summit and what your general impressions of the course are and how you think it will play this week?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I have never played the Summit actually. I've been invited and I just I haven't really made it out. I kind of -- I'm a member at Southern Highlands, I play TPC Las Vegas a lot, or I practice at the back, I should say. Typically I like to play games and certain things like that, so for me to sort of come out here, it would be hard for me to bring out friends or something like that, so I've sort of stayed away from here just for that reason alone. I wouldn't feel comfortable bringing some friends from college out here and just sort of freewheeling it around the property; it's not really one of those places unless you know the owner.

Sorry, I forgot the second part of the question.

Q. What are your impressions of the course so far?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, it's beautiful. We're at a very high point here in Las Vegas and you can see the Strip from holes 2 and 3 just straight down. It's a very pretty property. It is a Discovery property, so everything's pretty top notch, and I think it's set up for a good week.

Q. Since most of you haven't seen it, do you think that plays into the week at all and does that give a big advantage to Collin and Maverick since they're members out here?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I think so. I mean, whether they feel more pressure to play really well, I would say no. They're both Tour pros, they're both highly touted Tour pros, so I think it's more of an advantage to know certain nuances around the greens or something like that.

But for the most part, to speak for the field, we've gone to so many new properties during the Playoffs where I thought the winning score would be this and that and the field managed to blow it completely out of the water. So obviously, you know, aim lower than higher I'd say out here on the PGA TOUR has sort of been the motto, so I really can't put a number on anything.

Q. You're going to either love or hate these questions, it's a little offbeat, but when this Ryder Cup team was finally formalized and you started doing group texts and something like that, was there a number that you didn't have before you guys became a team, because Koepka didn't have like six of them the first time he played?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yeah, I did not have -- I didn't have a fair amount. I still don't have a fair amount, I just added one, Harris just did the Game Day. In all honesty, the group shots, because Bryson don't have an iPhone, like they come in green and then when people will like something, all these messages would run through. So I muted the whole group chat because I would read it and I just didn't want to add to it because I was bothered by receiving Tony liked it, Jordan liked it, Patrick liked it, all these people liked it. It would be individual messages versus like if it was just an iMessage thing, it would just be a thumbs-up on it. So for that reason alone, I mean, yeah.

I didn't have Scottie's number. I think Brooks got a new number, so I didn't have that. I think Patrick has a couple numbers, I'm not really sure. There was honestly a few numbers I didn't have, either.

Q. Are you saying Bryson's got a flip phone?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: No, I'm sure he's got some high-tech phone, but yeah, his whole -- he's in his own world with the phone thing. Everyone's bothered him about it in the past and he hasn't budged, so I didn't even give it any thought to bother him to get one.

Q. You could have stopped after "he's in his own world," but let's move on. The other question I had, is there a difference in these two events at this time of the year I guess when you don't have the Masters looming like you did last year in terms of how you go about your work, any of that stuff just because you don't have a big one waiting at the end of it?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yes. I feel it's more offseason feeling. Putting a major in at the end of the year really, for me personally, I feel like offseason's the time for me to work out more. Any sort of change you want to do to your body that you can physically, like attempt to in the gym, this is when you try to hit it hard.

So I feel that with the Masters looming, I never really had that opportunity because it was so late. And once it was done, I was just mentally exhausted and I just wanted to not do golf at all. I feel like it's feeling a little bit more like I'm nearing an offseason where last year I felt like I had to keep up with certain things to perform at a very high level at the end.

Q. What do you got after ZOZO? Do you plan on anything else the rest of the year?

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: I am going to do the Hero, Tiger's event in the Bahamas.

Q. And Kapalua. Congratulations on your gold medal.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Yes, thank you. That was a very nice reward that they gave me there to let me in.

JOHN BUSH: Xander, as always, thank you for your time. Best of luck this week.

XANDER SCHAUFFELE: Thanks, JB.