

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
August 24, 2023

BERNHARD LANGER



Q. Bernhard, thank you for joining us here at the Ally Challenge. How does it feel to be back here at Warwick Hills this week?

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, it's always great to be back here. We've been coming here for many, many years. I remember being here in the '80s and '90s. It's really a great venue, a good course for the Champions Tour. I think it fits perfectly. The course hasn't changed in many years, not drastically anyways, and with the young guys hitting it much further, this still fits us.

Q. Take a look at the golf course, obviously it's soft, it's going to dry out a little bit, but does this favor your game at all pitching darts against these younger players?

BERNHARD LANGER: No, I'd rather have it firm and running because then you need to be even more accurate, more precise. And it's going to play a little shorter. Being that wet, it probably favors the bombers who can hit the tee shots much further and have short irons into the greens.

Q. A few years ago I talked to you, you shot 64 at age 64, you were absolutely giddy about it, but since then you've broken Hale Irwin's record, defending U.S. Champions Tour, seems like the records just keep oncoming. Is there one that sticks out more than any other or are all these records your children so to speak?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, some of them are more special than others. Obviously what are the odds you're going to shoot 64 on your 64th birthday, right?

Q. That's right.

BERNHARD LANGER: We only play so many competitive rounds a year and that you would shoot exactly that score on that day is very, very unlikely, so that's why I was pretty excited. And it was the first time I shot my age, I think, period. I've done that a few times since, and hopefully I'll have a chance this Sunday when I'm turning 66 to shoot my age or better. We'll find out about that one.

Q. There are golfers everywhere who would love to know what the secret is to such longevity. If you could bottle it and sell it, you'd probably not be playing anymore. What do you tell people who ask that question?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, I get asked that question constantly. It's not one or two things. They want to know the secret, is it whatever, exercising, is it eating, is it practicing.

It's everything. It's all combined. It starts with the DNA, I guess, that I got from my parents to the willingness to practice, to put the time in, you know, to a good coach, caddie, family, and many, many other things. It's not one little thing, it's a puzzle of 20 things that all have to be in place to play well.

Q. So how different is the Bernhard standing in front of us today from the 1985 version, for instance?

BERNHARD LANGER: He's 40 years older, feeling a lot more aches and pains than I did then, but golfing-wise, I've matured obviously. I know more about the game, I know more about me and how I play golf and I accept that. I've learned to take time off.

You just have to make adjustments as you get older. I couldn't practice hitting balls six hours in a row anymore like I used to, that just -- my body won't be happy with it. So I had to make adjustments, and hopefully I'm learning what I'm doing.

The key is or the neat thing about the game of golf is you can still get better at it as you get older. You may lose a little bit of distance, but you have so much more wisdom, knowledge, understanding of what you're capable of doing, whatnot. You can improve your technique by getting better at chipping and putting, has nothing to do with age, bunker shots. It's all technique and nerves. And whatever you lose in distance you can hopefully make up in accuracy.

That's the wonderful thing about the game of golf, you can't get better at baseball or soccer or basketball or any of that as you get older because you don't have the speed or the strength or the stamina, but in golf you can.

Q. With so many golfers on a never-ending quest for distance, I think that studying your game would be really beneficial because distance is not your key to success. Looks like you've adjusted your game accordingly and become so much more precise.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, I was reasonably long when I was younger, I was not short. Distance always played a role in the game of golf, a big role, but more so lately with the change of the golf ball, the way different shafts, different equipment. In my days when I was young, if you swung 10-mile an hour faster than the other guy, you gained 10 yards, now you gain 30 yards.

So there's a huge focus on hitting it further. You look at the best players in the world, they're all pretty much, nine out of 10 are bombers. There's very, very few that can compete on most of the courses being short and just accurate.

Q. The guys who become rookies on PGA TOUR Champions, they're 50, but I would think you probably still consider them as rookies. Do you take a little extra joy out of

beating the kids these days? I mean, they look at you and think there's no way this guy's getting me again, and he gets them again.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, hopefully they know my record and they know what I'm capable of doing because they've heard of me for the last 40-odd years.

Yeah, they're trying to obviously start a new career on the Champions Tour, and we call them rookie the first year as old as they may be. But most of them find it much harder to succeed than they thought. Many of them think, oh, I'm going to be the one on the block, I'm going to be the youngest and the best. They come out here and they find that there's a lot of competition from everyone that's teeing it up. They're all fantastic players. We only have 80 guys on a regular basis that can tee it up, and the competition is pretty tough.

Q. One of the things I've long admired about your consistency on the course is mirrored by your consistency of your favorite testimony. Can you just kind of speak to how that helps inform or shape your life as a golfer and as a nongolfer?

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, it's huge. It's the best decision I've made in my life, and I've made many good ones. Made some bad ones, too, but that was the most important. It influences and infiltrates every aspect of who Bernhard Langer is, everything from my private life to who I am as a husband, father, as a granddad, to a friend to a golfer to whoever. It influences my outlook on life, that I'm really not in control and God is, and that my sins are forgiven because of Jesus, not because of me being a good person. I used to think that I could earn my way to heaven until I started reading the Bible, and it clearly is stating none of us are good enough to get there on our own, but Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for us.

So all of that is huge. It takes a lot of pressure off in the game of golf. It takes pressure off my life in general, and I know where I'm going. I remember when 911 happened, the airplanes were empty, nobody wanted to travel. I had no problem going on an airplane or travel because I know when my time's up here where I'm going to be for eternity, and that's a much better place than this here, as much as we love it.

So that's a long answer, but I could talk about it for an hour or two and give you examples why my faith is so important. It certainly has helped me, I believe, to be the best I can be as a golfer as well.

Q. So how do you define success this week at the Ally Challenge?

BERNHARD LANGER: Being everything I can be that God created me to be. So not necessarily winning the tournament, but treating everybody well and being a Christ-like example.