

# KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship

Sunday, May 28, 2017

## Bernhard Langer

### Press Conference

JOHN DEVER: Good evening and welcome back to the 78th KitchenAid Senior PGA Championship and pleased to be joined by our new west champion, Bernhard Langer. Bernhard, congratulations again. Clearly a historic moment yourself, but also I think golf in general and maybe without getting too specific into the records and the Grand Slams and such, maybe you could explain your emotions in getting this done. I know you've had it on your mind for awhile.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, it's been an awesome ride. The last two weeks were pretty special. To win back-to-back Majors is very unlikely and very unusual. I've done it twice now on the PGA TOUR championships.

But coming in here I knew my game was in pretty good shape after winning by four or five shots last week, but I truly didn't expect to pull it off again and today was a very hard day playing with Vijay and being outdriven and being outplayed at times by a ton. He can reach par-5s, he can drive the -- he did drive the number 8 hole, hit it to about 10 feet with his driver and if I hit driver I'm going to end up 25 yards short of the green or 30, so there was no point to hit driver, so I laid up. But we both made 3 in the end.

I was fortunate to make a bunch of putts, very important putts, even from 20 feet, 18 feet away and he missed a couple shorter ones. So it was very tight race all day long until we got to 16, 17 and then I got my nose in front by two and never looked back.

So it's been a whirlwind of couple of weeks for me personally and hopefully this is encouraging for the older people that are my age that they can still improve their game, that they can still play good golf and get better even at age in the late 50s or early 60s.

JOHN DEVER: Okay, questions?

**Q. This whole week and for most of your career you just hit loads of fairways. Do you think that was wearing Vijay down at all? He seemed to have trouble with the driver particularly on the back nine.**

BERNHARD LANGER: I don't think my driver wore him down, but maybe my consistent play and my good putting did. He probably could see that I wasn't going



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to let up, that he had to really win it. He wasn't going to get away shooting even par or something like that, he really had to go and make some birdies. And he did, he started off driving really well, but then he did hit a couple in the left rough. But I mentioned to my caddie, it's incredible how good he was out of the rough. Every time he was in the rough he hit it pin high. He didn't just get it somewhere on the green, well except on number 11, he just got it to the middle of the green not pin high. But every time pin high. Sometimes from pretty far away.

That's extremely difficult to do because you get fliers or you don't get a flier or you have such a bad lie that you can't even move it 180 yards or whatever, 160 yards. And I was really impressed by that.

But I think what really frustrated him was my putting. I made a bunch of putts just to keep in touch and he really didn't make anything. He hit two fantastic shots on to number 7, the par-5, right between the bunkers, I mean the opening is six yards wide and he hit some kind of second shot in there. I couldn't even reach that green. So, again, he hits it there and then he 3-putt for a 5 and I wedge it up there and almost make birdie. So it's, that's probably the kind of thing that wore him down in the end. Just the putting stroke, his putting stroke doesn't look really good right now, but he's had that before and he will figure it out. I told him on the green, I said, you know, you played like a champion, and I know what you're going through, because I had the yips four times in my career, I missed lots of three, four five footers myself and I said if you get your putting right, you can win any tournament in the world still because you're still long enough and straight enough to do so.

**Q. Take me through the 16th hole. Did you feel like you needed to press your advantage there because you were in the fairway and he wasn't and go at the pin and the putt looked good from the minute you hit it, so that must have felt great.**

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, as I was walking down 16, I realized, I mean you're so in the moment that there's only three holes left and I didn't want to be tied coming into 18 because he can definitely reach 18 probably with an iron and I might not even reach it with a 3-wood. So again, I have the disadvantage. So I figured I needed to at least get one in front somewhere

on 16 or 17 to have a chance on 18. And I hit a beautiful 6-iron in there and made a great putt. Had a good read, hit it with the right distance and the ball did exactly what it's supposed to do and that gave me a one advantage.

Then on 17 we both hit it similar distance, actually, had to go up a crest and then a little bit down and I rolled it up there like this (Indicating) and he misjudged his first one, left it well what was it, five foot short or something? And then didn't hit a good putt and gave me a two-shot advantage going into 18.

**Q. You mentioned having the yips four times and that's an incredible thing to even say out loud. Why are you able to putt so well now? What's been the, how were you able to turn that around?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Well I'm pretty comfortable now with the way I'm, the way I've been putting, the way I've been practicing with this putter for 17, 18 years. It was tough for me to go from anchored to non-anchored, I would be lying if I said it was a piece of cake, it wasn't, it took several months of very hard work and dedication to get somewhat organized with not anchoring it. But I found a way now that I feel reasonably comfortable most of the time, not always. Last year I putted pretty good and this year it's been all right, too. So it's encouraging for me to see that even under pressure that I can make some putts and so that's exciting for me personally.

**Q. Breaking a tie with Jack for most senior Majors or winning all five of the Majors, is one more special than the other and as a follow-up to have your daughter here to help celebrate with you, what did that mean?**

BERNHARD LANGER: It was fantastic to see her. I went into the fitness center, like I always do, to stretch and get warmed up in the morning and I walk out of there into the clubhouse and my daughter's standing there. I'm thinking she is in Seattle where she was yesterday. So I said, what are you doing here? She says, well, I'm just surprising you. So that was a cool moment. Totally unexpected. It actually put a little bit more pressure on me because I figured, heck, if she's here, I better win this thing so we don't want to finish second or third or something worse. But it was really fun having her out there and now we're going to celebrate a little bit this evening together.

**Q. It's neat to think of Vijay growing up without many resources in Fiji and you growing up in Germany in a similar sort of way. Both in your 50s and you wind up here in the same place and you live more of your life probably in Florida than anywhere else. But to get right to it, have you ever thought about becoming an American citizen or are**

**there road blocks to becoming an American citizen and what's your general feeling about how the world comes together to play golf in this country?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Well I think that I have been giving it some thought to become a U.S. citizen. But I haven't done it yet. I have a German passport and I might do it in the future, I don't know yet. I'm married to an American and we raised four kids in America pretty much. What was the other question the game of golf? Yeah, it's great to see that the whole world now plays golf. They play golf in China, in Russia, and communist countries where golf was not ever played. Eastern Germany, what used to be Eastern Germany years ago, golf is pretty much everywhere and it's growing and we see some great talents coming out of Korea and China and Near East, Far East, whatever you want to call it, from all over the globe to challenge the golfing powers of America and great Britain, if you want to call it that way.

**Q. Why do you and Terry make such a great team?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, we have a lot in common. We're both believers in Jesus Christ, which is the most important. We both pray. We have the same faith. And we both married American ladies and we both have four kids. We both live in Florida. We're the same age. He's actually that's one thing that kind of ticks me off is he's one year younger and they always say, that's your son caddying for you, right? I say, no, I can't have a son that is that old. Anyways, but he's a very hard worker, so am I, but I think he even outworks me. Like he must have been out there this morning checking out the golf course again and doing certain things. So, I appreciate that about him. He's totally dedicated, he's very loyal, and faithful and those are some of the things that I am, too. So we get along pretty good. We have our little arguments here and there, like most player and caddie relationships run into, under the heat of the pressure, he sometimes explains to me why and I say, don't preach to me, I need to hit the shot, I don't have three minutes listening to why this and why that, you know, we got to go. So that's one thing he sometimes doesn't like when I cut him short, but I don't have that much time out there. We got to move on. Otherwise we would still be out there. But he's a great guy and very fortunate to have him on the bag.

**Q. Becoming the first player to win all five senior Majors, what does this mean both for you in context or in context of your career and where you are now and your career as a whole?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, it means a great deal to win two Majors at age 59. I'm not sure many people have done that. And to surpass Jack's record of eight Majors out here is pretty neat. I'm a good friend of Jack's and I think very highly of him and whenever you

can do something just similar or close to what he's achieved, you've done something pretty special. So I'm excited where my game is at this point and looking forward to hopefully a couple of more good years on the PGA TOUR champions and then we'll see where it takes, just got to try and stay healthy and keep a solid mind.

**Q. Most people reasonably believe it's time to make your great success as a senior right after you turn 50. You've now won seven of your nine Majors in the second half of your 50s since you've been 55. Have you surprised yourself at how this has all unfolded?**

BERNHARD LANGER: A little bit, yes. But my goal when I came on this tour was to be one of the better players. One of the maybe top-5, top-10 dominant players out here. And I think that I've achieved that. To, when you look at the statistics, I think I glanced at them briefly awhile ago, not lately, but they say the guys have the most success from about 50 to 54 -- 53, 54, and then the curve goes down. Well, I'm trying to change that. I look at the exceptional players out here, I look at Tom Watson, Hale Irwin, Jack Nicklaus, Sam Snead, Bob Charles, Gary Player, those guys that have lasted longer than most guys. And so I'm trying to be a part of that group and so far I'm doing well but the future will tell where that goes.

JOHN DEVER: All right, we'll wrap it up with our 2017 Senior PGA champion and thank you, sir, on a job well done.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, thank you very much.