

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
November 7, 2018



BERNHARD LANGER

LAURA VESCOVI: Bernhard, thanks for joining us here today. Welcome to the Charles Schwab Cup Championship.

BERNHARD LANGER: Thank you.

LAURA VESCOVI: Another incredible season, you're here at No. 1 in the standings yet again. You had six runner-up finishes, which I think is best in terms of runner-ups, two wins.

Do you pride yourself, do you feel a sense of pride that you're here again in that position? You work so hard. Do you recognize that in yourself?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, of course you recognize it. You work all year to get better and to have success and to be in the position I'm in going into the last tournament of the year. There's a lot at stake, as we know; not just the Schwab Cup, but the tournament itself is a huge tournament. Then there's Player of the Year honors, there's Leading Money Winner, there's all sorts of different things that many of us have goals to achieve. It's pretty special to, you know, have a chance to win some of that again.

LAURA VESCOVI: You're in the hunt for a fifth Charles Schwab Cup, but this is actually a tournament you've never won before, so does that give you an extra boost of motivation?

BERNHARD LANGER: Of course it does, yeah. Ideally, you would like to win every tournament on the whole tour, but that's very difficult to do. I've come close a couple times winning this one but haven't done it yet, so I had better get to it. It's as simple as that, right?

LAURA VESCOVI: Exactly. Well, you had the chance to play the course today. How was it playing compared to last year?

BERNHARD LANGER: It's very similar, I think. It's in great condition, the greens are phenomenal, the whole golf course is really good. The bunkers are well maintained, everything seems to be in very good order. The forecast is wonderful. I think the green-keeping team has done an amazing job to present the golf course in probably as good condition as it can be.

Q. Beginning of your PGA TOUR Champions career, if someone were to tell you you would be playing and in great position to win your fifth Charles Schwab Cup, what would you say?

BERNHARD LANGER: I would have thought that's pretty amazing or pretty special, and it

is. There's a lot of good players out there. You just go up and down the tee sheet or the participant sheet and there's some legends, there's some great players, and on any given week anybody can win, it's as simple as that, and we've seen it happen. So to be there consistently is not easy.

Q. In terms of mentality, you've been in this position before. Does anything change this week with your lead?

BERNHARD LANGER: Not really. My lead is -- you know, I have a big lead over some, but a slim lead over others, and there's double points with a lot of prize money, so a lot of things can happen. The easiest way would be to win the tournament and you don't have to worry about anything else. If that shouldn't be the case, then yeah, I'll be keeping an eye on some of my closest competitors and see where they're at.

Q. This is not tournament related, but a few months ago you won the Payne Stewart Award. What was that like for you in celebrating during TOUR Championship week?

BERNHARD LANGER: That was an amazing honor for me, you know, to be recognized for the things they celebrate the Payne Stewart Award with, like character and charity and all that kind of stuff. It's pretty cool.

And on top of all that, I was pretty close to Payne Stewart for a number of years. Even though we were competitors, we were friends at the same time and had a few things in common and shared some good times and sometimes some not-so-good times as well. But our families got to know each other and spent some quality time together.

Q. A lot of players like yourself and Miguel and Colin played most of their careers on the European Tour and have come here to play on the Champions Tour. Why do you think that is? What's the allure to bring you guys here?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, it's by far the best senior tour in the world, there's no doubt about it. It's the best probably organized and run tour with the most prize money. We have one in Europe, the senior tour, there's one in a Japan, but it can't compete with this tour and I think that's the reason.

Plus, in my case, I married an American, I've lived in Florida for many years, so it's easier for me to play in America where it's home now rather than fly halfway around the world and play tournaments there.

Q. When those guys made their transition from being European Tour players to come to this American tour, was there any advice you gave them?

BERNHARD LANGER: Not really. I just, you know, told them it's going to be a lot harder than they think it would be and I think they all know that.

My hat is off to anybody that doesn't live in America and plays this tour, like Colin Montgomerie or Paul Broadhurst or even Jimenez. They do the back and forth, back and forth, whatever it is, 10 times a year, 20 times a year. That's extremely tiring when you're young and have lots of energy, but certainly when you're over 50, it's a grind. It takes a lot out of you and it's incredible that they're willing to do that.

Q. This year, after two years of this tournament being a 54-hole championship, we're now playing 72 holes this year. Do you feel like that's a fitting conclusion to the season?

BERNHARD LANGER: Absolutely, that's why the players who are on the committee voted for that. After last year it was three rounds and we just felt this is one of our biggest tournaments on the tour and it should be treated like a major, it should be four rounds, and everybody agreed. I don't think there was anybody that -- you know, the key was to see what the sponsor thought because we used to have two pro-ams and now we have one pro-am and pro-ams are income, for the money. So financially they had to look at that, but I think in the end everybody agreed that that was the way to go forward.

Q. After such a dominant campaign last year with all the victories, admittedly probably a little bit of a sluggish start this year, I don't think you won until May, what was slowing you down earlier in the year, how did you fix it, and are you still amazed that even after a sluggish start to the year, you're still the guy everyone's chasing coming into this week?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, I always believed in myself, but I thought if I was that dominating last year, why shouldn't I be one of the top players this year? So it was just a matter of there were times when my putting wasn't quite where it should be, and if you have one stroke more a day than usual, that's three or four a week and that's too much.

So I had to work on my putting very hard and figure out what's going on there. And then sometimes the ball-striking wasn't quite what I was used to, I didn't hit as many fairways or as many greens. Worked with my coach on that. So after a fairly short period of time, you know, early in the season we figured it out and had a really good spell there in -- I can't remember now when it was, around April, I think, when I won one and got into a couple playoffs and lost those. But I was playing really good golf, put myself in a very good position to win tournaments and to be in contention, and then it pretty much continued throughout the season.

Q. As a follow-up, we asked Scott Parel this, but certainly you win this week, you win the whole thing, but there is some math involved. You probably won't check that or think about it during the round, but at the end of the day, at the end of Thursday, Friday, Saturday, will you look at the leaderboard to see where Scott is, see where Jerry is, see where Miguel is maybe compared to where you are?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, absolutely. I think maybe not the first day or two because

there's a lot of golf to be played, but come Sunday I think we're all going to look and see what we need to do to improve our position.

In the end, you've got to play your own game and get the best out of that and be up the leaderboard as high as you possibly can.

Q. I interviewed you a long time ago at Arnold Palmer's place down there and you still had a 4-iron in there from Ben Hogan. Do you still carry that around?

BERNHARD LANGER: I did until the middle of this season, yeah. I actually had a 3-, 4-, 5-iron from Ben Hogan and that was 18 years old until it lost -- got out of the bag. It was replaced now.

Q. There's one other thing. I saw you down in Barbados and every once in a while you hear somebody say something that really means something to you, much more than just the game itself. You talked about your family and faith, and somehow that has just stuck with me all those years and I really appreciate it.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, you're welcome. It means a lot to me. Those are some of my priorities and that's far more important than whether you win or lose a golf tournament.

LAURA VESCOVI: Thank you.

BERNHARD LANGER: All right, thank you very much.