

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**August 23, 2020**



**BERNHARD LANGER**

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**Q. Bernhard, thank you so much for joining us here at the Charles Schwab Series at Ozarks National. Before we get started on this week, let's just talk a little bit about last week. You came so close to earning your 42nd title. Can you just take us through that final round a little bit in the playoff?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, we had -- everybody in the last group had their chances to pull ahead by making a couple of putts or so. Kenny had the lead and I'm sure he was very disappointed, Kenny Perry, with his bogey on the last, but his 3-wood off the tee went a little too straight against the wall and ended up making a very good 6 in the end.

So it was down to, you know, could Shane and me make a birdie and we couldn't. The hole wasn't reachable and we just didn't manage. So then it was a four-way playoff. The three of us did not hit good tee shots, into the right bunker where you can't reach the green. Shane got the best tee shot off and then hit a great second shot with a fairly good bounce, too.

You know, looked like if he misses his putt, I might have a chance from five or six feet to tie him with a birdie, but he made a wonderful eagle. There's not a lot you can do about it, that's playoffs. It's often one or two shots at the right time or one or two bad shots and it's all taken care of.

For me personally, I've lost two playoffs now here. A couple years ago, Tom Lehman and I were partners, we lost a playoff when Kirk Triplett holed a bunker shot in the playoff, and this time I lost to an eagle. That's how the game is, but happy to put myself in that position.

The game's looking fairly decent. Felt pretty comfortable there on the weekend -- "weekend," the last two rounds I should say -- and look forward to this week. This is a brand new golf course for me, never been here before and it's beautiful. It looks like we're on top of the world looking down on everything.

**Q. Did you have a chance to play the course yesterday?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** I played 13 holes, I've got the other five to play today. It's beautiful. It's in great shape, fantastically manicured and good conditioned. I think Crenshaw designed it, would that be correct? He did a great job, I think. It can be quite challenging, especially when the wind blows, and I imagine the wind will blow up here as exposed as we are.

So I'm still learning about this place, where the pin positions may be. A little bit of wind change here, 10 miles from the south or 10 miles from the north, will make a huge difference in what clubs you hit into the greens. They're also some of the largest greens I've ever seen.

I felt like I'm in St. Andrews where they have 70-yard greens. Here there's three or four that are over 50 yards long, pretty big. So practice some of my long putts, let's put it that way.

**Q. Of course, the big news this week, too, is the debut of Phil Mickelson. Can you just give us your thoughts on what he'll bring to this tour?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, Phil's had an amazing career and still plays at a very high level. It's great to have him out here. It will be a thrill to be paired with him or to have him in a field. I'm sure any tournament or any sponsor will be happy to see Phil. It's great the guys who have come out lately with Ernie Els, Retief Goosen, Mike Weir and on and on, I'm forgetting a handful here, we've had some very strong players join the PGA TOUR Champions the last couple of years. Jim Furyk just made his debut and won right away, so it's going to get tougher and tougher as we go along here.

**Q. Just to ask you as well, coming back here to Ozark mountain country and obviously your history on the Champions Tour right here in Branson, Missouri, just give us a little bit of insight. How good does it feel to be back here in this area, seeing this course for the first time? How good does it feel to return?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Oh, it's phenomenal. This is one of the most beautiful areas that I've seen around America, maybe around the world. What Mr. Morris has, you know, created here is exceptional. Every golf course is unique, different designer. He's got a 13-hole course, he's got the par-3 course, he's got I think three big courses. It's becoming a golf destination.

And he does a great job with his greenkeeping staff to keep the places in fantastic shape and it's worth a trip for anybody to come here for a weekend or even a whole week and play all these different courses.

**Q. To kind of follow up on that, what would you most want to say to your fellow golfers, maybe those that have not come up on Champions Tour just yet or have not had an opportunity to come here and play? Obviously we've got Payne's Valley that's going to be opening up in September, some potential big tournaments for Tiger Woods and people that he is connected with, what would you want to say to your fellow golfers to encourage them to come here to the Ozarks and experience golf here?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, it's definitely worth the trip for any golf lover. You can play so many different venues and golf courses and they're all right here, you don't have to travel an hour or two. Once you're here, it's all within two or three miles and you can have a fantastic experience.

On top of that, if you like fishing or hunting or any outdoor activity, it's all right here. It's certainly a place worth visiting.

**Q. Curious about just this sort of two events in one location, two days off and back to it on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Do you like that?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, it's very unique. It's new for all of us, I think. I've never experienced having Saturday, Sunday off and then playing Monday, Tuesday Wednesday in a tournament, but I think we like it. It's more condensed for us, so we don't have to travel anywhere, we don't have to change hotel rooms or wherever you're staying. You get an extra two or three days at home. We're done Wednesday night and we have the rest of the week off. So I think all of it is very positive. Players seem to embrace it and love it. Even though you're in the same spot, you're playing two totally different golf courses and different venues, which makes it very interesting.

**Q. Curious, back to Phil for a second, like you've obviously seen different guys make their debuts over the course of your career out here. What sort of challenges do you think -- obviously people think he might come out here and win just like a Furyk or an Els, but what kind of challenges could he possibly face?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, I think there's a good chance he might win if he plays well, but if he doesn't bring his total A-game, he might be surprised about the competition out here. I think that's just about what everybody says. It's not just me, but most guys that have come out here, "Oh, I'm the youngest, one of the longest," they find it difficult to win and they are surprised about the scores we shoot.

Many of the people on TV, they ask me, "So what is the length of the courses you play, about 6,600?" I go, "You're kidding me. We're in the 7,000s." And sometimes -- we played the SENIOR PLAYERS at Firestone a couple weeks ago, that was about 7,000 yards and it was a par 70 or 71. If you add another 200 or 400 yards, par 72, you're looking at 7,300, 7,400. That was a lot of golf course.

**Q. And my only other question was, you'll turn 63 on Thursday right after we finish here. Just your thoughts on turning 63 and what you're going to do to celebrate.**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, I'm looking forward to being home with my family. Going to fly home Wednesday night hopefully, if everything goes smoothly, and be home on my birthday, which doesn't happen every year, either. It will be great to bring a trophy with me, but if not, we're still going to celebrate just life, just being here. Even though they're weird times we're going through, but we have so many reasons to be thankful for and count our blessings.

**Q. Talking about weird times right now, you're used to week in and week out playing on these courses, your fans watching you 10 deep, 20 deep sometimes. How does it feel right now for you and the other players on the tour to not have the fans out? Is it a strange feeling? Is it something you're getting used to?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** I don't want to get used to no fans; I love fans around and having the big cheers and the roars. It's very weird. It's very different, to tell you the truth. It's hard to

get used to. I've seen a couple holes in one and there were no cheers. Seen great shots, eagles and there was nothing. They announce you on the first tee and nothing. We've got to be each other's cheerleaders in a sense, the caddies and the players. So we truly hope this is going to pass by soon and we'll get the regular experience back.

**Q. Thank you.**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** You're welcome.