

**May 2, 2013**

An Interview With:

## **BERNHARD LANGER**

**PHIL STAMBAUGH:** Good to return as the Schwab Cup leader this time for the Insperity Championship?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, it's many reasons to be thankful and grateful for. It's a great venue here, it's a wonderful tournament, very well organized. Many of us have played here on a number of occasions and to come in here as the Schwab Cup leader is always a good thing.

So I had a good start to the year as you know, and hopefully that kind of form will continue in the weeks and months ahead.

**Q. I read you said a couple weeks ago, this is the best start you've had. What has gone into that and did you do anything different, practice more?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** No, it's not necessarily practice more. I usually practice quite hard anyways, not necessarily in the off-season, but when I'm out on TOUR and just I think just trying to still get better.

If I believe I can get better, my swing can improve, my short game can improve, and if I can just do that by two or three or five percent, if I can shave off half a stroke a day or a stroke a day, it would be phenomenal.

At the end of the week that, would mean winning five or six times instead of winning once and finishing third or fifth a few times. So that's the goal and you can still get better mentally, and there's always room for improvement.

Yes, I'm going to be getting shorter as I get older and don't have the strength and the flexibility that I used to have 20 years ago, but I can make up for that in other areas where I'm mentally better, where I'm technically better, and I know myself better and I know how to play and attack certain golf shots and golf courses.

**Q. You said you would probably get more satisfaction at this stage of your career playing smarter and better and reading courses better, as opposed to just whacking the ball just an extra 20 yards; is that true?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, what is true is the end result. Obviously it's the number on the scorecard that matters, and it doesn't matter how you get there. I've had some good scores playing fairly ugly golf and I've had some good scores playing good golf and every day is a little bit different.

But as I said, the key is to still improve and believe that you can and I'm convinced that I can as long as my body holds up to practice a certain amount, I can still make improvements on my technique and if I can do that, I should be able to hit more good golf shots and less bad ones.

**Q. Your ratio of victories to tournaments is obviously very high on the Champions Tour. I guess when you look at what Hale Irwin accomplished out here, is that somewhat staggering? I look at your numbers and think, geez, you must be close to the lead?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** No, what Hale Irwin did was staggering. One thing, we are not comparing apples with apples, when he played most of in his prime, they had 40 tournaments out here or something like that, or 42 even, for a number of years.

I'm playing 18 to 20 a year; he probably played a whole bunch more, imagining, for a number of years, so he had more opportunities to win.

But you know, I told him yesterday, we chatted for a little bit and he said, "Well done, and take it easy now."

And I said, "Don't worry, your record will never be broken, it's not going to happen" (laughing).

**Q. But your success, maybe this is true of every golf tournament you've ever played but you're probably disappointed when you don't win a tournament.**

BERNHARD LANGER: There is certainly times when I'm disappointed, yeah. There's times when I finish second and third or something, or even fifth and I messed up. I feel like I had a good chance to win and I should have won if I had done certain things better or played smarter or whatever. But that comes with the territory.

So you know, when you enter 20 tournaments, you're not going to win all 20. There's going to be up-and-downs and there's going to be some thoughts that were wrong, but you're not doing it on purpose. You know, you look at it later and the next day or that evening, and you say, well, this was not the right thing to do at that time.

But when you're under pressure, under the heat of the moment, you have to make decisions. We have to make lots of decisions out there, and not all of them are going to be perfect.

**Q. What do you think what you do out here on this tour does to your golf legacy, yourself, Irwin; how do you judge what the Champions Tour record should do to a player's resumé, let's say?**

BERNHARD LANGER: I really don't know. I'm not here to judge and I don't know if other people judge and recognize it or not. It's none of my business. I'm here to have fun and do the best I can. That's all I'm trying to do.

How much recognition we get or what other people think about me or the Champions Tour is totally out of my hands. I'm here to do the best I can, entertain the people that we have and give the VIPs and the amateurs a great day when I play a Pro-Am with them and give back to the communities that we raise charity dollars for, give back to the sponsors and the tournament in general, and have fun doing it. Because I'm only going to have a few years left, let's face it. It's not going to last forever.

**Q. How many years do you have left?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Nobody knows. God knows and He hasn't told me.

**Q. Do you feel like you're playing as well this year as you were five years ago, if not better?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, might be playing as good as I played 15, 20 years ago, who knows.

**Q. Does that surprise you?**



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BERNHARD LANGER: No, not really. Because as I said, as long as my body is healthy enough to do what I'm trying to do, it doesn't surprise me, because I'm still eager to play. I love to compete and I love to win. And if you still have that drive, why shouldn't I get better. I just told you a few minutes ago; I believe I can get better. If I believe that, I can do it.

**Q. Fred Funk was in earlier and commenting on the greens, how have you found them?**

BERNHARD LANGER: I haven't played the course yet. I was delayed. My flight was four hours delayed coming in on Tuesday, so I arrived here at 8:00 when it was dark or close to dark. So I've only seen the putting green.

I've always liked the greens the way they were before. I enjoy putting bermuda and fast bermuda and they were always that. So we'll find out how these play. It's a different type of grass I understand and we'll see how settled they are or unsettled. Don't know.

**Q. He said they are playing so fast that he could see even par winning this tournament this year, especially with the weather that's predicted.**

BERNHARD LANGER: I don't think the greens are fast. I think that's a misquotation there. The greens are not fast. They are hard. There's a difference between fast and hard.

**Q. Couldn't get anything to hold.**

BERNHARD LANGER: So any front pin you won't be able to get near the hole. And if you're coming out of the rough, which we are all going to miss a few fairways some, where that ball is not going to stop because you come out of the rough, the ball has less spin, you get flyers, you might not even be able to hold a wedge on the green coming out of the rough. So driving is going to be very important this week with these firm greens.

**Q. Is that your experience with this kind of grass previously?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Not the type of grass but when you have new greens, they are always rock hard. Our course was re-done in Florida about five years ago, and all the members were bitching and complaining about the greens

are too hard, and that's how they are. You know, you make them that way, takes about a year, eight months and then they soften up.

**Q. Last night on the practice green, you were holding a short putter; an experiment?**

BERNHARD LANGER: No. I talked to Matt Kuchar at the Masters briefly and watched him hit a few putts. I think he's one of the best putters on TOUR. I used to putt that way if you remember for seven years.

If they should go through with this ban, which I hope and believe that they don't, but if they should, I might go back to that. And I might even try it if they don't ban it just because I know I can putt that way. I won my second Masters that way.

So it's just a matter of messing around with stuff. So I just ordered a putter that way.

**Q. How do you feel about that discussion?**

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, I've talked about that many a times. I think it's ludicrous. I think they missed the boat. They should leave it alone. It's going to hurt the game, not help the game, by banning anything, banning the long putter. They have much bigger issues to deal with than the long putter. It's been around way too long.

Give you a quick, what do you say, example. Who is using the big-headed driver? Who? How many percent? Come on, that's a simple question. 100 percent. I don't see anybody using a Persimmon or --

**Q. Less than 460 --**

BERNHARD LANGER: Not many. So let's face it. There's 100 percent, okay, not 95. There's 100 percent using a big-headed driver, with what kind of shaft? Graphite shaft, 100 percent. Why? Why?

**Q. Longer and straighter.**

BERNHARD LANGER: Exactly. Because it's an advantage. That's why.

Who is using hybrids? Just about everybody, because nobody can hit a 1-iron, 2-iron, at least not the amateurs, 3-irons. So they are using hybrids. Why? Because it's an advantage. Well, how many are using a long putter? 100 percent? No. 15 percent at the most. Why? Because it's not an advantage. It's not easier.

**Q. It does work for some people.**

BERNHARD LANGER: It works for some but they work very hard at it. So why ban something if it's not, you know, totally out of control or an advantage or whatever? Makes no sense, sorry.

**Q. If it makes you shoot better, therefore, it's aesthetically more pleasing for --**

BERNHARD LANGER: You've still got to work hard at it. You know -- - don't give that long putter, ball goes into the hole by itself. No. I've still got to read the green. I've got to make a stroke. I've still got to deal with my nerves. It doesn't go in by itself, trust me. I've used it for 15 or 17 years and I've had many bad days with it.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Thank you.  
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