

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT: BERNHARD LANGER
Thursday, May 1, 2014



PHIL STAMBAUGH: We welcome Bernhard Langer into the interview room today. Bernhard, two-time winner of the Insperity Invitational. Off to another great start this year leading the Schwab Cub with a victory in the season-opening event in Hawaii and you've been amongst the top three in five of six tournaments. Just your thoughts on coming back to a familiar place where you've had a lot of success. I believe your first victory was here on the Champions Tour.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, that's correct. It's been a lot of fun playing in Texas over the years and especially at The Woodlands. I remember playing, was it the Shell Houston Open or just the Houston Open here years ago in the '80s? This is, you know, a great test of golf. This golf course has proven itself over the years. It's an outstanding layout and it's usually in great condition. It's always fun coming back here.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: Just talk about the game a little bit coming in. You've had a great start to the season.

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, I've had a wonderful start, been in contention most weeks I've teed it up. It's fun, just playing good golf, very consistent, had lots of Top 10s lately and it's always nice, you know, being amongst the last two or three groups on Sunday and playing for the title. It's great to see some of the new guys come out that we've had over the last year or so, and there's a lot of great champions and it just makes competition even tougher.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: You just finished your pro-am round, so maybe could you talk about the course and how you think it will play?

BERNHARD LANGER: Yeah, it's interesting. The course was really, really firm when I played Tuesday afternoon. The greens were pretty firm and you had to land every ball eight or 10 yards short of the hole to hope to get it near the hole even with a shorter iron. I guess that was the case yesterday and they poured a bunch of water on it overnight or this morning and it was a lot softer. The greens I'm talking about, the greens were a lot softer this morning. They might dry out again with the good weather that we're having, a little bit of wind and sunshine, so it's going to play a little bit firmer in the afternoon than it does in the morning. It's difficult to say. The thing that's really tough is the wind. It swirls around just like it does at Augusta along the pine trees and it's never quite consistent here and it's very difficult to figure out which direction it's going. There's a lot of water hazards here close to the edges of the green or near the pin positions where you need to be really precise and it's just tough to pull the right club and hit the right shot at the right time, so that's going to be a challenge if it's windy. Then, as I said, the firm greens add the new greens that we

have here, it's a different type of grass and we all have to get used to that. They used to have Bermuda greens. I don't know what this grass is called, but it's certainly a little different type.

Q. Bernhard, your consistency over the last couple years has been extraordinary. Most people think as we get older it's harder to maintain consistency. How have you done that?

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, I disagree with that actually that it's harder because the older we get. The more we should know our swing and the more consistent we should get because I don't have to learn a new swing. I'm actually repeating hopefully the same thing over and over. I understand that the body's getting older and we're not as strong and as flexible and maybe don't have the young nerves anymore or don't have the focus and concentration that we had in our 20s and 30s, but we should have a better technique, we should have a better understanding of the golf swing, the techniques, the various shots that I can hit or can't hit. I should know my whole game a little bit better. I think just because of that you can be consistent. But it is difficult to continuously be in the Top 10 because there's so many great players out here. All it takes is one or two major hiccups or just an average round and you're not in the Top 10, so that part is difficult, yeah.

Q. (Inaudible)

BERNHARD LANGER: I've been very blessed to be playing some really good golf, yeah, the last few years. I'm planning on enjoying it while it lasts. I know the clock is ticking and it gets harder and harder once you get near that 60 and over-60 mark, but there's been some great players like Hale Irwin and Tom Watson and Gil Morgan, Larry Nelson, they hung in there for a long time so I'm hoping to do the same thing.

Q. You've been blessed with good health. Obviously it's not just accidental. What are you doing in the gym to stay so sharp?

BERNHARD LANGER: I've always enjoyed working out and you just feel better, you have more energy. It's no fun aching every morning when you get up. I've experienced more of that over the years, but you try and defy time by staying in shape. So I work out, I enjoy working out, just do some cardio and some weights and the basic stuff to feel better. That's really what it's all about, and to stay flexible as long as I can.

Q. Do you spend more time on the driving range than the average golfer?

BERNHARD LANGER: My whole life I've probably practiced more than not the average golfer but the average professional. I was a hard worker throughout my career. I learned that from my parents, they both were extremely hard workers. I've never had an issue with that. I enjoy actually practicing for the most part and I hate

playing bad, so I figure the more I put in, the more I'm going to get out.

Q. With the challenges that you met on the golf course, you're one of two players after 18 holes to win this tournament the last two years to have a lead after just 18 holes. With the challenges, does that tell you that you have to get off to a fast start in this tournament to give yourself a chance to win or does that tell you that they'll kind of play themselves out during the second or third round?

BERNHARD LANGER: You never know. Anything can happen in this game and especially on a golf course like this, too. You could have a great start and lead wire to wire, or you could have an average start and still win it on Saturday or Sunday by shooting a great score, breaking the course record or whatever. Anything can happen in this game and it usually does.

Q. Have you spent much time playing much with Monty? It's fun to have him in the mix now?

BERNHARD LANGER: Oh, yeah, I've played a lot of golf with Monty in the Ryder Cups and on the European Tour. I was paired with him the first two or three times he teed it up here the first day or the first two days in the majors, so I probably played more with him than anybody else out here the last year or so.

Q. We're told he lost his wallet today, so keep your eyes open.

BERNHARD LANGER: Well, there's more where that came from.

Q. Talking about the course's firmness and the wind, what's the key to scoring well on this course?

BERNHARD LANGER: It's to hit good tee balls, but then also be very precise with your iron shots because some of the greens look big but there are small pockets and you have to hit them. If you don't, it can be very difficult to get up and down. Or if you dump it in the water you're going to get penalties left and right. Water comes into play on many holes actually and it's really in play. Some courses water is just kind of there for the eye, for the beauty of it, but it's really not in play. Here, the water is in play on at least I would say six to eight holes. That's my guess, I'm not sure. With the wind and all that, that makes it difficult. And then you always have to make putts. You're never going to see a winner of any tournament if he doesn't make some putts, that's just how it goes. If you have 80 guys teeing it up, there's always a handful that roll them in and a handful that hit the ball great.

Q. Just kind of changing course a little bit, ask you a Jordan Spieth question. Have you ever seen a golfer at age 20 as mature as he is?

BERNHARD LANGER: Not very often. I mean, we've probably had a few. I've used the words "old head on young shoulders" before, but he certainly fits that description, yeah. He's very mature and I was impressed by what he said in some of the interviews and the way he plays golf obviously.

PHIL STAMBAUGH: We're all done, thanks very much. Good luck this week.

BERNHARD LANGER: Pleasure, thank you.