

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**May 1, 2019**



**BERNHARD LANGER**

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**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome, Bernhard, to the Insperity Invitational, a place that you know very well. Your first win came here, you won it again last year. What's it mean to come back to a place where it started and where you've had continued success?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, it's always more fun coming back to a place where you've done well than going to a place where you just have this apprehension of I've never had any good finishes here. Even though my first win was at Augusta Pines, but it's a memorable win. Then we moved here and I think this was a great move. This is a wonderful facility, great golf course. Probably closer to town where there's more golfers and all that. I think it was good for the tournament and I'm certainly thrilled to be back here defending my title.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** It's hard to win anywhere out here, but I would say it's especially hard to win repeatedly like you have at this same tournament. Would you agree with that?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah. I mean, in general they say, you know, statistically they say that guys win the most tournaments from age 50 to 55 and then they kind of drop off. I'm trying to prove them wrong, amongst a few others.

So yeah, winning four times over a span of, what, 11, 12 years I think, it's pretty unusual.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Last week you took the week off. Got two big events coming up, this week and then major season starts next week. Let's focus on this week and the amazing field that we have here at the Insperity Invitational. What's it going to take to add a fifth title?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, it's going to take a lot of great golf. That's usually what it takes any week, but with the field they have, even more so. The golf course we play and the windy conditions we're probably going to have, so it will be a real test of, you know, anybody and everybody's ability in all aspects, from driving the ball to hitting good iron shots in windy conditions and then making putts. So keep the ball out of the water, out of the trees, all those are priorities here.

**Q. You've won so much on different golf courses, but what is it about this course that you like?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, my first reaction would be the fast greens. We always have good and fast greens here, but there's obviously more to it, but putting is the most important thing of any victory. You've got to putt well on any golf course. And I'm a much better putter in general on fast greens and bermuda greens because I kind of lived in Florida now for a

long time. I can read bermudagrass fairly well because that's where I've been for the majority of my time, so that's what I like.

But there's much more to it. You know, you have some extremely tough pin positions here, some holes where you -- water comes into play big time and you just have to hit a gutsy shot, you've just got to commit to something and pull it off, and if you don't, you're either in the water or way over or way short or something.

So it really is a demanding golf course on at least I would say eight or 10 holes. Then you get a couple of breaks where you feel like I sure hope to make birdie here, but nothing is guaranteed. And a lot of the greens, if you miss them, they slope off and the ball runs down the hill. Now you're facing a pitch shot from way down into the grain with no green to work with at times. So short-siding is not a good thing around here. Not a good thing most places, but especially here.

**Q. Obviously you got off to a great start last year in the first round. What was kind of the key to that and how important is it going to be to do the same here this year?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, when we only play the tournament for three rounds, you've got to have three good rounds. It's very unlikely that you're going to win with a mediocre round or a poor round. So all three scores have to be decent.

It's nice to have a good first one because you're in the lead or near the lead and you can see what's going on and you have a good feel for the golf course.

What needs to be done? You've got to hit a lot of great shots, make some putts, avoid double bogeys and even bogeys if possible.

**Q. What do you think about the challenge of the field that's here this weekend?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, we just talked about how strong the field is. It's great for the tournament, it's wonderful for Insperity and the spectators here that have been so faithful to our tour. They come out every year in great numbers and Insperity's been a wonderful sponsor, so they deserve to have a very strong field and they certainly have it this year. That's going to make it even more challenging to lift the trophy at the end of the week.

**Q. Is that something you've noticed each time you come through here, both of those things, the strength of the field and the support from the fans?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Oh, absolutely, yeah. You know, there's some tournaments where you get a stronger field and then some tournaments you have more spectators or fewer spectators. Yeah, we notice that.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** You're a World Golf Hall of Famer yourself. Are you able to sit back and appreciate being able to still compete with other World Golf Hall of Famers on a weekly

basis and especially here at the Insperity Invitational?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Oh, yeah, that's one of the fun parts of being on the PGA TOUR Champions. You play against guys or with guys that you have known 30 years, maybe more at times. You're friends with them, you know their family, but you know their kids, even their grandkids at times. There's just a camaraderie that you don't often find on the PGA TOUR because you just don't spend that much time together and everybody's out to build a career.

Many of us, especially the Hall of Famers, they've had their career. We're not here to prove anything. We don't need to prove anything. We've been there, done that. We're just trying to enjoy the gift we've been given and, you know, the natural talents we have, the gifts we have honed over the years by practicing and working hard, and knowing that this might only last a few more years depending on how old you are and how healthy you are.

So most of us are out here to try and enjoy it. At the same time, we're all competitive. It's a wonderful combination. It's a beautiful working climate if you want to call it that way. Whenever somebody wins you get tons of congratulatory texts and notes from other guys; probably not so in tennis and other sports where it's kind of more selfish and more man to man.

**Q. Bernhard, is that one of the things that drives you? You said you don't know how long -- how much longer this will last, but you've been so successful on this Champions Tour. Of course, you were successful on the regular Tour, but is that that extra oomph that drives you every year?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, I've always been a driven person if you want to call it that way. I always say whatever I do, I want to do it 100 percent. You never see me do a half job, you know. Whatever it could be, it doesn't matter, I want to do it as well as I can.

That's the same especially with my profession. So when I come out to a tournament, I'm going to give it 100 percent and I'm trying to be prepared. I'm not coming here to go on vacation. If I'm going to go on vacation, it's not going to be at a golf tournament, I'll go somewhere else. That's just how I live life. That's what I was taught as a young man, to do a good job no matter what you do.

**Q. When you first joined the Tour, did you envision this much success, or what did you kind of set realistically what you thought you would achieve out here?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** I had no idea. I knew I had a pretty good career on the European Tour, the regular Tour. I figured if I stay healthy and play my normal game, I should be one of the top-5, top-10 players out here. But no, I didn't know it was going to be this good, no clue.

**Q. What do you do to stay fit?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Just, you know, work out. When I'm home I work out almost every day. Some cardio, some weights, some bands, using my body weight. Just a general workout where everything is -- most muscles are involved, and then a little more golf specific where you need to have a strong core. Lately I've been working on trying to improve my fast twitch muscles maybe a little bit because as we get older, you're going to lose some strength for sure, can't stop it. My swing's gotten a little shorter than it was. All that is just age. So you've got to try and make up for it in other areas, by having better technique, a better understanding of the golf swing, a better understanding of myself, what I can do and what I can't do, and use all that to get better instead of worse.

**Q. Bernhard, your friend Fred (inaudible) said you're the most mentally tough athlete he had ever been around in his life. Is that what carried that mental toughness?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, mental toughness is important, absolutely. If you put five guys with the same game out on the course, the guy that's mentally stronger is going to win more than not. So yeah, that's a big part of our game because we all have time to think. You can think this way and you can think that way, or you can react this way and react that way. I think, yeah, usually mentally I'm fairly good. I have my moments when I'm not great, but I try to put those aside as quickly as possible.

**Q. Is that what hurts us most weekend golfers, we're not mentally tough enough?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** No. People think that's the case. But what's your handicap?

**Q. Sixteen.**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Okay. You could be the best mentally tough person in the world, I will still beat you even though I'm not mentally good. Guaranteed. Putting the house on it. And you know why? It's not mental, it's just I have better technique. When I have a bad day I shoot 76 or something, and if your a handicap 12, you're going to have a hard time shooting 76 even if you're the best mental person in the world. Do you understand what I'm trying to say?

**Q. Yeah.**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** No, it's not just that. There's a lot more to it.

**Q. You're No. 1 all-time money winner on the tour and I guess you've won a tournament 13 straight years, I believe you won six times at the age of 60 or older. Is there one thing that you've done on this tour that you're most proud of?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Nothing I can really think of. I mean, what I'm maybe most pleased about is I won 10 majors, more than anybody else, more than Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player or anybody. That's hard to do. You're talking the best players in the world. So whenever you can hang with those, it's pretty special.

And then, you know, been out here 11 years I think and I've won 10 money titles. I don't think anybody else has done that, either. Or five Schwab Cups or eight Players of the Year or whatever it is. It's been a fabulous run and I've just got to pinch myself sometimes. I'm very grateful and blessed to, you know, have been able to do this the last 11 years.

**Q. I would think since you're more than competitive, you're winning, having a good time and you're healthy, have you been thinking about there's no time where you say, hey, I'm going to call it quits? You're just going to keep playing?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Hopefully when that time comes I will know it. I don't want to be one of those that hangs around just to take up a spot, take a spot away from somebody else because I have nothing else to do. I don't think that's me. I'm too competitive in that way.

So when I feel that either my body is hurting to the point where it's no fun anymore or where I'm out here and I'm finishing 60th every week, or 80th, then it's time to pack it up. I think if you're used to winning or being in contention, that's the fun or big part of it, so you want to have that feeling that I think I can still compete. That's why I'm still playing in the Masters, because I feel like I can still compete. I'm not out there making a nuisance of myself shooting 85 every time I tee it up. Certainly even more so out here.

**Q. You brought up the Masters. Obviously you were there when Tiger finished. What were your thoughts about how that weekend went for him?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, it went very well for him. It went awesome. We all probably thought he had a good chance; he's won several Masters before and he's been in good form going into it. He won the TOUR Championship, as we know, and had a lot of other good finishes even in majors leading up to it. We knew he was going to be one of contenders if he plays his game and doesn't make too many mistakes. He was right up there in the hunt, and if you put him in the hunt and he smells blood, then he usually comes to the top. I think it was terrific for him personally, but also for the game of golf in general.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Thank you very much and good luck this week.

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Pleasure. Thank you.