

Bernhard Langer

Q. Bernhard, welcome back, that is the storyline this week just shy of three months from your injury. You have so much history here at the Insperity. Why was it this Tournament that you were so motivated to come back for?

BERNHARD LANGER:

First, I am thrilled to be back and as I had surgery and I was talking to my surgeon and my PT – you know how long will this recovery be and they were well, 4-6 months, and I was like I got this tournament that I'd love to play, it's in 3 months. And they were going, well, we don't know about that. I love this Tournament, Insperity. I have won it four times, it was my first victory on this Tour. The other thing I was arguing with my PT and my surgeon is that Houston is very flat. It is like south Florida, easy to walk and get around. It is not hilly. They finally agreed after I played about a week ago and showed them I am capable of doing this. There are no restrictions, I am not in pain, and they all said alright you have our blessing – go and be careful.

Q. How was it driving up yesterday, being welcomed back by the guys, just the camaraderie out here?

BERNHARD LANGER:

It was unbelievable, just great. Everybody was like 'what, what are you doing out here?' Always pulling each others chain basically and having fun. So many friendships, and the camaraderie is just better than anywhere else.

Q. Where do you feel your game is at now coming off the surgery and how it appeals to this golf course?

BERNHARD LANGER:

Ya that is a great question and I'm not really sure if I can answer it. I played in the Pro-Am yesterday, played pretty good actually, hitting the ball fairly decent but when you are out there under pressure and you got to do it, it is different. The pin positions will be harder, the wind and all that, I don't even know how far I hit the ball precisely. It is all a bit of guess work. My expectations are pretty low, and I try to keep them that way which is not like me. I usually have a game plan and big expectations but I realize I have been gone for a long time and lets gradually work my way into it and I think in a couple of weeks I should raise my expectations and play some really good golf.

Q. What about Houston appeals to you, coming back to play this course and the Tournament?

BERNHARD LANGER:

I love the Tournament. I think it is one of the best. It is run by wonderful people, by Bryan Naugle and his group. Insperity is a great sponsor, they have great leadership with Paul Sarvadi and the whole team. They really are true professionals and I love the golf course on top of it. Generally, we have very fast greens here which I enjoy. Lot of water hazards so you need to be very precise, can't afford to miss a lot of shots and I think that is part of the reason I have been reasonably successful around here.

Q. Bernie you talked about expectations. Can you share them with us, or is it where you place in the Tournament or is it a score?

BERNHARD LANGER:

No, it is neither really. It is just trying to get back into the game, and see how it feels. But I don't expect to win. Most tournaments I arrive and I'm hoping to be in contention on Sunday afternoon, and I know I may only win one, or two, or three a year, but I'd like to think I am one of those that might have a chance. I don't really expect that of me right now, not this week and maybe not next week either, but in a few weeks from now I think I should be expecting that again. And, so that is where I am. I lowered my expectations a little bit, just because I haven't competed in golf for a quite a while. My left leg is still not 100 per cent. I can't walk properly. I can't bend down properly. It's not that I'm fully restored, and I got to be patient.

Q. How different is that for you?

BERNHARD LANGER:

It's different. I'm a very competitive guy and it's hard for me to accept that I may just be playing a role here and not being in contention, but it's happened many times in my career before and I am just happy and blessed to be back here competing.

Q. Next month, Padraig will be joining the Hall of Fame. Your thoughts on that and Padraig?

BERNHARD LANGER:

Ya, it's fantastic for Padraig to become a Hall of Famer. He deserves it. He's won three majors, he's won all over the world. A great career everywhere. Wherever he's been, he's been successful. He keeps evolving himself. He's one of those tinkerers that always tries to find a better way. Not just hit it further, but hit it straighter, become a better putter, what else can I do? Even when it comes to eating, I talked to him a few years ago, I said 'You look like you have lost some weight, what are you doing, you look great?' He goes 'I came up with the idea that if I just eat a third of the dessert I usually eat, I am saving a lot of calories. I still get to eat what I want to eat, I just eat a little less. Typical Padraig, he just kind of researches everything and figures it out I love the guy, I am thrilled for him, he deserves it.

Q. While you were gone, Ricardo Gonzalez has joined our Tour, he got the win at Trophy Hassan II. Thoughts on have you played with him, is there any history with you guys from the DP World Tour, or just overall thoughts on him joining the Champions Tour?

BERNHARD LANGER:

Ya, congrats to Ricardo, that is great news. We did play a couple of times, not too often but I know like most Argentinians, he hits the ball a very long way so Padraig get ready, you have some competition.

Q. Bernhard, you know what it is like to win multiple times here, Steven has done it back-to-back. What can you say about the way his game fits this course?

BERNHARD LANGER:

Well, Steven is just a complete player now. He's to me one of the best iron hitters, or second-shot hitters, in the world. He controls his distance very well and that, I think, that is very key here. First of all, you have got to keep the ball in the fairway because this Bermuda grass, rough, is very difficult to judge how the ball comes out with no spin, or less spin, or a lot of spin, it is just inconsistent. So, driving is important and he is a very good driver of the ball. But, I think his real strengths is his iron play and that's what you need around here. You need to be spot on.

Not just somewhat straight but you need to control your distances. There are various holes you come in over water and if you don't hit it the right distance, you are going to end up in the hazard and get penalty shots or get punished for various other reasons. As I said, that's where I see his strengths, but he is really good at everything and he has proven that over the last two or three years.