

**PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW**  
**June 6, 2018**



**BERNHARD LANGER**

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**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Welcome, Bernhard, to the 2018 Principal Charity Classic.

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Thank you.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** You've been off for a few weeks. You attended your son's high school graduation. How was that? Was that a fun family experience?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yes, it was a great experience. The school did a wonderful thing when they handed over the graduates, and we had a wonderful party with some friends and family members and everybody was talking about Jason, our son, you know, a few words. It was great to be home and to be there for him.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Great family celebration, but also it has to feel good to get back out on the road and get back to Tour life. How's the game looking these days?

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, it's not too bad. It's tough to know. I had two weeks off, as you know, and I went to Germany for five days to visit. Did some business and also visit my family over there. A little jetlag involved, a lot of travel, but it's great to be back out definitely and work on the game.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** How long have you been back in the States since you --

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Got back Sunday.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** And now this is your, I think, fifth start here in Des Moines. Talk about the golf course, what it's like to play in front of the fans here in Des Moines.

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Oh, the fans are amazing. They're probably the best in the country. Really a wonderful turnout here. They've really embraced the tournament over the years. Great sponsor, fantastic people who run an organized event and super volunteers.

The golf course is challenging, you've got to drive the ball very straight. A lot of undulation, a lot of slopes, very seldom do you have a flat lie. Every shot is either uphill, downhill, sidehill, something is going on, and smallish greens with a lot of slope on them so you've got to try and keep the ball below the hole to have an uphill putt, which is often not possible. If the pin is four yards on or five and you want to land it on the green and it bounces forward, you're going to have a downhill putt. So those are the challenges, to first hit the fairways so you get the proper spin and distance control for your second shot, and then keep the second

shot below the hole so you have a chance of making a putt and not having to worry about three-putting or four-putting.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** All right. I'll open it up to questions.

**Q. You were talking about how to play Wakonda and you've really last year showed maybe you're learning your way around pretty well.**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** It's a slow learning curve.

**Q. I mean you guys play courses a lot of times and this will only be the third, fourth time you're playing it, so do you feel like you've got a better grasp of the course now?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, I think so. I was a little frustrated playing here the first couple times. It was my worst finish of the year I think once or twice, so I tried to figure out why would that be.

I came in here with confidence and I felt I was playing okay, so how can you finish poorly when you have everything going for you? So third time I came back or whatever, fourth time, I try to pay even more attention than I usually do on what I need to do around here to be more successful. Last year was encouraging, I was in contention. Sometimes it just depends whether you make a putt or two or whether you get a break or not. The competition is so tight out here that one or two shots can make a huge difference.

**Q. What do you take most pride in, or can you differentiate, 37 wins or winning at least once 12 years in a row, which you did this year and it was an all-time record?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, it's difficult to say. It's just been an awesome run on this tour the last 10, 11 years. To have won 10 majors and then many other events, one every year and on and on it goes, to be the leading money winner, I think. I'm not sure, nine out of 10 times? That's very difficult to do when you're facing the competition I've been facing out here. Very, very blessed to have been in that position and hopefully will continue for a little while longer.

**Q. What have been maybe some of the struggles you've had to the start of this season for you and how do you plan on turning it around this weekend?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, some of the early struggles were probably putting. Didn't putt quite as well as I had been, but then I had a really good stretch. I was tied for the lead, lost in a playoff; I was tied again, lost in a playoff; then won the third week. So three weeks in a row it was very good and the week before that was the Masters, where I played fairly well. So there was a very positive stretch of four weeks in a row, and then we had the Tradition where I finished 11th and didn't play poorly there, either.

So lately it's been pretty good. It's been back to the standard that I was hoping to be.

**Q. We asked you last year, I think you were 32 wins, about catching Irwin's record of 45. You said it was kind of a long shot, then you proceeded to win five times after leaving here, now you're within range. Is that a goal? Is that something you even care about?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** It's not something I focus on. I focus on just my daily work ethic and trying to be the best I can be today. If I do that and succeed, then I should win another tournament and maybe another tournament, and who knows, in two or three years I might be there.

But I also understand it gets harder in the 60s to win than it is in the 50s, so I'll just -- can't control what everybody else does. As I say, I don't focus on that, I focus on trying to shoot the lowest score every day and then see where that measures up against the competition.

**Q. Last year you had your daughter working on the bag for you. This year is she back or have you got somebody else caddying for you?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** No, I have my professional caddie, Terry Holt. He's pretty much 90 percent on the bag all year and it just so turned out that last year one of my daughters was caddying.

**Q. How long does it take to settle in to this course? You talk talked about the challenges. Do you ever get comfortable out here, does it take a certain number of holes?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, I'm not sure you get totally comfortable because, and it's not about how many holes, it's just that you're always on an uneven lie. People don't understand how hilly it is. Even if you hit the fairway doesn't mean you're on a flat lie; the feet are below the ball, above the ball, there's always something going on.

I think one key to be successful around here is to hit the fairways because if you don't, and it's not easy to hit the fairways, if you don't hit the fairways, you come out of the rough, you can't control the spin or the distance. You think it might be a jumper or a flyer and it doesn't, or it really jumps and then you're not going to be close to the hole, you're going to be missing greens or have a very long putt.

The other thing is you will have less spin coming out of the rough so you're going to end up at the back of the green instead of the front of the green. Most of the greens slope back to front. That means if you end up in the back, you're going to have a downhill putt, which is really difficult around here and tricky, so all that plays a part.

**Q. With rain expected overnight a few times this week, how does soaking into this course maybe slow it down for you guys or change this course for you?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** It will make it play longer, less bouncy, less firm. Hit another club or two or three more into the greens. May be a little softer will also keep the ball on the fairways a little bit easier. That's really about it. Softer might play into the hands of the very long hitters, they can still reach the par 5s even though it plays longer, while some of the medium hitters might not get there any longer.

**Q. What do you enjoy about the pro-am, these two days here leading up to the actual tournament? I know that everybody gets a chance to play alongside you really enjoys it, but what is it like for you guys?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Yeah, I really enjoy meeting four new people that I haven't met before most of the time. There's a lot of great people in the game of golf and in the various cities. I met some of my best friends actually in pro-ams or even a couple of my sponsors.

I understand they're excited, they look forward to it, so I'm trying to help them with a couple of tips and make them relax. They're usually pretty nervous the first few holes, so calm them down and just tell a few jokes if necessary or possible. Just have a good time. I mean, this is one way for us to give back to the sponsor, to the tournament, and then at the same time it gives us an opportunity to play the golf course one more time just before the tournament starts and see where my game is at.

**Q. Is the charity aspect something that makes this tournament maybe something a little different than most that you play in throughout the year?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, most tournaments actually give lots of dollars to charity, so this is not unusual. Some more than others, but that's really the real winner is charity every week. We raise millions and millions of dollars throughout the year and that's a wonderful thing for the community and we appreciate all the volunteers.

**Q. You mentioned the two weeks off. Are you refreshed now? Did that come at a good time?**

**BERNHARD LANGER:** Well, it didn't come at a great time since I was defending champion at the PGA KitchenAid Championship and I wasn't able to do that and I like that golf course. But I had a couple of other things I had to deal with, small injuries and things, so that was probably an opportune time, a good time. It was nice to see my mother again in Germany and my brother and the family. That was all good, so I'm not complaining.

**CHRIS RICHARDS:** Anything else? Thanks, Bernhard.