

FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW: PAT PEREZ (-21)
November 13, 2016



ROYCE THOMPSON: Pat, congratulations on a great win. Second win of your career. You move up to No. 3 in the FedExCup points race.

PAT PEREZ: Oh, really?

ROYCE THOMPSON: Yes. If you could, just talk about what you're feeling about winning the 10th Annual OHL Classic at Mayakoba.

PAT PEREZ: I feel incredible. It's been a very down and then to now, just on-top-of-the-world type of year. You know, we didn't play well the west coast and I told my caddie Mike, we've got to shut it down, I've got to have surgery in March.

That was a real hard thing for me to do. I couldn't imagine not playing. I had the surgery and knew I was going to be out a while, and then you always wonder after that how you're going to come back. It's been a very, very unusual 2016, I would say at the least. Very rewarding after all the work that we put in this last three, four months to get ready.

Q. Two-part question for you, Pat, both of them have to do with the back nine. One, notice that the wind picked up a bit later in the afternoon. Did that affect your play? And two, were you playing with an eye on the leaderboard figuring that you had enough of a lead that if you didn't take any chance to par it out, chances were you would win?

PAT PEREZ: Give me that first one? That was a hell of a long two questions.

Q. The first one was the wind kicked up a bit in the afternoon. Did that affect your play at all?

PAT PEREZ: No, because it was the same all week. It was the same from Tuesday we played in the practice round and that didn't really change anything. I have certain holes on this course that I really have trouble with and it's 10 and 12 and 13. That in off the left for me with the driver is very tough and I hit a bad shot on 10 and 12 and then I hit a good one on 13.

As far as you say on the back, you know, I just tried -- I just stayed aggressive the whole time. I wasn't really worried about where I was. I knew I was ahead, I didn't know how many I was and didn't really worry about it. I knew if I stayed aggressive and played well, it was going to be hard to catch me.

Q. Pat, yesterday you talked about the confidence you had that when you came back you would be this good straightaway. Can you take me through the point where you

were at your most down and when it got you to the point where you thought you would be able to do this as soon as you came back, that roller coaster if you will?

PAT PEREZ: The down was right after I got out of surgery. I was home and I thought, What am I going to do for a while? But it gave me a lot of time to kind of really evaluate what I needed to do in the future. I was pretty down because I knew I was going to come back with limited starts and I knew that it was just -- it was hard. I would tell my wife it's going to be hard, I can't figure out when I'm going to do when I come back, when I'm going to start, how I'm going to start. It was tough.

I didn't really know what was going to happen until I hit the first shot. You don't really know. You hope, like I said earlier, you hope two things. You hope you get a good doctor and that he fixes it, and you hope, two, that you can recover fast enough. And that happened and it was great.

But you still don't know until you hit the ground, and I was very nervous. I was only hitting about, you know, a 15-yard shot and I was still nervous about what was going to happen. It felt good, it didn't hurt me. I did that for a little bit. I didn't really play too much.

About a week later I tried to hit some longer shots and it was good. Then about a month later is when I finally started to get into half shots, which is what, amazingly enough, I needed that in Malaysia and I needed that last week and I needed that this week with the wind. It helped me change my swing. Somehow my swing had totally changed over the last -- from when I left here last time to this time, my swing is totally different. For whatever reason, my shoulder being healthy and then some little things that I fixed, my swing had totally changed.

So the down was really terrible and you start to worry, God, can I ever come back. Winning is really not even in the equation yet. When you first come back, you just hope that you can play well for once, and then you hope that you could come back and get kind of in this routine again and play well. You know, I knew about a month and a half ago when H came up and my coach came out, I knew that I was going to be ready to go. And then I added in this different attitude, I can't really repeat what I say and how I view things, but it was a huge. Let me put it this way, I had a lot of motivation to come back and really, really play well.

Q. Did you ever think that you would (inaudible) with the surgery and everything, how special is this win, special here for you? And obviously you will be after big winning in the Masters, any thoughts about that?

PAT PEREZ: It's very special. It's actually, you know, when we won the first time, it was really special. It was awesome because you always want to get that first win. But I didn't really -- I don't want to say I didn't appreciate it, but this one's a little extra special because here I am seven years later, I'm 40 years old. Everything in my life right now is just unbelievable. I've got a great team around me, my wife's amazing. We've got life just kind

of going the way we want it.

To come back, like I said, and to be able to compete and beat some of the best players in the world in this event and not -- you know, play well for four days and get the lead early and make a charge and continue on all the way through the 18 holes, it's really, it's really fulfilling. It feels amazing. It feels better than the last one because everything I had to go through the last, you know, three or four years really.

Q. Is this your (inaudible) here?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, it's my second win, so yeah. Purses have gone up, yeah.

Q. Are you kind of up on the idea that you'll be playing in the Masters?

PAT PEREZ: Oh, yeah, I forgot, sorry. Yeah, yeah, who doesn't want to play that? Anybody that plays the game, whether you play for a living or not, wants to play the Masters. And my wife probably gets to caddie for me in the par 3. We've been talking about it for years and years as we sit there and watch it. It will be special. We're going to have a great group go with us and it will be -- it's awesome.

More than just the Masters. It's not just about that, it's about everything. We've got status now for three more years, we're going to go to Maui again, we're going to continue to play all the great tournaments across the PGA TOUR. Very excited to be back solidified on the PGA Tour again and we're really excited for everything.

Q. And also being in the FedExCup points?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, there's a long way to go and a lot of great players coming out and playing. Yeah, we're going to continue on. We're just going to continue working.

Q. You kind of touched on it a little bit, but coming into this week and everything that that changes about today, how are you looking at the rest of your season now, but in regards to your shoulder and also seeing how confidently you can come in and really win a tournament?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, it has definitely changed the season because really, I really wanted to win today and I really thought that I could have won. But the thing was, I was just really going to try to get myself in position to win, and if I didn't, then get enough points to keep moving on. You only have so many starts. The reality of it is, yes, you want to play well.

I didn't expect really Gary and Scott to make kind of the mistakes they did and I got off to a great start. I really didn't try to get ahead of it, but I was really trying to continue on to continue to get points and move on so that by the time I got to the west coast, I could take care of it there.

Once I got the lead and we got to about 14, I knew that I had a real, real chance to win that and then that's all I went for. I just went for the win. I told H, I said I'm going for it all, I've got nothing to lose, everything to gain. I've played aggressive and I've played -- I wouldn't say not to win but not to screw up. I didn't do that today. It feels great when a plan comes together and I plan on sticking to that for a while.

Q. I sense a lot of emotion, you're almost ready to get out of here. How much more can you tell us? This is obviously a very emotive time for you, it's almost like you want to express something?

PAT PEREZ: No, I'm just very excited about it. This win was different than the last time. I didn't really expect to beat Steve Stricker in that tournament. I just have this different look like at life. That was seven years ago, this is now. I'm just in a total different place. I turned 40 and the things I went through, they just have this different like look about things. I don't know really how to explain it, but I'm just -- I'm very excited for it. I really can't explain. I just have this like, I have this vision that I was going to stick with it.

It was just small parts. I look at big picture. I looked at how aggressive can I play this hole, how can I birdie this hole, how can I hit it here, how can I make birdie and I just stuck with that for 72 holes. Same thing as last week, I just didn't make enough putts or I would probably be in the same position.

Yeah, the emotions are I couldn't be any happier. My team's happy, my phone's exploding here. Everybody's excited. I'm just real excited.

But I have just like this relief almost you could put that I put in all this time and effort and this belief and this work ethic that I put into doing this and I knew it was going to pay off. I didn't really know it was going to pay off in three tournaments, but I just knew that at some point it was going to click and it was all going to come together and it was going to be my fine.

Q. This aggressive thing you told us about, I think I know where you're going, but an Australian term would you had a (inaudible) you know what, this hadn't worked for six years, bugger, let's do it.

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I woke up this morning and I knew I was going to win. I didn't take a step from getting out of bed this morning that I didn't have in my mind I was going to win.

Before I would get near the lead or this and that and go, oh, okay, now what? Got to hit it over here, got to hit it over here. I didn't play that way today. I stayed on the throttle. Elkington's been like, I don't want to say a mentor but he says to stay on the gas, step on their throats, kill them, this and that. I had already had that before he said anything. So that's kind of what I've been doing. I wanted to just beat everybody. I just had in my mind all the time just keep going, just keep making birdies, let them try to chase you, just keep going and see if anybody can catch you. It's different.

Bob Rotella had something that changed me a long time ago. I just happened to read his book and it made so much sense to me. When you get a chip, you just practice a 25-foot chip, you just go, it's easy. But when I got into tournaments I would think of how to not screw that up from 25 feet.

He said instead of thinking about how not to screw it up, try to think about making it and your entire mental changes. I thought I did that and my chipping's been pretty good for a long time and I kind of carried it over doing all this stuff, this work that I've done mentally over the last basically eight months was what happened today. I had already done this, rehearsed this enough times playing and having this attitude that today was just like another day even though there was so much on the line. It didn't really feel like that to me today.