

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
September 21, 2017



PAT PEREZ (-2)

Q. You sort of seemed -- yesterday your attitude was happy to be here. Does it translate to the golf at all today?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I didn't finish the way I wanted to. Got to 4 under after 10 and I was going to -- that's obviously the side that you can score on, the back and I didn't. I made two bogeys.

You know, obviously it's always great to be here, but if you're going to be here you might as well still -- there's a lot of money to play for. You might as well try to get some of it.

It was a nice start. I went around, I only saw nine holes each day and there's some shots out there that I don't like. I was kind of -- wasn't too comfortable with my swing all day so 2 under was good. You know, I would have taken it.

Q. Did you kind of let yourself enjoy the walk coming out of the gates?

PAT PEREZ: Oh, yeah, I'll enjoy it all the way around. It's just, you know, like to enjoy it while walking in the fairway and not in the rough, too, getting my shoes dirty.

Q. Do you ever find -- I was talking to Webb, he's kind of found a spark here after being out here for a couple years. As a guy who's been out here for a long time, is it ever hard to stay hungry?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I'm hungry all the time. If I'm playing, I'm trying to make money. I'm trying to make as much as I can. I'm trying to do as well as I can. If there's opportunities there and you have the chance to take them, I'm trying to take them.

There's -- you know, you ask a guy like Tiger, he had all the money in the world, right, and he was hungry because he always wanted to break Jack's record. He always wanted to make as much money, everything he could because he was going to do it. So if he was going to do it, might as well get the most out of it.

That's kind of my thing, too. I want to keep playing. I don't want to see a decline in my game and just say oh, well, he had a great year for once and that's it and then he fell off the map. I don't want to be that guy.

So the hunger is to stay in the top-50, stay in the big league tournaments and that kind of stuff. And who knows, Ryder Cup's next year. If I can play well, I might get on the radar, I don't know. If I can have a year like I did this year, maybe it will happen.

Q. Were you bummed not to be in the Presidents Cup?

PAT PEREZ: No, I didn't have enough time. I played great, I played good for a year but those guys all played phenomenal. Those 10 that made the team, they played incredible. And the two picks were exactly who I would have taken. So I wouldn't have picked myself at all because I only had eight months in and I was 20 or whatever I was, and Phil brings everything he brings with him. Hoffman was a no-brainer. If I was captain, those two wouldn't have even had to worry, Chappell or Hoffman, they were going to be on the team no matter what. Those 11 are playing so good, they have been for two years and we've got an unbelievable team this year.

Q. Michael was saying how the sign of your appreciation or maturity or whatever was hitting that second shot on 18. The previous path --

PAT PEREZ: No, I wanted to go for it. He literally would not let me. I wanted to go for it because I knew if I would get over the water I would have a wedge and I might be able to make four, and if I don't, then I have at least 4-iron in and who knows. I had to make up-and-down. If I had made 6 I would have been really hot.

Yeah, I just hit a bad drive and I got the worst lie of the day and it just wasn't -- the juice wasn't worth the squeeze. I hit it in the water there and I make 7, I would have really got -- I basically wasted the whole day to shoot even. But H wouldn't let me hit the shot and I don't argue with him ever.

Q. The injury gets perspective during that time away at all?

PAT PEREZ: Oh, yeah, that's what it all was. That's where all this motivation and stuff came from. It just gave me a whole different look on life and golf in general. You know, it's easy to say yeah, because I've played well, but I've played well because of the fact that it was taken away from me.

And it's not like I work out and do all these other things, mental coach and all that stuff. I just appreciate to be out here again. Even though I have some bad days, I realize that I wasn't here last year, I wasn't playing and I didn't know what was going to happen when I tried to hit my first shot again ever. I could have been out of the game forever. So it's carried over to let's enjoy it, let's try hard but let's remember what's going on.

I've just been at ease with everything. Home life is fantastic, you know. Out here's been great, I've got a great circle around me. I've got this unbelievable radio show that we do every Tuesday night, big ratings. I'm just having fun with the whole thing and it's just definitely carried over to my game and just it is what it is.

Q. Was the injury bad enough that you did really wonder if you would be able to play again?

PAT PEREZ: Well, yeah. You go under the knife and you come out, you wake up in a sling and I'm in that for a month and then I try to move it around and hopefully nothing rips or tears or whatever.

But you don't know until you hit that ground for the first time what's going to happen. The first shot I hit was only like six yards and I hit it just once and that was it, and I took off another week and I came back and I tried to hit two shots just a little bit harder. Then I went through the training, whole thing and they said you look great, healed. I went to the doctor last time and he said, You healed perfectly, go try it and see what happens but don't go crazy.

It's a scary thing once you -- you just don't know. You don't know what's going to happen when you try it again the first time.

Q. When's the last time you weren't happy?

PAT PEREZ: Weren't happy? Eighteenth hole.

Q. When you're deciding like you have to have this surgery, is there any part of you that's thinking, well, if this is it for me on the regular tour, that's cool, I'm okay with it?

PAT PEREZ: No, it wouldn't have been cool because to play that many years straight on the tour, to have to go to let's even say the Web, and the Web's a great tour and all but I haven't fallen back to it. So if I would have had to come back and everyone says don't come back early, don't come back early, don't press it. I'm like I'm so impatient, I'm going to try it.

But if I hadn't gotten -- I said a hundred times if I hadn't gotten that spot in Malaysia, I don't know if I would have started. I mean, I just don't know. I would have waited for Hawaii and then who knows what might have transpired the rest of the year. I don't know.

There was some luck involved. Thank God Todd gave me a spot and I went over there and I did that in Vegas and finished seventh and happened to win the third event. I mean, that was not how I thought things were going to go. I always had my mind on those 15 starts, can I get enough points together to get my card because I was already sending letters out to try to get exemptions past that.

The way the whole year has gone, it's actually just amazing. I would have never been able to script this, but it really hasn't happened that much either where a guy comes back and in eight months the first three events he wins and gets to the TOUR Championship. It just doesn't happen that often. So I think about that all the time and I just feel --

Q. I think you're the second oldest rookie behind Vijay.

PAT PEREZ: Is Vijay the first?

Q. He was 44 in 2007. Anyway, that's pretty elite.

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, it's amazing. I never thought it would take me this long to get here but it did, but it did somehow. But it's all worked out. Try to beat these young punks. This Koepka, 70 yards by me in the middle of the fairway. That's the thing that's amazing about these guys, they're long but they're always in the fairway. Good luck.

Q. If you get to France next year, would you be a good pairing for Phil, would that one work?

PAT PEREZ: I can play with any of them. I'd like to be with a long hitter, to be honest with you, especially in alternate shot. I give him the long holes. I can play where those guys play from, I just can't get it to where they get it, that's the only problem. That's why I like this course because it's not too long. There are a couple long holes but I feel like I can play this course because it's not 7900 yards like a lot of these courses.

Q. Todd said that one of the reasons he gave you that exemption is because you had been -- you had played that tournament --

PAT PEREZ: I've been there every year, yeah. I'm going back this year.

Q. What made you in the beginning, that's a long trip and --

PAT PEREZ: I'll give you have two reasons: Free money and free points. Three, free ticket. I mean, it's a no-brainer. You get to go. Like this year I'm going to do the same. I'm going to do the same, I'm going to play the three in Asia and then I'm going to go to Mexico and then I'm going to get into Tiger's and then hopefully Shark Shootout and I'll play five more and then I can sit down for a little bit.

But it's so nice, even though I have status through two more years, the goal is to get here and there's just not enough tournaments where you can go with 78 guys and have a chance to make some big money and get some points out of the gate and get your year started. I'm going to go do it.

Q. So it sounds like you were appreciative of some of the perks that this tournament had to offer before --

PAT PEREZ: Oh, yeah. I played so many events where there was no cut and there was a big purse and that kind of stuff that when you have now, it's like how could I possibly not go. I'm not that big-time to act like I'm too good to go do that so I'm going.

Q. If you had to pick between the Ryder Cup and coming back to the TOUR Championship, which one would you pick?

PAT PEREZ: Really? I don't know. I mean, I would love to be on a team. Now that I've been here, I would love to be on the Ryder Cup. I would just love to be on some team format, I think it would be just -- I think it's the ultimate. The fact you get to share that type of deal with 12 of your Americans, your friends, I don't think there's anything -- but I love -- you know me, I love team stuff. When I get involved with my buddies on a baseball team and stuff, I mean, I'm in the locker room, I love that kind of stuff. I would love to be in the locker room for a deal like that, love to.

Q. So Ryder Cup would be the choice?

PAT PEREZ: Probably, yes.

Q. Are you still with the Chargers?

PAT PEREZ: No, I'm done with them. They left me, I'm done with them. There's one Charger fan over there and that's it. I'm done with them. I'm Arizona, but then I brought them down, so I can bring the Patriots down.