

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
March 1, 2018

CHRIS PAISLEY (-6)



Q. Making the most of your very first WGC event. As you look back on this round, what are you most proud of?

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, obviously I was delighted with the score, and obviously it's the biggest tournament I've played in by a long stretch. To play as well as I did and shoot a great score against the world's best players and to be right up there, I'm just delighted.

Q. We talked about it on the broadcast, two other top-5s, two other top-5s on the European Tour but this is the strongest field you've ever played against. What attitude did you bring to Mexico City?

CHRIS PAISLEY: I've just been very quietly confident about my game, you know. I didn't want to come here and just be happy to be part of it and just make up the numbers. I felt good about my game and I really like the course, it kind of suits my strengths, so I was just quietly confident. I'm obviously surprised that I've gone out and shot 6 under and I'm in second place. That's going to surpass my expectations. I was quietly confident I could have a good day.

Q. Chris, you were a big part of our preview show. Am I right in thinking you'll be doing it every week from now on?

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, if you don't mind. I think that was the key to my performance today, just getting to spend some time with you.

Q. What was the secret to today? You looked like you did so much well. Where do you feel you made that score?

CHRIS PAISLEY: My putting is really good. The first 15 holes tee to green I was really solid, hit a lot of fairways, a lot of greens. Then I holed some really good putts. A bit of a scrappy finish, a few miss-clubs and a push on 17, but I held it together to recover.

Q. Let's have a little look at some of those highlights, there were plenty of them out there, just talk us through them, Chris. First of all, here on 5.

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, the greens are obviously so tough to read and very slopy, very fast, so I just holed that right in the middle.

Q. Then on to 6?

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, really nice lob wedge. I actually felt I hit it really close and I just caught the top of the tier and kind of just stayed up on top. Obviously holed a really good putt after this.

Q. No. 1 so far in strokes gained around the green. Do you feel like the putting and the pitching's a big secret, too?

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, definitely. I hit it nice and gave myself a lot of good chances, but you know, they're tough greens to putt on, and to hole as many putts as I did, obviously I'm delighted.

Q. And what's the vibe like as well, because moving into your back nine, we talked about this being your first WGC. To see your name on the top of it, I mean what's it feel like being ahead of so many of these top players as well?

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, obviously great, surreal in some ways. Yeah, I think I maybe caught myself on the last few holes there, I got a little bit ahead of myself and kind of realized where I was. But yeah, just to be playing so well and kind of competing with guys like this is fantastic.

Q. Was that the drill you were showing us yesterday?

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, definitely, got it through that gate nicely.

Q. And just one final shot, we see this bunker shot on 15 as well.

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, my bunker play's really strong. I had a nice lie. It was quite a tricky one, there was a big tier there to get over. I just landed in a perfect spot and got it to run up pretty close.

Q. Just finally, you won this year the SA at altitude. How much did you lean on that, how much more comfort did that give you going into today?

CHRIS PAISLEY: I mean, starting the round I felt pretty comfortable with the altitude, but then at times I went long and came up short, I was kind of losing confidence in it the whole time. But I hit a lot of good shots and got it close quite a bit, but there were a few mysteries. On 18 I thought I hit a good shot and it came up short of the green, there were a few of those.

Q. Your first WGC event, wow, you looked right at home out here.

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, I felt comfortable. I think maybe the last couple holes I got a little bit ahead of myself, a couple poor shots, but the whole day I just felt really good. I've been quietly confident about my game, had a good three weeks off working hard on things. Yeah, it was nice just to kind of keep my form rolling.

Q. Really well done, got off to a great start birdieing the first two holes. You were 4 under through 6. What I was impressed by was you weren't happy at 4 under, you tried to get it further and further under par, you weren't protecting out there.

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, absolutely. That's been a bit of a theme for me recently, I've been trying to not just be happy with what I've been doing. After the win in SA, I didn't want to just be happy with winning, I wanted to kind of press on and that's what I did. I'm taking that attitude into the rounds as well. If you get defensive or you back off at all against players like you've got this week, then you've got no chance of winning.

Q. We have you hitting 11 of 18 greens, right now you lead the tournament in strokes gained around the greens, and you were third in strokes gained putting. Those are really good numbers.

CHRIS PAISLEY: Yeah, absolutely. I mean, I felt like I hit the ball really well but had a few shots where I came up short or went long just because we miscalculated the altitude. But then, yeah, I had a lot of good up-and-downs and holed some long putts, all added up to a good day.

Q. Are you feeling comfortable here? So many Americans in the field, so many players from around the world here, different than the European Tour?

CHRIS PAISLEY: I was actually surprised about how many guys I actually knew. Obviously going into a WGC is a new event, new experience, I didn't really know what to expect. But I know all the European guys, and then know a lot -- there's a lot of guys around my age that I played with in college, like Brian Harman and Patton Kizzire, all those guys that I haven't seen for a long time. I already knew them so I wasn't kind of -- I didn't feel over-awed this week. I think with the form I've had and the kind of confidence I've got in my game, I was just more excited to see what I could do against them.