

**PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE**  
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**MATTHIEU PAVON**

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**MODERATOR:** Let's please welcome our defending champion, the winner of the 2024 Farmers Insurance Open, Matthieu Pavon into the interview room.

Matthieu, how does it feel to be back at the place where you got your first ever PGA TOUR victory?

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah, it feels great, like a lot of souvenirs. It's all about like working around, playing practice rounds and then you can see yourself hitting the shots last year, feeling the emotions, getting back to a little bit on what happened. It was just awesome feeling just to watch -- sorry, to experience this. And I mean, it's obviously my first defense on the PGA TOUR, so it's something very special.

**MODERATOR:** First full defending champion tournament, I mean first full season on Tour last year as well. Just what expectations do you have for yourself not only this week but in the 2025 season?

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah. Well, I think the second year is always kind of the confirmation year. That was a great rookie one, but now it's time to confirm, it's time to show up again and try to win tournaments.

It's a pretty big year for me because it's also a Ryder Cup year. This is one of my goals I've been chasing since I'm a kid.

Yeah, a lot going on this year and I can't wait to start the year.

**MODERATOR:** You played in the pro-am this morning. Just what is the course playing like and how is it rounding up to your game?

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah, the course is tough. I think it plays definitely firmer and harder than last year. I mean, obviously last year, Monday was a very rainy day so we kind of messed up the setup, but now it's firm. The rough, I think it's really thick as well. It was a bit cold in the morning so the ball wasn't traveling a lot. Like the golf course is really prepared to put the players all in a little bit of trouble this week.

**Q. Matthieu, what was the reaction like on the DP World Tour and when you went home after winning this?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah, so --

**Q. Was it crazy?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** It took me a little bit of time, to be fair, because I stayed mostly in America before really going back home. So I was just like focused on going tournaments to tournaments and try to perform. Then when everything kind of stopped, I really realized how big was the hype in France.

I mean, golf is not a huge sport in my country. When you finally walk into restaurants and airports and people come to ask you pictures and talk to you, you feel like a soccer player, a rock star a little bit. It's a funny feeling. That's nice to have a chance to experience that in my life.

But I think overall on the DP Tour it showed that players from DP are legit to come here and compete. Like I said, I know many great players in Europe that are coming this year and will come maybe next year and show great performance on the PGA TOUR. I think we have more and more depth on the DP Tour and it's very nice that we can show it to the PGA TOUR now.

**Q. Do you feel like you've inspired other Tour players over there to be over here with what you did?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Maybe a little. It just showed that it's possible to do it. I don't like "inspire" because for me it's a bigger picture, it's like bigger athletes than I can for now. Inspiring is like Tiger Woods for me, so I won't compare myself to him.

No, it just showed that it's possible and that we're well prepared on the DP Tour to compete to a higher level.

**Q. I read on PGA TOUR.com you've really embraced America for quite a while now. It wasn't overnight, but you did go to your first hockey games, right? Talk about that experience of seeing hockey, because you hadn't seen any of it before.**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** I loved it, I loved it. It became one of my favorite sports. I came from someone who never watched hockey to someone who watch all the Panthers games. It's different.

Yeah, I just love how you guys in America promote sports in general. It's a show, it's big, fans are coming with huge crowds that cheer for the team. It's just such a great atmosphere and this is why I like so much being here in America because all the sports, football, hockey, golf and more baseball obviously, is just so much different. It's more kind of the atmosphere that you can find in soccer back in Europe, and it's great that you can have such a great experience in many different sports here in America.

**Q. Did you know that there was fighting when you first started going to games?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah.

**Q. What do you think of the fighting?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah, well, it's part of the game, it's part of the game. Of course you have to protect the players, the integrity of the players for sure, but it's part of the game. And I think the crowds love it. I haven't watched a game yet where -- I mean in person where they were fighting. I can talk a lot about it, but yeah, I can't wait to see my first fight.

**Q. Last year was your first time here. What were your impressions of the course, the South course in particular, and I assume you would be in favor of the Genesis moving here if that comes to pass?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah, I think -- which is nice, it's a tough course. No offense to easier golf course, but I'm not like a huge fan when a course gets between 20 and 30 under. I think it relates too much to the putter.

Here it's really a ball-striking golf course and I like to see how intense and well committed to the shots you have to be if you want to play great. I think this is why I kind of fell in love with Torrey the first time I played it.

And of course I just said South course is a beast. We know that from the previous U.S. Open and also the Farmers over the years, but it's just a phenomenal golf course to test your game. Obviously if Genesis comes back here in a few weeks, that would be a very nice test of golf with the best players in the world.

**Q. Do you feel like it would be -- because there was a thought originally -- let me rephrase it. Thought originally that some guys might drop out this week so they didn't play the same course twice in a short span. Do you think it's an advantage for you guys that are playing this week to then come back?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah, I think it could be. It's just that when you're facing tough golf courses, I feel like the more you play on them, the more comfortable you get. The fairways are much tighter than most of the fairways we play all year. The greens are definitely firmer this year, the rough is thick, so why not play it two times. I think it's probably a great warmup for an even bigger tournament which might be in like 15 days.

**Q. Last year you were unable to play the South course before the tournament due to the weather. How or in what ways did that maybe help you go on to win?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** I think it helped me so much. Like people would be maybe like surprised about like, oh, the guy doesn't know the course, it's not going to help him. But for me, I had like no expectations.

So that day basically I just walked on the golf course with a putter. And it was foggy, I

couldn't see from the tee to the fairways, the fairways to the green. It was like no expectation. I didn't know like how tight could be the fairway, how long could be the golf course. I was just like rolling a few putts on where I possibly could have putts to the pins.

So my expectations were really low and then when I show up, it was just one shot at a time. Wasn't really focusing on any scoring and how tough could be the golf course.

Obviously I had a good one, I shot like 7 under that day on Friday. Then I went to the media and talked to everybody and they were amazed about the performance. And me, I kind of didn't realize. It's only when I got Saturday and I started playing again on the weekend and I was like, well, that's for sure not an easy golf course because I struggled to shoot level that day. Then by all the people telling me like it's a tough golf course, it's a tough golf course, it kind of get in my mind that it was tougher than I thought for sure.

**Q. On the first tee box on the South course in the tournament, what were you telling yourself knowing you walked it with your caddie but you hadn't really played it?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah, not telling many things, is just committed to the process. Every tee shots are the same, it's all about having a nice practice swing, a good picture of the shot you want to hit. A good briefing, it's really important. Then just try to commit to the shot and hit it the best you can.

**Q. And then obviously with coming from the DP World Tour, winning on the PGA TOUR, a lot of doors opened kind of worldwide, even more so than just playing on the DP World Tour. What will you remember most from that 12 years that really impacted you the greatest?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** I think it's really failure. We kind of say this, but you can achieve great things before you fail many times [sic], and I had like so many different failure in my career. Like when I was on the mini tour back in Europe, I failed (indiscernible) over a year, which is nothing. It's not even a shot.

Then I went back to Q school, got to Q school and went on Challenge Tour. Challenge Tour, the same. Great year, started great and then dropped a few spots and I had to finish second on one of the last tournaments to get my card. Again, it was like this until I finally won on tour a year and a half ago in Spain.

I lost many times before I succeeded. I think it just makes me a better player because the more you fail, the more you learn about yourself and it's all about this in the process. So this is like that was a long travel to the -- a long experience to get there, but when you get to the top, you feel more comfortable and more prepared.

**Q. Where's the surfboard you received last year and have you been able to get up on it and ride any waves?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** It's in my living room. I don't surf. I tried, but I don't surf. It's just like a unique piece. I want to make sure that I can see it for the rest of my life because it's one of my best souvenirs. It's right there, I have my TV watching the Panthers game and my surfboard on the right side of it.

**Q. I have an offbeat one for you. Favorite all-time club in your bag and why, either as a kid or --**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Yeah, I don't have really a favorite club. I think I'm a good driver of the ball and a pretty good putter, so if I have to go with any clubs it would be maybe driver and putter.

**Q. Not like one that's been super special?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** No, I don't have really a club. I'm not like someone very superstitious or I like that club. The little superstition that I have maybe is like when I warm up I go always like 8, 6, 4 clubs in my bag. It's like kind of a ritual. I don't think it's really superstitious, just a routine.

**Q. You do evens and then the odds?**

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** No, only evens. But my favorite number is the 7, so it's complicated.

**MODERATOR:** Any more questions? Thank you very much, Matthieu.

**MATTHIEU PAVON:** Thank you very much.