

FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW
October 15, 2017



PAT PEREZ (-24)

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: Pat Perez, CIMB Classic 2017 champion.

PAT PEREZ: That's got a nice ring to it.

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: Yes. How does it feel?

PAT PEREZ: Unreal. I think I'm the last guy that expected to win this week, to be honest with you. I did not think I was going to win this week.

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: Your third PGA TOUR victory, Pat, but more importantly, 18 months after that shoulder injury. Where does this sit in your career right now at this stage in your life?

PAT PEREZ: I said on the telecast, I really can't believe what's gone on basically really a year from this tournament last year because Todd gave me a spot and I was so excited to come over and play to try and further my career. And I played pretty good here, I think I finished like 33rd and I finished 7th in Vegas and then I won Mexico. But if he hadn't given me the spot, the funny thing is I don't know if I would have started the Tour until January.

So all those chain of events might not have happened. So I can't thank him enough for doing that. I really can't explain it, it's been an amazing 12 months. I can't explain it, but I hope it continues.

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: Comes with some fringe benefits, a spot in the Masters, a spot in the Sentry Tournament of Champions in Hawaii.

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I was in all the other tournaments anyway. The Maui one I wanted to get back to. I just told my caddie, because we had a long break we were going to take after the Shark Shootout, but we've got to change those plans now, which I will not be upset about. I'm just very excited.

Q. Congratulations. After your first visit here, you obviously love the course, love the layout. What suits your eye?

PAT PEREZ: It's actually not even the course that suits my eye, it's the greens. Mayakoba, where I won, has the same greens and I putted better than anybody there, too. So I don't know what it is. It's the grass. I don't really see a lot of shots. I didn't even hit that many good shots. I putted unbelievable really. I didn't hit it that great, I just made a whole lot of putts and that saved me because if I didn't putt well I probably would have finished 40th.

Q. Unfortunately for you, those greens are going to be --

PAT PEREZ: I know.

Q. -- next year, but hopefully they'll be better than ever before. Will we see you back here for next year?

PAT PEREZ: Oh, yeah, I'll be here every year. Every year of the tournament, I'll be here. It's been very good to me. The tournament's been fantastic. CIMB, everybody's been great. The fans are fantastic. Everybody that I've met, come in contact with, can't do enough. It's fun. The police escort is actually the most fun I have. In the air conditioning and we get to go fast, it's nice.

Q. You mentioned just now that when you came here you weren't expecting to perform as well as you did. Did that put you in a more relaxed frame of mind in terms of pressure from outside?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, there were multiple things. I'm just trying to get this season started. I have three tournaments coming up that are no cut and Asia, I'm going to be gone a lot. I just got done with the other season two weeks ago.

So I didn't really do anything. I watched the Presidents Cup and I drank a lot that week and ate a lot and hit balls on -- I planned to hit balls on Friday last week, once for a couple hours and we drank, and I played with Mr. Parsons. I didn't really know what to expect when I came over here. Then I had a knot in my shoulder from sleeping on the plane and back problems and I couldn't sleep and I thought I was sick and all these kind of things. I don't know. I didn't really have any pressure when I got here, so I was just hoping to kind stay alive in the heat.

Q. Obviously a better recipe from the gymnasium?

PAT PEREZ: Oh, 100 percent. Even I lost weight this week, so that's nice.

Q. Four-shot lead going into the final round, were you very comfortable out there? Did you feel any pressure out there or was it just a little cruise your way home?

PAT PEREZ: No, there was no cruise. I was actually trying to beat Justin's record. I was trying to get to 27, that was my goal. I knew I had to get off to a hot start because I knew if I faltered at all, you know, if I didn't get any scores in the first five holes, I was going to at least be even with somebody.

The guys I played with and even the guys in front of me are long enough that they can get there and make eagles, and I'm not. So I birdied 2, 3, 4, which was nice, and I missed a short one on 5 but I was okay. Bogeyed 6. You know, there was no relax whatsoever. I

had a number in mind and I was a little short of it, but luckily I was -- I had enough, I guess.

Q. Does it feel a lot cooler now that you won?

PAT PEREZ: No, I'm still fighting for my life.

Q. And secondly, were you surprised they didn't put much heat on you throughout the whole round, they didn't get close?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, you know, when I was at 21, if you look at the scores in the past, 21 would have only lost one time. It's not that I'm surprised. I'm not surprised at all because there's so many great players week in and week out. You know, I guess, I don't know. I'm not -- I don't know. I am a little bit -- I actually am a little surprised that someone didn't come with 63 or 64 because the course was set up for there's some long hitters that were near the lead, I thought somebody would shoot 63 or 64 today.

Q. You just mentioned about the CIMB last year. You just got off a 30-week layoff because of injury. Those three weeks when you finished 33, 7th and you won at Mayakoba, after that, what was your mindset? Did you have to completely change your mindset, your schedules because you were somewhere around 115 and by the end of the season you were 30, 31. Now you can be gunning for much better. Has the mindset changed over the past year?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, it has. After you win, everything changes. I've obviously only done it three times, before this twice, but when you win there's a sense of like kind of relaxed, a little bit of relaxed. This is my 17th year and so I've had to fight for my card every year. It's different from Dustin, Justin and all these guys that win every year and then they don't have to worry about keeping their card because they're so good, they just keep winning. But for a guy like me, I'm always fighting to keep my card.

So when you win, it's like take a little bit of time to go okay, I'm just going to relax for a little bit. But you can never really settle down too much because the game will just steamroll you. The players are too good. There's a guy that's going to win next week and all the focus will be on him and you have to keep going.

The fight that I had last year was so good because I played enough and I played hard enough to try to stay in that 30 the whole year so I could get to the TOUR Championship. That's my main goal every year. One, to win, and then two, to get to the TOUR Championship. Now I've got half it. I've got a long year ahead, there's a lot of golf. So I would love to get back to Atlanta. It's going to take a lot of great golf, about another 800 points. So that's playing some good golf to get 800 points to get in there, so I don't think I'll really slow down too much this year.

Q. Now that you are (no microphone) will you choose your tournaments now for the rest year?

PAT PEREZ: No, I had them all set anyway because I was in the TOUR Championship anyway. The only one I got now that I didn't have was Maui, so everything else is the same. My schedule was already set to play next week. I'm missing Mr. Parson's anniversary party unfortunately during China, I would love to be there for that. I'm playing there, I'm playing Mexico and then I've got the Shootout. And then I was going to take all the way off until end of January but now I'm going to go to Maui and then to Dubai and then Pebble, L.A., Mexico. So I'm pretty much, I'm set all the way until then.

Q. Pat, you spoke about Dustin, Jordan, Justin, the younger generation, and you're 41, the oldest champion of the CIMB Classic. How do you stack up against these guys, do you change anything --

PAT PEREZ: I don't stack up against them. I mean, they hit it -- I hit it terrible today. I just got lucky that I made a lot of putts early in the tournament to stay ahead because I really didn't hit it that good on the back nine. Those guys are -- you know, I don't know. It's not that I don't think I'm as good as them. Dustin is long and straight and so is Brooks and so is, you know, Rory and all these guys.

I mean, I can be honest, they're just different type of players than I am. I try to get mine where I can and that's what it is. That's basically what it is.

Q. Coming up on one year now, playing Dubai next year, how important is it for PGA TOUR players to go out and play?

PAT PEREZ: Play what?

Q. Play golf outside of --

PAT PEREZ: Oh, I think it's great. The game is so global now, I think it's great that we have this one and we have Korea next week and we have China. I think it's awesome to get the Tour -- that the Tour's expanded outside the United States. I think it's important for the game.

When I was coming up the game wasn't that global, it just wasn't. The best player we had in the world was Tiger and he was best by a mile and he rarely went out of the United States. But I think there's so many great new, young players worldwide that it's important to get all these kids or players together because you can see that there's so much competition going on.

Q. You just mentioned Tiger, so any comments about Tiger? He's now hitting the irons pretty well. You just mentioned how good he was for the game. Do you see him come back this year?

PAT PEREZ: You know, what do you want me to tell you? I would love to see him come

back. He's my age, he's three months older than I am. I don't want to see him -- I don't want to see him be finished.

I've competed against him for 33 years. He grew up in L.A., I grew up in San Diego. I've been getting my ass kicked by him forever, so I would love to see him come back. I want to see him have another run. I don't know if it's possible, I don't know what kind of state he's in. It looked like he's hitting the ball good. I think the world would love to see him come back and have one more run.

I think the game -- I don't want to say the game owes him, but there's something out there that owes him another run. I would love to see it, I would love to see him come back. I don't want to see him go down with an injury. I would love for it to be healed and watch him hit balls again and get the crowd excited again and TV and all that kind of stuff. I know all the players do, I know all the players do, would love to see him. I know everybody's kind of getting excited about the buzz he's hitting balls again and getting back. That's a great sign and I would personally love to see it again.

Q. Pat, apart from the golf course which you love and enjoy obviously now much more, is there anything about Kuala Lumpur which you like and that brings you back here every year?

PAT PEREZ: Air conditioning. That's it. No, I'm kidding.

I love the course, I love the layout. I don't love the heat, the heat's unbelievable. But the city's great, it's great to walk around down there by the Westin where we stayed. The mall's incredible.

It's actually cool because I've probably been to this course 50 times and I've never gone the same direction ever to get there or back. So I get to see kind of the whole city every time we go there or back, so it seems pretty cool. I haven't really ventured outside, but it's just fun to come here. It's a nice change to come here.

CHUAH CHOO CHIANG: Pat, many thanks. Many congratulations once again.

PAT PEREZ: Thank you, appreciate it.