

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
10 October 2018



PAT PEREZ

MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, we have with us defending champion of the CIMB Classic, Pat Perez. Pat, welcome back to TPC Kuala Lumpur. First off, just tell us how exciting is it to be back in Malaysia as champion of this wonderful tournament.

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, it is. I love coming here, my caddy loves coming here. We've had fun ever since the first time we came a lot of years ago. It's a fun trip, it's a fun trip. Todd does a wonderful job taking care of all of us and organizing everything, we're very excited to be here.

MODERATOR: You talked about how this tournament sort of helped with your career comeback a couple of years ago. Just remind us about what Todd did, what this tournament did for you back in '16 and moving forward from that.

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I had my surgery on March 8 of 2016 and I wasn't planning on playing, but (inaudible) got a hold of Todd and Todd gave me a spot to play in the tournament, which was huge because if I hadn't played that one I might not have actually played until the Sony Open. And then to come back and play here and then finish 7th in Vegas and then win the Mayakoba, that was the starting point for me. So I'm forever grateful to Todd for that spot and to the CIMB Classic to help me do that. Like I said, this is always going to be a special place for me and I'm always excited to be here.

MODERATOR: Looking forward to playing the west course here, which has undergone some changes with new grasses on fairways and greens, a little bit firmer and faster as the players have been saying?

PAT PEREZ: That's what I heard. My caddie said it was firm and fast, I'm looking forward to that. Like I said last night in the sponsor deal, a lot of slopes in the greens haven't really been in play because it's so soft and wet, and now when it gets firm you'll actually have to worry about runoffs and going into some buried lies like that. So I think it's an awesome change, I'm excited to see it and see what happens.

Q. Coming to Malaysia, you must be like -- going to be a very different kind of weather condition, it was bright and sunny yesterday, it was raining, it's like two or three different seasons all together here.

PAT PEREZ: Well, yeah. We've had a hot summer in Scottsdale. We don't have the humidity, but we have hot, so I'm used to hot but the heat will wear you out. What I do is I drink a lot in the morning when I wake up because I'm up so early anyway. I'll drink bottles and bottles of water to get ready. I've been over here enough now I know what to expect. I

take my pace down a lot, I don't walk as fast, I don't do as much as fast and I try to save all the energy I can for all the shots.

Q. Starting a new season on the PGA TOUR 2018-19, just looking back at the previous season apart from the win at CIMB here 12 months ago, how did that season feel for you in terms of achievements, performance on the golf course?

PAT PEREZ: It was okay. I didn't play as well as I wanted to from about Augusta on. I had one good tournament, which was the British Open, and then the Playoffs I was kind of scatterbrained because my wife was pregnant. We were pretty much due anytime there, so my mind wasn't exactly in the right time frame and I had to pull out of Boston anyway.

So the end of it didn't go great, but we had a nice healthy girl and that was the highlight of my year, for sure, even with winning. To see her face the first time was just incredible, so that was really the highlight of my year, so I had a great year.

Q. Welcome back. You seem to be playing very well in Asia. Last year I think half of your FedEx points came from the Asian Swing. Are you looking for the same kind of hot start again?

PAT PEREZ: Hopefully. I'll take points anywhere I get them. If they happen to be here, they happen to be here. I love this course, I love the greens. I love the greens at Mayakoba, they're the exact same and I've won both of them. So I get confident with the putter, it's a big thing for me. So I don't know, for some reason this time of the year I don't know if my mindset is different or I don't think about it as much, whatever, but I like playing from now until February. It's just kind of my deal, I don't know what it is.

Q. I think we spoke about it last time a little bit. What are some of the things outside the golf course you've enjoyed about Kuala Lumpur?

PAT PEREZ: Nando's, Nando's is fantastic. Going to that mall is fantastic. We haven't really done too much. When Sergio was here, he took me to a couple restaurants that were pretty cool and I got to see those, but I haven't really seen much of the sights. We get up at 5 a.m. every morning and then we're out here sweating, it's real hot. I just kind of want to just rest and then eat and get ready for the next day. So I think KL's a fantastic town, I just haven't gotten to see too much of it.

Q. Another great here this week, JT's back as well, Ryan Moore's back as well, last week's winner Kevin Tway is back as well. Just talk about the strength of the field this week.

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I think over the last five years this tournament's really become one where the fields have gotten better and better. I think guys are excited to come over here. It's like anything, they hear it from other players and they realize they might be missing something. I'm not surprised that the strength of field is getting better. We've got a great

sponsor in CIMB and unbelievable tournament host, Todd Rhinehart, so I'm not surprised. I think guys are realizing they come over here, especially with 78-man fields and no cut, you can kind of get yourself off to a nice start to the year. They're going to have the tournaments anyway, I look at it as might as well play them, especially with no cut. Last year worked out great for me and I got off to a nice start and I think guys are kind of seeing that.

Q. What was about Tiger until sometime back, now he has made the comeback.

PAT PEREZ: I didn't get the first part.

Q. About whether Tiger can make a return, a comeback the way he has done. How does it affect the golfing world and will there be many of colleagues support Tiger, and they did a lot of thing about social media, wearing T-shirts in support of Tiger. How does it change things in the golfing world, his comeback?

PAT PEREZ: For me it doesn't change anything because Tiger's been a massive person in golf since back when we were eight years old. We're the same age, so he's always been a massive icon in our sport. He obviously had some physical troubles and then he came back and he got healthy. I'm not surprised the least that he won. I said back in Singapore in January that he was going to win and make the Ryder Cup team and both of them came true.

It's wonderful for our game. He's obviously the greatest thing I've ever seen and arguably the best player ever and everybody benefits from him being around, from media to anybody. Anybody that's involved in the game it benefits and we all couldn't be more excited to have him back and healthy and playing, and especially winning the TOUR Championship I think was just absolutely amazing.

Q. Do you expect him to surpass Sam Snead's record because many of the people initially were not feeling that he can even win the 80th? Do you think that he can go past Sam Snead's --

PAT PEREZ: I don't bet against him ever, I think he can do anything. I wanted to see him get to 19 majors. The 82, 83 wins would be nice. I know in his mind he wants a 19th major and I think everybody that's kind of, you know, in the golf world wants that as well. I definitely think he can pass 82 if he stays healthy and the back stays strong and all that. From what I've seen the last six months, there's no doubt in my mind that he can pass that, but I would like to see him win majors and I know he wants to do the same.

Q. Pat, after many, many years you have got a chance to defend a title. Is that extra motivation this week?

PAT PEREZ: No, I'm motivated every week. You know, this is -- I don't want to say it's another tournament, but it is another tournament. Even though I won it, I'm not going to put any extra pressure on myself to win it again. I played phenomenal last year, I putted

incredible and I'm going to have to do that again. With the players in this field, I'm going to have to do it again. Every year the fields get better and better and the players get better and better and it's hard to win, it really is. Like I said, I'm excited to be back and I'll do everything I can to try and have another great week.

Q. Pat, starting the new season, last year you were leading the FedExCup point standings for a few weeks heading to the new year. Can you talk about some of the changes taking place with the FedExCup, especially with the TOUR Championship and the increase in bonus pool as well?

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I haven't really looked into too much. I've been kind of busy with my daughter the last month. I know there is a change, I know it ends sooner, I know there's only three Playoff events. I haven't seen a real breakdown or anything. I actually just went over the schedule and it seems I'm going to be busier than I was. I don't really have that month break. I usually take about a three, four week break somewhere in the middle and I don't think I'm going to be able to get that this year, which is fine because we can't compete with football, that's the number one thing. Even as great as Tiger's Sunday was at the TOUR Championship, that's what the whole world was talking about, it still goes up against football.

I think as far as like Presidents Cups, Ryder Cups go, I think it will be great because it will give the guys a little bit of rest before they go over and try and win those events. Overall, I'm excited about it. Obviously the players, we can't thank FedEx enough for being the head sponsor of that and taking care of that and we benefit from it. I think it's phenomenal that they do that, so I speak for everybody when we say thank you to FedEx for that.

Q. You have Justin Thomas, a two-time champion, you have Ryan Moore in the field. So who do you see posing a stiff challenge to you in the tournament defending your title?

PAT PEREZ: What now?

Q. What do you see as posing a challenge to you while you're defending your title? You have Ryan Moore, Justin Thomas, all these guys who have previous wins.

PAT PEREZ: I don't understand the question at all. Who's my biggest challenge? Well, they all are, everybody, all 77 others. Justin Thomas is phenomenal, Keegan Bradley just won, Snedeker almost won, Ryan Moore almost won. They're all threats. Anybody that gets hot every week, they're all threats. Everybody's really good.

MODERATOR: More questions for our champion? Pat, many thanks and good luck.