

Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Friday, January 31, 2025

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

Joe Pavelski

Quick Quotes

Q. We have the celebrity leader, Joe Pavelski. Congratulations on a great round today. You are currently at 69 points in first place. One point ahead of Mardy Fish right now. Congratulations on playing well. First talk about your round today.

JOE PAVELSKI: The round today? Came out obviously got my feet wet yesterday, first round here. Awesome. Got to really experience what it's like playing with the ladies and how good they are.

Come in and obviously you're chasing Mark for a little bit and he rolls in two long putts right way and makes a couple birdies. Just trying to keep pace, stay with it, hit good shots.

Throughout the round you're watching these ladies hit the ball and just how solid they are and how much control they have, and you're just trying to commit to that one shot and stay with them a little bit.

The round was good. Drove it pretty well today. Made a few mistakes here and there. Hole 11 to 14, 15, kind of down the whole back side I was grinding a little bit.

I kind of lost some of my irons a little bit and lost a few feels. That's just part of being an amateur. Part of not having your game where you want it to be.

It was grinding. Made a great par on 11 out of the woods. There were moments like that that were really good.

Q. Talk a little bit about the game of golf and how long you've been playing.

JOE PAVELSKI: Kind of started playing when I was 8, 9, 10 years old, somewhere in there. Just as you get a little older, get the memberships, mom, dad drops you off at the course and you spend all day there. It was a game I learned to love. I played hockey for 18 years professionally. Kind of your whole life and it was a team



sport.

When you get on the course there were definitely challenges early in my youth where you get really upset with yourself and want more.

Yeah, just found it a really nice change of pace kind of from the team to go out there and try to be in control of your own ball and the emotions ride high all the time, understanding what we are in this game, and you hit some good shots, hit a lot of bad ones, and really enjoy it along the way and try to hit a good one on the next one.

Q. I'm not sure if you heard Jeremy's comments yesterday about you.

JOE PAVELSKI: I did not. He played great. Always got something nice to say. I love JR. Got to play with him my first two years professionally. A little story. Christmas Eve I think he took me out to Pebble Beach in San Jose. First time I got to play Pebble being in the Bay. He's going to say something nice, love that guy.

Q. He was joking. He did say I hate him. It's okay if he makes a couple double bogeys. Do you have a response to those comments?

JOE PAVELSKI: No. He's a competitor. Like I don't mind if he makes a double bogey. Give him a pat on the back, tell him to keep going.

We have a lot of fun. Haven't seen how he's done today. I'm sure he's out there competing, doing all right. Go from there.

Q. When an athlete transitions into retirement I'm sure there is maybe a little bit of -- a huge void there, but also for your identity a little bit. How much is golf filling that?

JOE PAVELSKI: Yes, there is definitely a little bit of void there. Scheduling is different usually, where especially playing a professional sport everything is taken care of you and you have to show up and perform.



Scheduling is a little different. Different responsibilities here and there. Some of the things filled this void, been able to coach my boy's team and be a part of that and coach youth hockey, 14 year old boys is pretty fun to be around.

Very competitive. It kind of gets the juices going enough to compete, to want the kids to play harder, better. You get mad at the other team. You get mad at your team. At the end of the day when the kids play hard and have success you couldn't be more proud to be a part of it.

Because as a player that's kind of what you remember, your best moments were usually the ones you're satisfied with your effort and found success through them. That's been a great kind of add-in and something I was looking forward to after the fact.

Golf is -- you hear a lot of people talk about it that are here in these events. It's fun to be able to compete in something and play against everyone that's here and the good players. The experience at American Sentry and being here, this is first class as well. To have this in the middle of the season where last year I was watching this on TV and being out here and trying to get the game as good as I could in the hurry, it's been fun.

Q. Where do you play out of at home?

JOE PAVELSKI: Back in Madison, Wisconsin, so got a few courses there. Maple Bluff, TPC Wisconsin, which Steve Stricker just redid that course. There is three courses we're kind of at over there. Four, five month golf season, you try to fit as much as you can in.

Q. Have you played Erin Hills?

JOE PAVELSKI: I have. And I'm excited to see Angel, Queen, how they do this year. It's about an hour from Madison, so there is a good chance we might have to make the trip down and follow them. That's what probably is so unique with this event. First time I got to play with the ladies and just how good they are and how much appreciation you have for them early on watching them.

The professionalism in their game, a whole new appreciation for it. It's fun. Fun to see how they do at Erin Hills.

Q. It you mentioned that you had spent a lot of time trying to work really hard to get ready for this. What kind of expectations did you bring in being that you are just off the ice so to speak?

JOE PAVELSKI: Yeah, a lot of time is an understatement.

Not an understatement. We played in the pro rivals about five weeks ago and up until then I really handpicked up the clubs much two months prior to that. Good six, seven days of golf and hit the sim a little bit and got here Monday and played Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday.

Yeah, we got a four-day tournament. Bit of a grind when you're not playing a lot. A little bit of a stretch I lost it at times. Trying to cram as much as you can and keep some tempo and make a few good putts and keep moving on.

Q. What's the difference between grinding in golf and on the ice?

JOE PAVELSKI: That's a great question. I don't know if there is a whole lot of difference. You're just trying to kind of put one foot in front of the other and trying to make something happen out there and trying to stay within yourself.

There will be good stretches and shifts in hockey where you're in the D-zone for a minute and trying to keep it out of your net. Then there is a stretch out there today, four five holes, where I was just trying to keep it in the fairway and try to get the ball in the hole and keep kind of adding some points when I felt like I didn't have it.

So obviously different aspects of the game with grinding but the commitment and trying to get it back on the track is similar.

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