

# American Century Championship

Saturday, July 12, 2025

Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

## Joe Pavelski

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We have Joe Pavelski, who is tied for first, 44 points total. 21 points today and had a really good finish on the final three holes today.

Let's start with just walk through the round. You kind of had a consistent, just kind of a par streak on the front nine. But what got you going on the back nine?

JOE PAVELSKI: I hit it really good to start again. I had a couple of good looks. Didn't make anything early. The putter didn't feel very comfortable in the hand early.

I think my biggest mistake on the front was on hole 6, I hit it under a tree and got a little greedy versus chipping it out and kind of wedging something up there to two-putt and bogey at the worst, maybe make a par. Caught a tree branch and hit it in the water.

I was a little frustrated. I think I lost a little patience after missing a couple that I thought I should have made. And it was just kind of about resetting from there.

Got a good one to fall on hole 8, kind of got myself reset a little bit.

Then from there it was kind of more of the same. Hit it pretty good coming down the back and just didn't make a whole lot. Finally kind of freed up with the putter coming down.

Hit a great bunker shot on 16 to give myself a good look from about 6 feet and made that.

And then 17, you make a 30-footer, you get a little lucky on those. And it was kind of going back and forth and fell in. So that was exciting.

17's an incredible hole. All day the fans were amazing.

And then you hit a good shot on 18, with the driver, set up a 7-iron from about 199 out. Had a great look up the hill



and just kind of drifted a little bit right and had an easy birdie.

Great finish for me. It was kind of you're looking up, not really happy with your game and the points that you're putting up. And going back to 15, didn't hit a great putt, or 14, even. Just trying to find a way to get this into the 40s and stay connected to the leaders.

Obviously Twellman has been playing great so far this weekend. And to finish birdie, birdie, birdie and be tied with him, I'll take that all day after the way it was going.

**Q. Did you have a general kind of number, target in mind today, or just seeing how the putts were falling today?**

JOE PAVELSKI: No, I don't really look at numbers a whole lot. It's kind of a feel thing out there, how it's going. Hit it good, give yourself looks, and try to free up and make putts.

You've got to make some birdies. How can you get into that birdie mode as fast as you can for me is important. It took a little bit longer than I would have liked. I wasn't hitting my lines on the putts at all. So there's work to be done there. But definitely can take the finish and the confidence there.

Point-wise, you just know -- and it's usually mid to high 60s, low 70s -- and then there's years where it definitely will climb higher than that, like last year.

You kind of take what it's giving you right now. And to be connected in the lead is, excited for another chance at this.

**Q. You've been in this spot before. Finishing runner-up last year. You won the Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions this year. When Taylor and Adam were in here we asked them about the round, what are they looking to -- are they going to focus on the round or just have fun tomorrow. Since you've been in this position before, what is your mindset going into tomorrow?**



JOE PAVELSKI: I want to win. I want to win. What does that look like? There's stretches in the round today where you're kind of just hitting some really good shots and you don't finish it off with a putt. It's frustrating. And it's kind of like, all right, let's get a little fun going in this group. Whatever that takes, find a way.

Like I said, with the crowd, it's amazing. You play with Steph on a Saturday or Sunday, you know there's going to be a few extra people in the group. You're walking down the fairways and it's actually incredible that we get to experience something like this.

It's going to be very competitive tomorrow. You're going to want to stay kind of in your lane and do your thing, but you're going to enjoy it at the same time and realize how much fun you have to have while you're competing and doing that. And see a few puts go in tomorrow will definitely make that easier.

**Q. You mentioned the crowd walking with Steph. Curious if there was any crowd interaction, anything you saw or heard that stood out and that was memorable for you today?**

JOE PAVELSKI: I mean, nothing as memorable as his hole-in-one on 7. But we didn't give them enough to really make anything too memorable.

But obviously for me, I think get up-and-down out of the bunker out of 16 for birdie and then roll in a nice putt on 17 was pretty awesome, and the excitement with the crowd and everything.

To follow that up with two good shots and a putt, an easy tap-in birdie, was good on 18.

There's times you're standing in the tee box, you're looking at, trying to figure out what you're doing exactly and pretending you're a professional golfer is a great thing.

**Q. How does the night before the final round of a golf tournament like this compare to the night before a Stanley Cup playoff game for you emotionally?**

JOE PAVELSKI: Surprisingly, they're not similar but they are. Like, golf has a crazy way of getting some nerves going, especially on the first tee. And kind of welcome that. It's why we are so excited to come here and feel that and feel the excitement of competing.

The Stanley Cup playoff games, it's what I worked my whole life to get to and compete and have the chance to play for the Cup.

When I was in San Jose, I had such a connection to the fans and the group we had. I think we all felt that way. When I was in Dallas, I had a very similar connection with them.

And you want to win for them as much as you want to win for yourself, and you can feel the pull and excitement behind it.

I have a great crew here this weekend, some friends from San Jose. My great buddy is on the bag. Another great buddy walking, talking, cheering us on, chirping a little bit.

And birthday yesterday, 17th wedding anniversary tonight. So grab a little dinner, kind of keep everything in perspective and just enjoy ourselves.

And we'll get a little food, a couple little drinks and keep it somewhat tame tonight because it's -- I've been enough in these positions where you've got to find a way to close one of these at.

**Q. You look at the guys who always play well, it's an interesting mix of sports -- yourself in hockey, Steph in basketball, John Smoltz in baseball, Tony Romo in football -- and they all have different skill sets. What skills and abilities from hockey do you think translate most to make you a good golfer?**

JOE PAVELSKI: I think probably two things as far as like the impact zone, where you're hitting it helps as far as just the hands and the connection there. Then the hand part of it around the green.

But as you say that, there's a couple good athletes from each sport that are competing at this tournament, and for me and I think a hockey player, the offseason lines up terrific. It ends and the weather gets nice, especially going back to Wisconsin, and you get a whole offseason.

Growing up, it would be, you train. If you got your workouts in, it was go do whatever you want now. A lot of that was golfing, a lot was fishing.

I was always able to keep my game at a good level. We just really loved the practice side of the game and competing with buddies. And some of the good groups we've played with back home keeps it fun and interesting and exciting.

And now I've got a chance here to hopefully practice enough and have enough fundamentals going on this weekend where we can get something going on tomorrow.

**Q. Is there any thread do you think between the**



**different sports? Someone yesterday I asked talked about the competitiveness --**

JOE PAVELSKI: Yeah, I was going right there with that.

**Q. And beyond that is there a poise or a composure to play in front of these galleries -- you're used to playing in front of crowds and used to pressure in a sporting arena. Does that translate much?**

JOE PAVELSKI: Yeah, for sure. It gets your juices flowing, the competitive side. Then it's all right, you've got to go hit a shot. You can definitely do it. You've done it in the past. Now just go do it with a crowd when it means something more.

And tournament golf is just great. The fact we get an opportunity here at the American Century Championship with the TV crews and the guys walking in the fairway, it's everything you think it would be. It's a real treat.

**Q. You had the year off. You retired last year. How much better does your body feel right now after two rounds of competition play and at least two more with the pro-ams being well rested, I would imagine, not having to fly across country a couple times a week or couple times every other week, do you ever just do something and say, oh, that doesn't hurt?**

JOE PAVELSKI: Sometimes it still hurts. Sometimes it doesn't. It's definitely a little easier. When we were here every summer, looking beginning of July, even on deep playoff runs, when you're going to June, there was enough time that it was pretty exciting to be here and you didn't feel a whole lot pain-wise, you were kind of in recovery mode already and coming out of it.

To be honest, I haven't trained as much as I probably should, but it's still in there and the thought and head out to the golf course and hit a few more range balls and those types of things.

**Q. You didn't have six months of pressure to win a hockey game with your teammates, six, seven months --**

JOE PAVELSKI: It's tough, first year out, I was all in on the Dallas Stars. I was watching. I had so many great friends that I played with the previous five years, the staff that was there. Just really enjoyed my time in Dallas. I was cheering for them. I was watching every game.

Definitely kind of went through the emotions a little bit more than you probably thought you were going to, but it was just fun to follow. But the physical side is definitely great.

And to wake up, sun's coming up, you're ready to get out of bed and go do some something fun. We're in a good spot for sure.

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