

# American Century Championship

Sunday, July 13, 2025

Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

## Joe Pavelski

### Press Conference



**Q. Not a bad week: 41st birthday, 17th anniversary, first American Century Championship. Nicely done. Way to go.**

JOE PAVELSKI: The birthday/anniversary always line up on this weekend. It's special coming out here, obviously, and selfishly I get to play a bunch of golf, and it's a very competitive group out here. Just an awesome setting. Feels so good to finally get one.

**Q. This is your ninth appearance. You've had eight top-10s, three second-place finishes. Now you're on top.**

JOE PAVELSKI: Obviously I've had some close calls along the way, playoff last year, kind of had it going but Fish had it going a little bit better.

I think coming into the round today, felt really confident about my game. The putter was the one thing I didn't know. But it was just a little bit more commitment, I think, was a big piece of it.

And then it's going to sound stupid but I hit two fairly decent shots on (number) one and make a double bogey, and hit two fairly decent shots on number two and make a bogey. And I was just kind of searching for it, scratch my head here a little bit, try to tell myself to be patient, there's a lot of golf left.

And birdie on 3 was huge. The first round I was not very good on the par-5s. Second round, I got a couple coming in.

That stretch yesterday, 16, 17, 18, really did a lot for me, I think. And then to come out and go birdie, birdie, birdie, eagle, I think, on the par-5s today was a turning point. It's always an important part of your round out here is attacking those holes.

**Q. It seemed like we said earlier in the week, seemed**

**like you came into this week more confident. You looked like you were, hey, I'm ready for this. And you played it out that way.**

JOE PAVELSKI: I believed I was ready for it. There was a stretch probably two, three weeks ago I was playing really good. Then I kind of went on a really -- not a roller coaster ride, but I wasn't breaking par very often at all on my course.

I hit it pretty good, made no birdies in Portland, the Drive for Kids. And Fish threw out a good round. You don't know, golf is a weird game. It's mental, physical, everything, it's a challenge.

I hit it as good as I probably have ever hit it out here. But nothing really super tight. So I had a lot of 7-, 8-, 10-footers, and sometimes they can get a little squirrely coming down the hill or whatever.

And today I made enough of them. There was a hole on, what was it, 13, I think it was, when Jake rolled in a nice one to be tied with us for a second.

I had about a 5-, 6-footer, a little bender after. Thought I hit a good putt on 12 there. To see that one go in (on 13) gave me a lot of confidence.

**Q. John Smoltz had a really good round today with 28 points. He said afterwards, he goes, hey, it didn't matter the way Joe's been hitting the ball, the way he scored, especially the way he finished. But he said, I'm afraid he might be winning a few more of these down the road. He goes, however I'm promising I'm going to win and be the oldest winner next year at 59. That's what he said.**

JOE PAVELSKI: I saw what he was doing fairly early. He threw his name up there. Steph threw his name up there. And we didn't do a lot early. Make birdie-birdie, standing after a par on 5, and pretty much making all pars after the start I had.

So it was just, let's find a way to get this going, get some birdies going. And in this format, obviously those help a



ton.

I was able to climb. It's tough. You get out there and there are holes ahead of you. The score's there and you have to realize you have a couple more, still have to hit a couple good shots.

The pressure is good. Very proud of how I handled it, especially after that start. It could have went one of two ways, and I'll go back to -- like, I was telling myself, I think I just hit four good shots and I'm 3 over par. It's just the way it goes out here sometimes. That's golf and it was an awesome finish.

**Q. Has your wife told you yet how she's going to spend the \$150,000?**

JOE PAVELSKI: I think the number one objective this week was to make a hole-in-one and get a new boat. Actually, it was probably the second; I wanted to win.

We've been building out a MasterCraft. So to come out here and go on a boat ride with those guys, obviously they're a big part of this weekend. We went out for a boat ride Thursday with them as we always do, get to spend a little bit of time on the lake and go over to the bay, Emerald Bay.

Just kind of relax a little bit and try to fit in a little family time is special. So I'm sure a little chunk of that will be going towards a new MasterCraft.

**Q. How was the crowd out there today? Sunday is usually a little slower, people getting ready to go home. Sounded like it was pretty raucous?**

JOE PAVELSKI: It was amazing. Obviously, yesterday, Steph draws a crowd. Heading out, it was a pretty fired-up crowd yesterday. We didn't give them a whole lot to cheer for.

Then today, it was amazing coming down the stretch. You could feel everyone coming around you, closing in the fairway and around the green.

Just to have it is pretty special. What a week. The volunteers, American Century Championship, everyone, Jonathan, everyone that pours their heart, Quinny, that pours their heart into this event and into, I think, us as people and players is so special.

Billy just takes the best care of me and set us up on a nice dinner yesterday where it was kind of like, eight years, it's time for us to maybe just take a step back and slow it down in the evening a little bit. It's time to go get something

done.

So to come out, have a nice bottle of wine last night, a nice meal, then come out today and finish it off was special.

**Q. Where was that restaurant last night?**

JOE PAVELSKI: Bruschetta. I recommend it.

**Q. Someone mentioned the other day that obviously this is for the players, this is like a bucket list trip. And he said, "I think it's becoming that for the fans, too." Seemed like the reception that's out there, would you say that might be true?**

JOE PAVELSKI: It is. The players, 100 percent, people are, like, how do you get in? It's like it feels like one of the hardest invites. If you get in, you're like, God, I just hope to see it every year.

To get the nod that we'll be back next year already, so pretty excited about that. I'd also like to give a little shout out to all the Sharks fans, the Bay Area fans, obviously spent 13 years there, and it doesn't go unnoticed when I hear you guys shouting from behind the ropes and seeing the jerseys, seeing the cards and the kids.

Then you sprinkle in a few Dallas fans. There was a kid with a 16 jersey on there trying to fire me up. It's fun. That's why we play at all. And obviously the hockey side is special and the connections that I had with the fans in San Jose and in Dallas means the world to me, and it's great to see them out here.

**Q. You've become the third hockey player to win this tournament after Dan Quinn and Mario Lemieux. You've joined great company.**

JOE PAVELSKI: I got a text from Quinny. Pep talk. It's awesome to go get one for the hockey guys. We're a pretty tight-knit group out there. There's a lot of great people involved, and just highly competitive athletes in those guys. I know they're cheering for me, so it's special to get it done.

**Q. If you remember, I saw you on the first tee box. I've never seen you more focused. I mean, seriously. Then you start the tournament. You're in the final group. You've got the lead and you start double-bogey, bogey, and I have to wonder, what were you telling yourself while you were walking to the third tee box and what were your swing thoughts as you addressed your ball at that tee?**

JOE PAVELSKI: I hit two good shots. No, seriously, I hit



one, the 3-wood off 1. Hit it, another shot, didn't hit it as much, trickled in the rough. It was just a thick lie.

Took a little extra club and kind of went at it and actually thought I hit it fairly good. I was very surprised that when it went into that hill and it was, you walk it back, try to make bogey from there, take a hack at it. I'd like another swing at that one.

I thought I could get it out. It didn't happen. I go to 2, hit a good drive. Trickles in the rough. I thought I had a good number, thought I made a good swing on that one. Catches the hill and rolls back down. It was the rough.

It can grab your club a little bit and take five, 10 yards off. It's something we battle every year out here in figuring that out and how to gauge it. Responded well on 15. I was in the rough, had to hit one under the tree. Took a little extra club, made sure I was aggressive and actually hit one to the back of the green. It was a huge point in my round.

**Q. Didn't seem like you lost a lot of confidence after those first two holes. But you finished third, I think this was mentioned before, you finished third in '23, second last year. With that kind of progression, what did that do for your confidence coming into this week?**

JOE PAVELSKI: Yeah, I mean, for me stepping on the first tee today tied for the lead, it was right where I wanted to be. I wanted another shot at it. Leaving the second hole, after making the scores I made, it was, all right, let's get this back, because on the back nine I want a shot at it again.

I hit it good. I really did hit it good. And today I putted good. There were a number of holes where I burned some edges. I wasn't missing putts where I was kind of like, what was that? That had a chance, that had a chance, stay with it. And then a few started to fall.

**Q. I think I was the one that asked the question the other day or made the comment that you came in third two years ago with 66 points. I'll expand on Stan's question a little bit. Last year you came in second with 79 points. A little less points today but a point higher. I thought your progression would be 3-2-1. I took you in the pool but I don't think I made it. I think somebody else had a better pick at your score. But I wanted to ask again, I asked you this yesterday and today now is obviously finished, do you feel any better than any day three than you have since you're retired for the year?**

JOE PAVELSKI: I do. I feel great. Especially a cold plunge makes you feel better. The body is good. The mind's pretty good and it's just an incredible week. You

know you're knocking on the door as a player going in, you expect to be there, but you don't know, it's golf. It's a little crazy in how it can work.

I was hitting it good all week. Just stay committed to it. Try to stay patient. There were a couple times, hole 6 yesterday, got a little impatient. Missed a couple of ones I wasn't sure about, tried to grab a little more than I should have as far as playing safe in this format, made a double-bogey there. It was on.

Double-bogeys, they're tough out here. You make one where you really shouldn't, it's a bit frustrating. To step up there on 1 and make one, you kind of have to dig a little deeper and hit some good shots.

At the end of the day, it might have woke me up, to be honest, just the commitment of, all right, you've got to make some putts, you'll have to be a little aggressive at times.

The putts I was hitting, they felt somewhat aggressive, but they were dying right at the hole, just past the hole. Having a look every time. There were a couple out there that could have fell just as easy.

**Q. You and Twellman were neck and neck maybe the whole first 15, 16 holes. What were you doing to psych him out? Was he doing anything to try to psych you out?**

JOE PAVELSKI: I was trying to stay in my lane. He was hitting it great all week. He was putting it good. So just keep hitting shots, trying to keep putting pressure on him.

We both had opportunities where we could have kind of, not broke it open, but took a little bit of a lead, and we each missed a couple of them. And then I finally got one to fall on 14, I believe it was, which was a nice moment for myself.

**Q. I'm going to have to crop some of the photos of you, but I have to know did you get your shoes from Jim McMahon to come in here.**

JOE PAVELSKI: It just feels good after grinding out there. And the weather, it's always great weather here, but jump in the lake, figure I'll keep those dry.

**Q. I was going to ask about him and Taylor.**

JOE PAVELSKI: At the Hilton Grand Vacation Tournament, I buzzed in and I ran into him. One of the first times I met him. We played a practice round, then we played another one later in the week.



I saw him a bunch there. He was great to me. Obviously huge personality. I think everyone loves him.

And then in Portland, we played in the final group, and then here we got to play, we played a practice round, and we played in the final group again. I've seen a lot of him. I know his game. It's good. It's solid.

Obviously I got the best of him today in the group, which was important for myself coming in and having some close calls. But he's a great player that should be around for a while.

**Q. You know a thing or two about celli. How are we celebrating tonight, and where is the trophy going to reside?**

JOE PAVELSKI: It was fun to see that putt go in. I didn't know what was going to come out of the putt. Just find my caddie and the family and the crowd and the excitement -- we're going to figure that out. We usually -- we'll find a place tonight to go somewhere and celebrate a little bit.

And this trophy here will probably end up down in my sim room. Got a nice spot for it. Push a few things aside, just a reminder how great of a week this is and it's worth winning.

**Q. What was the temperature of the lake? What did it feel like when you dove in?**

JOE PAVELSKI: We have a nice little house over in Zephyr Cove. We've dove in every day. The water was way chillier over there than it is here today.

It felt 74. I don't know if it was the clothes or excitement or whatever. It was warm today. Over there, it was just awesome to get back after a round and jump in and kind of cool down a little bit.

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