

# American Century Championship

Sunday, July 14, 2024

Lake Tahoe, Nevada, USA

Edgewood Tahoe

## Mardy Fish

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Mardy Fish, the 2024 winner. 26 points today. Let's start with the overall feeling of just being the champion, hoisting that trophy.

MARDY FISH: It's great. I've won a few of the celebrity golf, if you will, tournaments, and so I felt comfortable kind of coming into here having won in Dallas and in Maine, and then this is the one you really want to win.

American Century is really the one sort of Super Bowl, culminating the rest of the year. Look, I'm just happy to be a part of the event. Initially, there's a lot of awesome people that are a part of this tournament that play in the event, that put on the event. I'm super thankful to be a part of it.

THE MODERATOR: Yesterday, you had a lightning round yesterday, birdied eight of your final 12 holes. What was the mentality going into today? Was it still just put the pedal to the metal because you had Joe Pavelski and company that was kind of on your heels? What was the mindset going into today?

MARDY FISH: He started hot. My mindset initially was maybe four or five birdies would be hard to come back from. And he started three out of the first four, or birdied three out of the first four, kind of sticking with him there, birdieing 5, getting 3 through 5, getting it back to five points.

The point system is very uncomfortable in terms of having a lead because you just don't know what the lead is.

You could play No. 4, could you play No. 18, No. 11. We've seen eagles all over the place, and six points -- that's how Steph won last year. You went five eagles and maybe a hole-in-one or maybe four eagles and a hole-in-one. And four eagles and a hole-in-one or just four eagles? Including? Three eagles and a hole-in-one kind of thing, that's tough to come back from.



Meaning that 16, 17, 18, there's a lot of points at the end to be had. And certainly on 18, I saw that last year firsthand.

Honestly, I would have expected him to make the chip and for me to have to 2-putt there and sort of doing the math and figuring out that if I make par, I'm mostly likely going to win unless he holes out from the fairway or something. So making par was big. I toyed maybe even hitting iron off the tee, but figured just blast something to the right, get down there, figure it out there.

**Q. I asked Joe the same question. Did it almost feel like you had a lead, but since you two both started hot, did it almost feel like match play between you two the first few holes?**

MARDY FISH: Just kind of in terms of keeping a lead. For me, it was important to sort of keep him at an arm's length, it felt like. If he got to two, three, four points, something like that, it's not much of a lead anymore. That's like a shot or two. It's a bogey and birdie and you're kind of tied.

So I was just happy with -- I played really solid, apart from the par-3s on the backside, which are two chunks, but other than that, I just played really solid, sort of no-frills kind of golf. There was a lot of pars, a lot of 2-putts and stuff. I probably had a bunch of putts today, but I probably hit a bunch of greens, too.

Kind of keeping the pressure on him, knowing again that I did have that little teeny cushion, not knowing what that cushion would be, obviously, at the end.

Sitting there on 16 having the long wait, I think we had six groups on that hole, kind of 45 minutes, 50 minutes to kind of wait. He had birdied 15. So it sort of slowed his momentum down a little bit. He was fired up from making that. Made a great putt on 15 to close it to five points. And five points with those last three holes, that's nothing.

So it was nice to hit a good drive there on 16 and get on in two or close to two and 2-putt there and get out of there with a birdie and bring it back to seven.

**Q. You touched on it briefly in your answer just now.**



**How satisfying is it to hoist this trophy knowing that you were on the other end of it and so close last year?**

MARDY FISH: Look, I come here, if I get the invite again, come back here, I'm going to try and win. I know Mark won three times. I think Tony won three times in a row at one point.

So we've had some dominant champions here, and I just really love coming to this tournament. It's the people and everyone that puts on the event, and obviously American Century and Jonathan Thomas, we've become friends. And Gary Quinn and Jon Miller at NBC, and just getting to know everybody. I feel like a veteran out here a little bit playing in these tournaments.

They're more than just, hey, come play our tournament, they're friends and there's a friendship there. Hopefully they're happy that I was able to win this year.

**Q. You already touched on the delay on 16. But I want to ask you a little bit more about that. What was it like having all of the chase cards and everyone together? Annika wasn't that far behind you guys. It was a really tight competition back there.**

MARDY FISH: You try and sort of keep your mind focused a little bit, but it's a long wait and it's hard to do that. That's what I'm used to doing in my previous career was focus the entire time, no matter how long it is. But sometimes golf is almost exhausting, almost more exhausting mentally to do that. So you sort of have to take yourself out of the moment.

To be honest, I had no idea where Annika was or anyone else was outside of Joe just because we were together and kind of playing. I knew that we were both playing well enough to have a little bit of a cushion on third.

I mean, you're trying. You've got -- your kids are running around out there. It's a fun place to be. But it can also be fairly stressful -- I was just up seven. He just birdied 15. And then you go sit there, and it can be a little stressful thinking about, shoot, if I don't hit a good drive here and he does, what can happen and this and that. Again, it was maybe one of the most important tee shots of the week was the shot on 16 today.

**Q. There was the delay with the weather. Did that give you extra time to get ready, throw you off the pregame routine? How did you feel about that?**

MARDY FISH: No, not at all. It was just 30, 35 minutes. No big deal. Gives you time to go mingle with your buddies you haven't seen. I saw Larry Fitz, he was coming

off No. 9, going to 10. And we were just about to tee off -- first time I'd seen him all week. We're good buddies; he's a Minnesota boy and so am I.

We have some in common. I was texting with Travis Kelce all week. And he's, I'm going to find you tomorrow, period. And we had the delay. So you get to kind of see those people that -- I don't see those guys very often other than here or maybe Orlando or something like that.

But just to kind of see old friends and new friends and meet new people and stuff, it's always fun.

**Q. This is the first year that the winner gets \$150,000. Any plans for that kind of cash?**

MARDY FISH: I mean, I got bills to pay, man. I live in Los Angeles. I have two kids right there that are very expensive.

(Laughter)

No, it's a great bonus. I think it kind of shows where the tournament's going and where it's headed and continuing to sort of grow the American Century Championship throughout.

This week was the first time we had a Tuesday night dinner. So it's just kind of growing every year we come back. So it's very, very special.

**Q. I was going to ask partly about the \$150,000 check because when you won in 2020 it was all about Tahoe charities.**

MARDY FISH: Wasn't that nice of me, gave it all to charity. Didn't have a choice.

(Laughter)

**Q. Everyone else did, apparently. You're 10 points better than your score last year. So what's the difference? Is there something in the air? Because Barkley finished tied for 52nd and minus four.**

MARDY FISH: I took that bet.

**Q. Buy more stuff for your kids?**

MARDY FISH: Yeah, \$50, I took it. That doesn't go anywhere nowadays.

What was the difference, besides 10 points? I'm kidding. Honestly, it was the first round. Like getting off to an okay start or a solid start, so many times here I've come, you're

so nervous and you want to play well.

It's like you only get three rounds out here and you want to play your best golf every shot, every hole, kind of thing. Obviously unrealistic.

So getting off to a good start, getting off to a start where I had 23 points and the leader was right there -- Adam Thielen was in the lead by one point, and I could kind of sort of be in that last group Saturday and Sunday, just so I could kind of see everybody and where everybody is and stuff.

Again, I think the world of Joe's game, and he's an awesome human, but he's a phenomenal golfer. He's going to win out here for sure. He was my pick this week, regardless. So I knew that even though we started with seven points and yesterday went so well, certainly wasn't counting my chickens, for sure.

**Q. You just missed the record by one point, 84 points. The last time the score was in the 80s was in 2015, Mark Mulder had an 82. I believe this is now your 11th tournament. Because before this year, the scores were mid-70s, lower than that. So you did a great job in picking the game back up and giving everyone something to shoot for next year.**

MARDY FISH: Thank you.

**Q. (From Stella) What's mommy gonna do with the money?**

(Laughter)

MARDY FISH: Stella, this is yours; you get to keep this (referring to the large cardboard check). That's a good question. Let's go ask mommy what she wants.

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