

# Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Wednesday, January 28, 2026

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

## Joe Pavelski

### Press Conference

**THE MODERATOR:** Hi, Joe, thank you for being here at 2026 Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions. You sit here as the defending champion. Kind of what do you have to do to replicate that and what do you think back on last year?

**JOE PAVELSKI:** Well, I think four-day event for us, it's the first one -- like for me last year, first time playing for four days in a tournament like this. Understanding after going through it it's a bit of a marathon. It's not -- you just have to be solid all four days and put it together.

With some of the weather coming, there will be some moments where you have to kind of just -- par is going to be a great score out there and figuring that out.

Don't try too much thinking you have to win the tournament on the first day. Just stay involved, stay in it, try to get to your game as quick as you can, because living in Wisconsin right now we don't get to play that much. A little bit of simulator golf. It's great getting down here.

A lot of good memories from last year. You know, just to keep it in front of you.

**Q. You're paired Thursday with our defending LPGA champion and Derek Lowe, past champion here as well. Speaking to last year, who you played with and this group you'll play with on Thursday, what did you learn from both LPGA folks and past champions from the celebrity side?**

**JOE PAVELSKI:** It was awesome getting to play with the ladies. Played a couple days with A Lim Kim. Just how good they are; how they don't really make mistakes. It's fun to watch them, especially as they get around the greens. Just there is a reason they're professionals. So, yeah, appreciation for what they do and really enjoyed being out there competing with them.

And then being able to play with D Lowe, haven't played

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## TOURNAMENT of CHAMPIONS

with him in a number of years. Played American Sentry Championship with him a while ago and became good friends. I'm looking forward to that group on Thursday and getting it going.

**Q. Just living in the cold all those years, tongue in cheek playing in the cold, do you wish you could come south and not have the cold?**

**JOE PAVELSKI:** Yeah, we were definitely looking forward to getting down here and getting some sun. It's a little bit cooler, that's for sure. Used to it, but when you're playing golf I don't think you're asking for cold at any moment. Just how the golf ball flies and how you feel being able to hit it when you're standing over it.

So played enough cold weather golf, whether it was springtime Wisconsin or fall or during out seasons in Dallas. At the end, if you wanted to go out and play it was going to be a little bit chillier during the season. Somewhat used to it; go from there.

**Q. What specifically do you have to worry about or guard against when it is cold? How do you incorporate that into the game of golf?**

**JOE PAVELSKI:** For me, it's a little bit of I've experienced it, it's finding the right club and the ball is not moving as far. Probably not swing it as fast or got extra layers on. So not being afraid to grab the extra club and trying to do too much I guess.

**Q. Where would you say the state of your game is coming into this event?**

**JOE PAVELSKI:** Honestly, I think it's fine. I don't fully know. I haven't played since really October. Played yesterday and the game felt fairly good. Just been hitting the sim back home quite a bit and trying to get the numbers and get the conditioning up that way.

So it's been awesome to get here. Already after going to the putting green a couple times and chipping green and trying to fine tune some of the scoring aspects of the game, some swing thoughts are coming back and a little bit of

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feel.

I feel like it's in a pretty good spot, but gone through it enough where you don't play for stretches and you go out there and you keep it pretty simple. It almost works out in your favor.

**Q. I know a lot of celebrities that come here are past athletes. This tournament gets the competitive fire, competitive juices going. You being the defending champion, everyone will be kind of looking at you. Can you take anything from last year or do you feel any pressure coming into this as the defending champion?**

JOE PAVELSKI: Super excited to be competing. Like you said, back in December, early December I was like, all right, I have to start hitting. I know what's out there and how much fun it was and what it feels like to win, so try to get the conditioning up with the swing and some of those feels so you are ready to go when you get here.

We're all in the same boat. Obviously like some guys get to play more than others, but at the end of the day you're going out there to compete in the tournament and you're going to have different feels and pressures.

It's such a great feeling to kind of be in that situation, especially after competing in my sport for as long as we did. This is something that it kind of turns you on, turns the mind on and the competitive juices. It's exciting to be a part of it.

**Q. From your time playing hockey is there anything you can take from being cold in the rinks to being cold on the golf course this weekend?**

JOE PAVELSKI: The rinks, you're surprisingly very warm out there. There is not many days we were cold on the ice with the equipment and moving around that way.

But, yeah, if you just -- I guess it's being in Wisconsin that's a benefit. You can outside right now it's cold all the time.

You know, whether you're taking the dogs out or shoveling or whatever, you're just living in the cold. So it's fine. Nothing to kind of shy away from.

THE MODERATOR: Great. Thank you so much.

JOE PAVELSKI: Yeah, thanks.

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