

# Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions

Sunday, February 1, 2026

Orlando, Florida, USA

Lake Nona Golf & Country Club

## Mardy Fish

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Here with Mardy Fish. And extremely cold day out there today. You only played nine holes. Congratulations on the victory. Talk about today, please.

MARDY FISH: Yeah, thanks. Definitely the coldest I've ever played golf in. Yesterday was probably the hardest conditions that I've ever played in, certainly on the back nine, kind of 12 on, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and then we didn't play 17 obviously.

So, yeah, it was fun. Honestly thought throughout the week that today was going to be maybe better than yesterday, assuming that there wasn't going to be as much wind today, but there of some wind today, which made it really difficult.

I grew up in Florida so you have to hit a lot of knock-down shots and punchy shots, so that -- a lot of shots called for that today. Was able to execute a few of those and I started good. I made a long putt on 18 to restart my third round.

I made good par putt on 17 and longer putt for birdie on 18. Sort of kept the momentum going and felt like today was sort of a new day and people were going to struggle if they weren't going to hit it well.

So, yeah, I played great considering the conditions and stuff today.

**Q. And you won this event a couple times. How does it feel to be champion again?**

MARDY FISH: Yeah, it's been a couple years. Super fortunate to be invited every year. I love this golf tournament. I love come to go Florida and playing golf. Lake Nona is such a beautiful golf course and Country Club as well. And then Hilton does such a great job of taking care of the players and having such a blast doing it.



You know, so it's a week that we look forward to every single year.

And then I don't know if you guys know, but the winners get a big room in the hotel. Like a big, big room in the hotel, so of that's probably what I'm most excited about for next year (smiling.)

**Q. Obviously everybody's dream is to be a great golfer. You were already a very good athlete in your own right before. What's it like to have a second resurgence later in life, to be this successful at something and do something you enjoy?**

MARDY FISH: I love competitive golf. It's really the only thing that we have anymore, or that I have anymore competitive-wise.

I compete in Jiu-Jitsu, but that's a whole 'nother -- I'm not nearly as good in that as golf.

But I love doing this. I love the fact that there is a bunch of tournaments that we can play now, and this is kind of the first big one of the year. It's great to get off to a good start.

Joe Pavelski has played phenomenal golf in the past 12 months and he won the American Sentry and he won Hilton Grand Vacations last year as well. I saw him right after and told him it was nice of him to let somebody else win.

So we have a fun rivalry, too. Some really good players. Jeff McNeil is a phenomenal player here. Smoltzy is a great. Played with Aaron Hicks for three days in a row that hits the ball further than anyone I ever played with. Got a beautiful swing. Beautiful golfer.

So, yeah, some good players. It's nothing -- when you can win these things -- there is tons of nerves and we get nervous and I feel like been in those types of situations a lot. You know, kind of nine holes to play, up one, down one, that kind of thing, around there, and I'm really comfortable in that scenario whereas maybe some guys -- some of the other guys aren't.



Maybe showed a little bit today.

**Q. Your ankle shocks are showing but fans out there are dressed like they're at the Milan Winter Olympics.**

MARDY FISH: Yeah.

**Q. How did this cold weather impact your swing mechanics, your frozen mouth when you're trying to talk to a caddie? Can you take fans through that?**

MARDY FISH: Yeah, I mean, I'm lucky enough to be sponsored by Travis Matthew where they have got some really comfortable clothes, really warm clothes. But you can't put too many layers on because you just can't swing. That's kind of the tricky part.

So I found myself putting a jacket, kind of a puffer jacket on and off after every shot, which was a little annoying and monotonous but it worked.

I actually called a buddy of mine that lives in Minnesota, plays a lot of golf, and we were texting last night. He mentioned that he had been through a lot of frost delays. I told him I was playing at 10:00 but there is probably going to be a frost delay.

He said, ah, I'm really familiar with frost delays. I said, what do you -- how do you play? I've never played where we've had to stop for frost. I just don't play that day if it gets like that. He said hands are number one; core is number two. Got to keep your body warm.

So I just grinded on my hands. I've got heaters, I've got hand warmers literally everywhere. In my -- oh, not anymore, but I had some in here, a couple in my jacket, all over the place.

So it was certainly tricky. The wind made it really cold. Felt like with the sun and stuff was going to heat up pretty good maybe get to the 40s, but the wind, really made it feel like it was super cold.

**Q. You were very effusive about Hilton before yesterday. They announced a two-year extension of the title sponsorship?**

MARDY FISH: Yeah.

**Q. Can you talk about what's special of this event compared to other events that you play in knowing that warmer weather will come down the road?**

MARDY FISH: Yeah, yeah, two years ago we had some kind of cold stuff as well. Not like this but it was cold. You

know, it is late January, right? Everywhere else in the country is freezing outside of Los Angeles where I live.

I'll get back there tonight hopefully. The tournament is spectacular for a number of reasons. One of which Mark and -- the CEO of Hilton Grand Vacations and Mackenzie and their whole team is spectacular in terms of taking care of the players and making it super fun, super easy with ticket requests and stuff like that.

We got a lot of family and friends around here that want to come out and I don't get to see them that much/ living on the other side of the country.

Being able to kind of do that, you know, them being so accommodating with pretty much everything; hotel is awesome as well. I played tournaments kind of my whole life, so there is a lot of like little things that maybe people don't understand that we love the Australian Open because transportation was so good, right?

It was like very close to the hotel; site is close to the hotel. So just a really friendly, awesome way to start the year on this part.

And then the second part, maybe not second, but just 1A and 1B is getting to play with the ladies out here and just being able to watch them and how good they are and how they play is completely -- you almost feel like you're playing a different golf course from some of the par-5s and shorter or longer par-4s and stuff where sometimes they have hybrids into greens or long irons and we have wedges and stuff and they are still making less scores than we are.

We think we're good and then we see them and we play with them and they're pretty awesome. And they're all super sweet. I've made a lot of friendships out there. Getting to see Nelly win here was fun. I won this tournament when it was in Tranquilo when Jessica won. Now Nelly and I won here, so that's cool. You know, a little tennis connection there with her father obviously and brother.

And then Lydia, playing with Lydia yesterday, she's such an inspiration and now a Hall of Famer. Such a sweetheart. I love, love watching her. I can't tell if she makes a double bogey or birdie. It's incredible. Her attitude is incredible. I wish I could do that remotely half as good as she does on the tennis court and the golf course.

So just awesome all the way around. Every year, every woman that I played with has been phenomenal and just fun and easy. I'm always petrified of playing too slow or getting in their way because they're playing a really tournament.



They're always so sweet and nice. So, yeah, that's kind of the couple things about this week.

**Q. Congratulations.**

MARDY FISH: Thank you.

**Q. How would you describe the course conditions when you first tee'd off this morning, and were you surprised that LPGA players never tee'd off while you were on the course?**

MARDY FISH: No, I mean, I wasn't necessarily surprised. The greens were really firm initially, almost frozen form. It felt like when I stepped on to the putting green, the practice putting green before kind of warming up maybe around 9:00, 9:15, that felt different on my feet. Felt like I was walking on concrete.

Again, coming in, playing the same holes, but maybe in different places after the tee shots, you know, they're coming in with longer irons or hybrids and things, maybe not quite as high.

I can't imagine very many greens, being able to hold -- or a lot of them being able to hold a lot of those greens, so I understand that part. It did get a little bit better maybe halfway through the nine holes that we played after the two and then the start of that nine holes.

So you know, they maybe could have played, but I don't know if they would've been able to play a whole 'nother round. Again, once the sun starts moving down, it is going to get colder and colder.

I wasn't surprised that they didn't play. I totally get it. Yeah, it was tough.

**Q. Looked pretty tired when you sat down here. What kind of test has this been yesterday and then coming back today?**

MARDY FISH: Yeah, good mental test. You know, I play golf in LA and can we play in like a dome. It's like the weather is perfect and there is no wind. So really not very many excuses. It's not really how I grew up playing golf. I grew up in this Florida, so I grew up playing in windy conditions like that, not cold conditions like that.

Again, if it was that cold and I was supposed to play a round with some friends or whatever, I just wouldn't play. No way I would be out there. So I don't like golf that much.

So yeah, that was just kind of the tricky part was just

making sure that your body -- I've got kind of a weird back right now that I've been trying to get back to normal.

It's pretty locked up, and so, yeah, got a couple back heater things on my back, Icy Hot things on my back. So that was the toughest part, keeping your body warm.

**Q. Anything from your tennis days when you had to push through under certain circumstances that you could draw on today?**

MARDY FISH: Not really. Tennis is so physical. I've played in conditions like this in tennis, but you're running around, moving around, so you're always sweating.

You almost feel worse after to be honest when you're trying to cool down or you cool down so fast that your body is kind of warm but your hands are cold and your nose is cold, but you're running around and you're sweating, so it's not as bad.

There is a lot of just like sort of standing around and you're just waiting and stuff like that on the golf course. You get into a tough spot like the 17th green or like 18 is not really insulated to the -- with the trees or whatever. 17 green is the coldest part of the golf course I'm sure.

We were lucky enough to play that twice today, so, yeah, it's not easy, but whatever.

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