

# LIV Golf Las Vegas

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Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

Las Vegas Country Club

## 4Aces GC

**Dustin Johnson**

**Patrick Reed**

**Harold Varner III**

**Pat Perez**

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please welcome back the 4Aces to LIV Golf Las Vegas 2024. We are joined by the newest member of the 4Aces, Harold Varner III, Patrick Reed, our captain Dustin Johnson and Pat Perez. Welcome, guys. We'll start with DJ and Harold; tell us how this off-season trade and transfer to 4Aces came about.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I was at Dick's Sporting Goods buying some stuff for the kids, and Colin was with me. I was actually shooting something for Perfect Practice, but while I was there, I was like, I need to run in and grab some stuff. Colin got a call from Richard Marsh, and I never -- this was pretty late, too, in December. Got a call, because we weren't really thinking about trading anybody, but they said, do you want to trade Pete for Harold, and I was like -- I didn't really want you, to be honest.

HAROLD VARNER III: Understandable after last week.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I was like, sure. That's really how it came about. It wasn't really any...

HAROLD VARNER III: Man, I need to play better.

**Q. Tell us how it went on your end.**

HAROLD VARNER III: For me, I had a tonsillectomy, and I was recovering, so I couldn't talk. I got the phone call, and I was like, yeah, I'd love to play for the Aces. Obviously I'd love to play better for them, but it's early.

Yeah, just super excited. It's not that big of a deal. We've still got to play golf, we've got to play well, and I really like these guys. They're heckling me right now, so I'm ready for the week to start so I can redeem myself some way, somehow.



## LAS VEGAS 2024

**Q. You had a great week last week, Patrick.**

HAROLD VARNER III: Wasn't close to my name.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It was pretty good until the last hole.

HAROLD VARNER III: What did you do on the last hole?

PATRICK REED: Made 7.

**Q. Tell us a little bit about your off-season and your preparation heading into this year. You were really close to winning a couple times last year. Do you think you can close that door this year?**

PATRICK REED: No, I haven't.

HAROLD VARNER III: I've got to get all my shots while I can. It's just like unload on Harold right now.

PATRICK REED: No, the preparation was the same as every year, go out and grind. The only difference is this year with having a longer off-season, I was able to spend a lot more time with the kids and kind of be a dad, which was a lot of fun. Then get back to work and kind of fine tune some things to get in the winner's circle. It's annoying being out here finishing second, third, fourth, fifth every week and always looking at the top of the individual rankings and seeing everyone around me have wins and me being that one guy that has zero wins but a lot of good finishes.

I feel like the game is trending where it needs to be and just go out and kind of take that momentum into this year and hopefully get in that circle not just once but a couple times.

**Q. A little bird told me you didn't pick up your clubs much this off-season, but you had a really strong start last week. Are you just that good, and if you had put in work in the off-season do you think you would have won the first event?**

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, woulda-coulda-shoulda, as always, in golf. I spent a lot of time at home and with the



kids. Not much time at the golf course, yes.

But sometimes it's good to take some time off. I practiced a little bit right before we went to Mexico, and then I worked pretty hard in Mexico at the game.

I was pretty surprised with my finish last week. I'm not going to lie. I was happy with it.

But the game, to be honest, during the week, I practiced hard where I thought I would actually be a little rusty was the short game and putting, but I put in some time and everything felt good, and obviously got off to a good start the first day, which always helps, and kind of kept it going.

Obviously the second day I didn't -- I played good. It was tough conditions. It seemed every time I barely missed a shot, it seemed like it went into the wrong spot --

HAROLD VARNER III: He played great. What are we going to talk about?

DUSTIN JOHNSON: But it's time to grind now, though. Looking forward to this year. I'm happy with our team. Obviously last week was not a very good reflection of the talent that's on this team and how we're going to perform this year, but I think moving forward -- well, we can't get any worse. We're definitely going to do better this week.

**Q. Pat, we are in Las Vegas, which I know you spend a lot of time here. How excited are you to be having a tournament in Vegas with LIV, and do you have any experience with this golf course?**

PAT PEREZ: I played it about 20 years ago. I don't remember too much of it. It was kind of short and straight. I'm excited to be here. I'm actually not staying on the strip this week because too much temptation, so I'm going to stay away from it until Saturday night, and we'll see. It'll probably be the longest for sure I haven't --

HAROLD VARNER III: We've been dealt a great hand, a lot of adversity this season --

**Q. No pun intended?**

HAROLD VARNER III: It is what it is. We've got a great opportunity to overcome something in our lives, and we're going to support our people, and I'm looking really forward to that. That excites me. Things happen; we're going to be better from it.

**Q. How shocked were you about the team result last week, or did you feel like --**

HAROLD VARNER III: Come on, we're trying to get over it.

**Q. I'm not used to seeing the Aces 12th.**

PAT PEREZ: It's early. It's the first week.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: It's the first week.

HAROLD VARNER III: It's a season for a reason. I can't dwell on it. It's over.

**Q. I assume if there's any team that can get past a result like that quickly --**

DUSTIN JOHNSON: We had one of those last year I'm pretty sure.

HAROLD VARNER III: Yeah, 100 percent.

PATRICK REED: We had a bad one last year.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Tucson last year. Greenbrier wasn't very good. Sometimes --

PATRICK REED: It's an off week.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: And too, with obviously the new scoring system, you need all four guys to play well, and even with counting three scores, you still want all four guys playing well.

Last week obviously, too, the golf course is -- for a first week out is pretty challenging, especially it's very, very narrow, and you can just barely miss shots and you're penalized.

HAROLD VARNER III: No kidding.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: But last week, we're not too worried about it, that's for sure.

**Q. Patrick, you've been talking about how you wanted to get off to great starts, then had kind of an issue the last two years --**

PATRICK REED: I crashed and burned the last two days.

**Q. You get off to a 64 and still find yourself five shots behind the lead. What was your mindset after that first day?**

PATRICK REED: Well, the mindset obviously didn't work. For me, I haven't had that much success there at Mayakoba. Played back there on the PGA Tour, and it's

just one of those golf courses that I feel like I'm dropping on every hole. I barely miss a shot and next thing you know I'm taking a penalty drop and then I hit a couple loose ones. That was probably one of the better finishes I've had there. It's just kind of one of those things that getting off to that 7-under start, it felt good, and obviously you've got a guy out there and shoot 59, Joaco, there's nothing you can do there.

You knew the weather was going to turn. The weather was going to get nasty, and you had to just keep plugging along. Unfortunately it went from hitting almost every fairway the first day to basically missing every fairway the next two.

Went out there and got home, talked to the coach, and we kind of went through a game plan. Game feels fine. It was just a couple loose shots at the wrong times on that golf course which will do it.

That's last week. We're glad to get that one out of the way. Like I said, just don't really like that place, so looking forward to a new one.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Like I said, it can only get better from here.

HAROLD VARNER III: For some.

**Q. I wanted to ask about the four rounds counting this season. Obviously new change in format. Pat, what did you think of that --**

PAT PEREZ: I like it. I like that it's all four because a lot of things can change on that last day. I think for a real team concept, really all four scores should count. If you're going to find the best team, then you need all four scores to count. That's how I see it. I like the change.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I do, too. I think it's great. It puts pressure on everyone on Sunday, whether you're up around the lead or you're not, because if your team is up around the lead, you know you have to perform well. Two, a 10-shot lead with four scores counting is not a lot. You can have a team way out front and easily get caught. You can catch them in two holes. With four scores counting, it's not a whole lot of -- so I think that makes it for -- it's going to be very interesting this year, and everyone has got to play well on Sunday if you want a chance to win.

**Q. Do you feel like it's an advantage for the Aces given how experienced and deep you guys are?**

PAT PEREZ: I don't know if it's an advantage, but we like it.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Obviously there's a lot of good teams. If we want to win, we've got to play really well.

**Q. Talk about being here in Vegas during Super Bowl week; how much of an opportunity do you think LIV has as a league to kind of shine this week?**

PATRICK REED: We have a big opportunity. You're talking about a bunch of people in Vegas, they'll be able to come out and hopefully have that trickle-down effect. You'll have more fans come out and experience what LIV is about. We're already in Vegas, electrified, and then you have Super Bowl on top of it, and now you come to a place where we preach "Golf But Louder." You have a lot of events going on around here, and I feel like it'll be big for us. We'll get a lot of fans who come out, come in early for the Super Bowl and all those festivities, and they'll trickle down, come watch some of the best golfers play, and the Aces will do what we're supposed to do, go out and play the golf we're supposed to and hold that trophy at the end.

**Q. DJ, can you tell golf viewers, and we have kind of a general lifestyle golf series that runs across the country, so it'll be after the event and whatnot, but tell golf viewers why this is must-see pro golf in your mind.**

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I mean, it's professional golf that's some of the best players in the world. I think it's a little bit different than obviously the PGA Tour. We have teams.

But I think the fan experience here is a lot more fun. I think the player experience is more fun. It's just a little bit -- we've got the music out on the range, some music out on the course. It's kind of just trending to where golf is going right now, I think.

When you're at home playing with your buddies and you've got your music on, you're having a good time. I think that's what LIV is all about. But yes, we are out here competing and at a very high level.

But you can still enjoy yourself while you're doing that.

**Q. We watch you guys; that's why we enjoy the game. Also the places and taking golf around the world, taking us to places we haven't seen like seeing a tournament here again, which is the nostalgia. Describe for the viewers what the quality of the players here, the guys they know, the accomplished players and what it's like to be a part of that for you guys.**

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Well, it's great. Obviously it's still really new. We're only -- this is our 23rd tournament. It's



still really new.

The quality of golf, though, I think is exceptional. The competition is exceptional. You've got to -- for me, if I want to come out here and win, I've got to play at my best.

Obviously the fields keep getting stronger. The teams are getting stronger. The golf is getting better.

I think obviously everyone -- I would invite everyone to come out and watch and just experience it for yourself before you make a decision on it without actually being here.

**Q. Harold, as it relates to the game, 54 holes, you might have a final stretch that's the toughest scoring holes out there. What about the strategy and the different aspects of the way you approach it, and then maybe you're back five or six strokes and you know you've got to compete for your team and take some risks. Do you go shot by shot, or do you change a little bit of the strategy with your caddie in that aspect?**

HAROLD VARNER III: I don't because I'm obviously not that smart to know where someone else is on the course. But for me I think it's hard to do, but you just try to do one shot at a time and do what you're doing and see how it pans out. When you're playing like I played last week, it really doesn't matter.

You just do your job and play golf and get as many looks as you can and see where it ends up.

The song that comes to mind is the Kenny Rogers song, "The Gambler." You've just got to know when to hold 'em and when to fold 'em. It's true in golf. I don't think it really matters. I think it's really cool everyone is on the course at the same time, and you finish. I think it's cool. Some people don't like it. 54 holes, for \$4 million I'd play as many holes as you need me to play to get to \$4 million.

It's pretty simple for me. Some people might think differently, but yeah.

**Q. Being an Akron kid and playing your college golf at East Carolina, how has it been getting to this professional level and being able to go back into your neighborhood and go back to your old school and give back to those people?**

HAROLD VARNER III: Yeah, it's pretty simple. I wouldn't be here without certain people that helped me, and I think it's an integral part of your life to have mentors, and that's what we're doing. I don't think you should get a pat on the back for doing that. I just think it's the right thing to do. It

costs a lot of money, and it's pretty simple.

I don't have this like feel-good thing, I just think it's the right thing to do. If you can do that every day -- I don't think too much of it, honestly.

PATRICK REED: I think that's the biggest thing with LIV, because of how much we're able to earn but also because of having a lighter schedule it gives us time to give back and actually make a difference. I think that's the biggest thing for me. When I was on the PGA Tour, because I was on the other tours, because of how many events I played, of course I could financially help people out but I couldn't really give my time. I didn't have time. Now having the time you can make that difference and not just write a check, you can be there to help and actually make a difference. I think that's the biggest thing is actually making the effort to make a difference.

**Q. You guys are about to head over to do an impact activation here at LIV Las Vegas. You're going to be meeting with students from the University of Las Vegas who just suffered a tragedy. You're also going to be meeting with some disadvantaged youth from the area. Tell us what that means to you guys to be able to use this platform to give back while you're on-site.**

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I've done a lot of -- it feels good to be able to talk to people that have gone through some hard times. I've had hard times through my life, and you hopefully run into people that can help you with it.

If you can help someone out in a situation like that, it feels great. Whether or not you think you made an impact or not, if they take something from it, it's phenomenal.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: Yeah, I think it's a big part of what we do. I have my own foundation that we do a lot of work with underprivileged kids. Not saying that that's what we're going to do now, but I think anytime you have the time to go and help some people or talk to them, you never know what you're going to be able to do or accomplish. You never know what someone is going through. Just a few words that you say to them could change their life or change their day. It's always a good thing, and it's positive to give back.

**Q. Harold, where did you get the shoes?**

HAROLD VARNER III: Thank you. This Jordan brand, they send them to us. It was in my room.

**Q. A lot of things being written about Jon Rahm, rightfully so. What does Jon bring to the Tour as a whole do you think?**



HAROLD VARNER III: I mean, it's pretty simple. He's one of the best players in the world, and that's it. We need the best players we can get because that's how the league is going to propel itself is if the best players are playing -- I don't know how else to explain it. He's really fucking good.

I mean, I'm serious; that's his attribute to the league. The better players that come, it makes the league more legit.

**Q. Would you agree with me that most of the people that knock the LIV Tour are conventional golfers, old-school? 54 holes, music, shorts, that type of thing, because they didn't grow up playing golf that way? Would you agree with me that that group has the biggest amount of criticism of the LIV Tour?**

PATRICK REED: Well, they grew up playing that way, they're not used to watching it that way. If you want to go one step further, they grew up riding around in a golf cart in shorts with a beer in their hand playing golf and taking a breakfast ball off the first tee. I see it every week.

The biggest thing is I feel like the people that are knocking on it is because they haven't actually come out and experienced it. The reason that is is people don't like change. You start making a ripple into anything, and instead of actually sitting back and thinking about it and having a clear head on it, the first thing is a knee-jerk reaction, I don't like it, I don't want to deal with it. I feel like the more they come out, the more they see, and they understand that -- there's room for both. There's that traditional 72 holes, tee times where you go to the golf course at 4:00 in the morning and you watch guys warm up, you can stay until dark, and then you need a faster pace because times these days, everything moves faster. Well, you have a 54-hole shotgun start so everything turns into a sprint. It's just trying to evolve golf into a more faster paced and kind of more with the times. There's definitely room for both, and I feel like people need to come out and experience that rather than having a knee-jerk reaction.

HAROLD VARNER III: I get where you're coming from, but I think a lot of the noise and all the smoke is coming from people that -- because it's funny, the businessmen and the people in the world that actually run the world don't say that stuff. It's the people that are obviously with the media. If you actually go sit at a country club and you talk about it, they'll be like, that's the best business decision you ever made. Those people aren't in the media so you don't hear it. I think there's a lot of talk about all this and that, and I think at the end of the day the only person that it hurts is the fan because the best players aren't playing together.

Like if we were honest with ourselves, we would sit here

and critique it and be like, yeah, it's fool there's two different tours, but not that many people are watching golf. Let's get down to the basics of it. We're trying to run these things, and it's just not going to work because there's not that many people watching. We're not the NFL. If you split the NFL, you would still have two amazing leagues.

If we sit here and we're just talking about it, it sucks for the fan. I love it for the money, so it's a tough decision, but when it comes -- bare minimum, it's a great business decision. It sucks for the fan. There's a lot of egos where they don't want to figure out what's best for golf because they're doing what we did, do what's best for us.

So it's very hard. I think there's more to it than just what this guy says on your show. He doesn't have a fucking clue. He has no idea. He just thinks for himself. He's like, well, I don't like that. That bothers me because at the end of the day it's golf. No one is going to die. It's golf. It's not that important.

It's fun. I enjoy being with these guys. You guys enjoy watching us. But it's golf. Like let's just be real. People are dying. Come on.

That's a great question, but I just think in the grand scheme of things, who cares what that guy said.

**Q. Speaking of the NFL, either of you guys going to the Super Bowl on Sunday? Who's your team?**

HAROLD VARNER III: I wish both of them could lose, but I'm going. It's the greatest sporting event in all of sports. It is insane.

PATRICK REED: I'm not going. I'm going home to see the kids.

HAROLD VARNER III: You're about to have three weeks off. You're not going to see the kids?

PATRICK REED: I'm going to go see the kids and we have some things going on at the house, so I kind of want to get to the house quickly and deal with that.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I will be going to the game. Who do I have? I'm not sure yet. I'm still working on it. I've got to wait until it gets a little closer to game time. It's way too far away.

**Q. Have you guys heard the history of this course? John Daly has talked about how he'd go play money matches on this golf course and then go spend \$3 million in a casino, just the stories and history of this golf course. Have you guys heard any of those?**



HAROLD VARNER III: I've never come to Vegas to play golf, to be honest with you.

DUSTIN JOHNSON: I used to come to hit balls at Butchy's, but that was usually for about an hour and late in the afternoon.

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