

LIV Golf Chicago

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Chicago, Illinois, USA

Bolingbrook Golf Club

Crushers GC

Paul Casey

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Let's welcome Paul Casey from Crushers GC. Paul, you are currently sitting in second place. You're four off from the leader, Brooks Koepka, who's sitting at 8-under. You shot a 66 today. Tell us a little bit about your round.

PAUL CASEY: It's a difficult golf course. Brooks has played amazing. I guess my round of golf, when we started out, the course changed. The course the last couple of days in preparation has been quite soft and receptive, not been a lot of wind. Then we knew the wind direction was going to change, which it did sort of late yesterday, and it stuck in the same angle through today, but it just increased in velocity.

I think the rules and the greens staff have been under the instruction to turn the water off because the golf course has just changed. It's become shiny and glassy, and with that wind, everything dried out and became a very, very difficult golf course.

I sort of made my score when we started and had some fairly straightforward holes and had good control of the golf ball, and to be honest I found it really difficult coming in the last sort of nine holes or so.

I saw where Brooks was. I was hoping for the Brooks and Bryson pairing, admittedly, which I almost got. But I had to work hard to finish 4-under, and I tip my cap to Brooks because 8-under is a phenomenal round of golf, so whatever he did in true Brooksy style is pretty impressive.

Q. I know we talked earlier in the week about it's your time, it's Baan's time, Bryson's time to get out here and take home a win this year. You're currently sitting in second place. Do you think this could be your event?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, but it's interesting because we -- look, there's nowhere to -- I've said it multiple times, there's nowhere to hide out here. There's no easy events. Every time I turn up it's Brooks and it's Joaco and Jon Rahm and Bryson and all these guys. I'm not excluding anybody, but



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it's where do you hide? You don't. In order to win, a win is an unbelievable -- really an unbelievable achievement out here.

Yeah, I'm probably a little frustrated I didn't get a victory at a couple of -- I had the playoff in Hong Kong and I was in a decent position in the UK, for example --

Q. Houston?

PAUL CASEY: Houston. But didn't necessarily have -- didn't play the golf I wanted to play, plain and simple, and there's always somebody there playing great golf. The level of competition is so high that that is what it is. There's only 13 opportunities; it's not a lot.

What am I saying? Am I frustrated? Yes. But also, like I said, the facts are the facts; it's hard, and there's not a lot of opportunities.

Q. I asked Brooks earlier, with him being four shots ahead and knowing how difficult the golf course played today, how feasible is it to catch up to him with such a commanding lead after the first day?

PAUL CASEY: I'm not overly thinking about Brooks, plain and simple. I'm trying to figure out how to get around this golf course relatively unscathed. If you can get off there with not too many wounds, that's what it feels like. It's sort of like Monty Python getting hacked to pieces losing an arm here and there. That's what it feels like sometimes out there.

If Brooks keeps playing that golf, good luck. Just give him the trophy now. I'm sure you've talked to him today and I'm sure he'll agree it's a very difficult golf course, and he's got to pay attention and keep his nose clean, as well.

Q. We also talked about the Crushers not taking their foot off the gas, even though you've already secured your bye for next week. You guys are currently in the lead, clearly not taking your foot off the gas. Can we expect more of this momentum from the Crushers heading into the rest of the weekend?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah. I heard Jason Zone Fisher talking to Cam Smith. Technically I think the Rippers could leapfrog



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and be No. 1 if they were to win --

Q. They're currently in ninth.

PAUL CASEY: I know, but just hypotheticals here, if Legion XIII and we have a poor week. We don't want to be in a position where we're picking up the scraps. We're not taking anything for granted, and I think -- like I said a couple of days ago, we loved John Catlin being a part of our team for a few weeks and he was awesome and I hope to see him out here next season. He is an unbelievable guy. He's obviously a great golfer, as well.

But we missed Chucky, so Chucky is back, and he's been like our glue. He's sort of like that silent -- I don't know what he is. I've known him for 30 years. But Chucky brings something, a calmness to our team that we obviously -- that works, plain and simple. He's obviously a phenomenal golfer, and we love his results. But now he's back, we've got that calmness and we're on full attack mode.

Q. I know you're still looking for that first win of the season, but do you feel like this has been a sneaky good season for you?

PAUL CASEY: Yeah, there's been a lot of -- it's been an uptick in performance, and I feel like I've had good control of the golf ball and done a lot of things right.

Yeah, I didn't necessarily play the -- I struggled last season, and I was still coming off some injuries from 2022 where I missed a big chunk of that through back injuries.

Ball speed is up, the control with the golf ball is up, and I've just felt very sort of energized and hungry. There's a lot to it. It's complicated. It's never plain sailing in any sport, but golf is one of those things there's ups and downs, and I've felt very much at peace on the golf course and enjoyed my golf this season.

Johnny has had his issues, as well, as those in the industry know. So there's a lot of things which have sort of come back together again, and I feel like this is just -- I'm kind of excited already. It's rare that I think too far in the future. I can't get past tomorrow. But we're already thinking about next season and planning it and looking at it and looking where we're going and golf courses we're playing. I'm very much in a sweet spot right now. It's good stuff.

Q. Do you credit the ski trip you went on in the off-season?

PAUL CASEY: I've been banned from skiing forever because I'm crap at it.

I don't know what I did. We went to Finland and stuff like that. But look, I've found a really nice balance. I'm a guy who has enjoyed playing 14 LIV events and Asian Tour. I played some DP World, as well, earlier this year, and I've really liked that.

There was a time in my career where I was playing -- I think I slimmed it down to low 20s and that was fantastic, and we got all the way to 2021, I think Johnny and I did 28 or 30 events, and it almost killed us, genuinely. That's not a light statement.

Now it's like I'm -- it was a bit of a crash and then it's a reset, and now with Johnny's health stuff and whatnot, it's taking off. Although every year is another year older, and I feel like I'm -- there's some really good stuff ahead.

Q. You talked about how much the course was different today versus the practice rounds. What's the biggest thing or the biggest key to making that adjustment when the course does change and you kind of have to make do on the fly, really?

PAUL CASEY: It requires a sort of plasticity, from both player and caddie. I think an experienced caddie really helps, somebody who's done it their homework. It's not a course -- I've not played here before. I think maybe a couple of guys locally may have played it, but I haven't. So it's how do you understand when a course changes as rapidly as it has, have you done your homework.

I think guys -- some guys might be exposed on that, and that if you do have the information at hand and you can adapt how good are you, then your plasticity, can you change the types of shots. A golf ball that was stopping -- a well-struck shot that was stopping within two yards now might be releasing seven or eight; how much can you adapt to that, even though that can be -- it's just a weird thing to do. Some guys do, some guys don't.

Q. If it makes you feel any better, Brooks hadn't even seen the back nine until today.

PAUL CASEY: Awesome. Look, Ricky has been here, and Ricky is a great caddie, so a lot of it is on Ricky, and those two are a very good combination, a very good partnership. Brooks loves him, like genuinely mean that; takes him on holiday and everything like that. That's the trust that Brooks has in Ricky. Ricky has done the homework. It's paid off.

Q. I'm just wondering how you fared with the rough today. Have you seen anything this thick? JCB maybe?

PAUL CASEY: No, this is the thickest of the season that I've played in. This is gnarly. I don't know what grass type it is, but it's brutal. There's some places with the crosswinds and the angles -- the pitch of the fairways, you almost can't avoid it in certain places if you don't hit the perfect tee shot.

And the way it lays down, just certain areas where it hasn't been trodden on is pretty easy, and then if it gets trodden on, the way that grass lays down, the direction it lays down, it's brutal.

Yeah, we had a couple today. I don't know. Yeah, it's gnarly. What can I tell you? It's not easy.

Q. I definitely noticed some guys getting pretty upset.

PAUL CASEY: There's a little bit of a -- you cross your fingers because if somebody has decided to -- if a golf cart has driven through it in a certain direction, you happen to be going this way and the grass is laying that way, that's the rub of the green, so to speak.

Q. As far as the greens go, they seem pretty tiny. Would you say they're comparable to Hong Kong?

PAUL CASEY: No, Hong Kong are miniature. No, the square footage is not the problem. Some of them are pretty small, admittedly. The firmness of them makes them feel smaller, and typically the architecture of the golf course is there's a ridge that runs through every single green, just in different directions. It just tends to turn around the compass.

The pin is typically one side of that ridge, so you have to figure out that side, and sometimes it's just -- I'm not going to say impossible, but it's just very difficult to get the golf ball where you need to get it, and if you miss the fairway it compounds and then you can't get out of trouble, and that's the problem -- that's why guys got frustrated out there. But that's why we play golf.

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