

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

Tuesday, 30 July 2024

Paris, France

Le Golf National

France

Matthieu Pavon

Victor Perez

Press Conference

STUART MOFFATT: Welcome to this afternoon's press conference with Team France, Matthieu Pavon and Victor Perez. First question to the both of you, how does it feel to be representing France in an Olympic Games held in your own country?

MATTHIEU PAVON: It's a great feeling. It's an amazing opportunity for us. We usually represent ourselves and now it's something just bigger.

It's good to have spent a few days in the Olympic Village, feel the atmosphere and talk to the other athletes and feeling you're part of that big family, and now we are ready to start the tournament.

VICTOR PEREZ: Yeah, I think Matthieu summarized it very well. Huge opportunity for us being French and competing our first Olympics in Paris. Three days in the Village were exceptional, meeting other athletes everything, and ready to get going here at Le Golf National.

STUART MOFFATT: How would it feel to win an Olympic medal this week for your country?

MATTHIEU PAVON: The thing is, I always felt like major for golf is more important because we have not really grown up with the Olympics. Golf came back in the Olympics in 2016 in Rio. So that was a different feeling first I had.

And after a few days on the Olympic Village, the Opening Ceremony in Paris with all this crowd in front of the Eiffel Tower and all the great moments we spent the last few days, it really feels like a Gold Medal would be now ranked higher than a major for me.

VICTOR PEREZ: It's really difficult to say, obviously like Matt said, we don't grow up like the track and field and



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fencing and dreaming of a Gold Medal. It wasn't really on the radar when we were kids when your first dreams are made.

Obviously seeing how much people obviously care and the fans, I was just shocked at how many people came to the ceremony. It was raining like crazy and people were still cheering for us from balconies overlooking the Seine in Paris. Definitely it meant a lot and enhanced the feel and the wanting for the Gold Medal for sure.

Q. This week is probably the end of a journey, thinking about competing in the Olympics in your homeland but when did the journey begin? When did you start thinking about this specific week? Is it a few years ago? A few months ago? Where does it kind of begin?

MATTHIEU PAVON: It was one of the goals this year but it really started in January. It was something I wanted to achieve before that.

When we started putting some points to qualify, it wasn't that big in my mind. I was feeling I had steps to do before qualifying for the Olympics, and this is what I did. Qualifying for the PGA TOUR was my first goal. Then won the tournament in Torrey and all of a sudden you're in the mix and put forward and you're almost guaranteed to be in the team. From that moment that I really realized and that kind of dream become really a goal that I had to prepare for.

Q. Do either of you feel a sense of pressure this week or when you play in golf course and the French Open, is there an added sense of pressure?

VICTOR PEREZ: I wouldn't say added pressure. I can speak on this one because I think we are very similar. I don't think anybody in this room is going to be able to put more pressure on ourselves than we are already putting on ourselves.

Obviously there's high expectations being in Paris and the course we've played so many times in the French Open, but at the same time, I try to see it as: Would you rather

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play at home or away. You'd rather play at home. And would you rather have the crowd with you or against you? You'd rather have it with you obviously.

I think it's a matter of perspective and seeing the glass half-full. Yes, there's pressure, but there will be pressure next week and the week after for different reasons. You trying to take it for what it is and make a good performance.

Q. In all the Olympic sports, you talk about the great journey to get to the Games. Golf is a little bit different. In your case, could you look back to late last year, and the finish you had with the DP World Tour, and getting to the U.S. Tour and winning at Torrey and just how quickly the game and what comes with it elevated for you?

MATTHIEU PAVON: It shows that highs and lows can come pretty quick, and this is what happened. We work hard with my team, and all the work we achieve for the last few years match together. It's like part of the puzzle, and feels like we have done great the last year and a half.

When you are always on a good momentum and have a good attitude and have a good discipline working out with your team, this is how everything can come quite quick.

Q. At what point have you all dreamt of being here for the Olympics? Was there a point where it became more reachable, more attainable?

MATTHIEU PAVON: It was really when I said. The thing is, we haven't really grown up with the Olympics in mind as we were a kid. It happens a few years ago.

For me, I always go step by step. I feel like, first, what was my dream since a kid, it's to go play in America, and this is what I achieved end of last year.

Then my dream is to win in America. This is what I did.

The next step in front of me was the Olympics. So this is -- it just came like very naturally, and it was like kind of unexpected because this is not like the biggest goal I have to achieve first year, but it kind of clicked pretty well and fast when I started the year, and this is how I went straight to be like, let's say, underdog to someone who would be in the Olympics this year.

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