

Senior PGA Championship

The Concession Golf Club

Bradenton, Florida, USA

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Pat Perez

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Pat Perez is with us now, the 2026 Senior PGA Championship. Welcome to The Concession.

PAT PEREZ: Thank you.

Q. How are you feeling so far and how are you feeling going into this one?

PAT PEREZ: It's been great actually. I've been excited about it for seven months now, counting down, counting down. It got here fast. We got here Saturday night. Excited to get here, kind of see what was going on Sunday and Monday and start to see the guys.

You know, I've played here one time before. It's a very challenging course. I knew that coming in. We had the owner of our club at Silverleaf walk with us on Sunday to give us lines. Also, we played the backs last time -- we played the tips last time we were here, so it's a little different being short. It's tricky lines. The distances are tricky, and you've got to fly it. If it catches can the wind wrong, it's going to be way short.

It's going to be a great test. I'm looking forward to it.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. Pat, we were walking down here yesterday, and Stewart looks over and screams, "I thought were suspended." You guys had a nice laugh. Can you talk about what you've been feeling from the other players out here?

PAT PEREZ: You know, I'm actually surprised. A lot of guys -- everybody has been great, but I've also seen some players along the way before I got here.

You know, he's not wrong. Yeah, I am suspended for a year. There was no surprise in that. I knew that that was going to happen.

I'm just grateful and fortunate to be here. The tour gave me a lifeline to come back and play. Couldn't be more

appreciative for it.

Yeah, it's going to be next year, which is, you know, not the end of the world. I've been on the road 28 years. It's kind of a nice mid-life kind of reset. I'm looking forward to getting out here.

The tour makes the rules. We all knew them. I think I might have known them better than anybody, but you know, just grateful. I'm grateful to be out and have the chance to play, but the players have been great. I talked to some really big names out here, and they're all excited for me to be out here. It's been great.

Q. What kind of schedule will you play then this year? Obviously next year can go at it full-time.

PAT PEREZ: I'm just in this one and the two Opens. As of now, that's probably all I'm going to do. You know, I've been at home with the kids now for a while. My kids are 7 and 4. I haven't really been able to spend that much time with them throughout my career just because that's what the job is, so it's been nice.

It's great to be with them in the morning, drop-offs, pick-ups. My day revolves around them. I've never really had that before. I've been able to be home with them and play with the boys at home.

I've got a long kind of ten years coming up. I'm not really ready to be on the road 28, 30 weeks. I can play some DP stuff. I thought about playing maybe some overseas stuff. I just don't know if I'm going to be really wanting to do it.

So I'm really looking forward to playing Scioto. I've played there a lot. I've never seen Gleneagles, so I'm looking forward to playing that Open. It's going to be nice.

After that, I don't know. I'll kind of see where I'm at. There is some international series stuff. I just don't know if I want to go that far. I might just hang out and really get ready for next year's full schedule.

I'll probably play a lot. You know, I probably won't miss an



event next year. From what I hear, this tour you want to hit it hard from 50 to 55. Since I'm missing 50, I'll probably hit it hard, you know, the first three years and then kind of see where we're at.

Q. Were you at all surprised or hopeful about broadcasting thing that set you back, that that was viewed -- it's almost as if you had played.

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, I mean, it's under the media umbrella thing, so I get it. You know, I guess I just didn't -- like I said in a podcast, I didn't really look into it. I thought because I didn't resign, that would have been better, but it was actually worse.

You know, again, I didn't look into the rules enough, but the TV thing was fun. I had a great time. I got to learn the ins and outs of TV, because I thought one day I might do it down the line, but looking back at it now, I probably may not have done it so that I could have played this year.

But, again, I still would have been out the same amount of time. I would have just been out from August 24 until now, or, you know, do the TV thing and then kind of learn some stuff, and I'm out until next year, but I still get some golf this year.

Either way, the timing is what it is. It's not really a year difference. Not that big of a thing. I had a blast doing it. I learned a lot about it. It was fun, but yeah, it's just under their deals.

Again, I'm under their -- you know, I'm with them and whatever penalties and suspensions they have. I knew it when I left. I just can't believe there's actually an opportunity to come back. So we're all thankful for that. Probably me more than anybody that I get this opportunity to play and have it next year.

Q. Where is your game at? I take it you have not -- have you even played in a club championship or anything?

PAT PEREZ: I haven't played anything. I play every day back with the boys at Silverleaf. But it's warm, the ball is going a mile. It's not really tournament golf.

Then you get to a course like this, and all of a sudden you're starting to see some different shots and winds, and the grass is completely different. There are still some holes out there I'm still not comfortable with. I've already played three full rounds. I'm going to play another full round today just because there's just certain holes I haven't hit good shots yet, and I know that if I don't, you know, there's a big number waiting anywhere out there.

Plus, you know, I've been off. I've been training like hell and just getting ready for this, so I'm not tired, but you know, the walking the first day was tough, because at Silverleaf we don't take more than 40 steps a day. As long as you don't knock it over the pin, you're pretty fine. We get pretty spoiled there by that.

I walked 18 holes in pants for three days, and I actually feel better now. I don't know. I don't know where my game is at. I haven't played competitively in 19 months. You know, I have an idea of what I want to do, but I don't really have a whole lot of expectations. I'd like to play well in these three that I have, but you know, I'm not really going to go overboard because you know, it is what it is.

It's not going to change my status for next year. It's not really going to change anything. Would I love to win? Of course, but I haven't had enough competition. I know when I tee it up on tomorrow, it's going to be, you know, a little more nerve-wracking just because I haven't been involved in it.

Q. Pat, you kind of touched on it, but how does a professional golfer fill the time when you don't have tournament golf for seven months, eight months, however -- how do you fill the time? Do you have to come up with things? I know you got the kids, but --

PAT PEREZ: Yeah, not really. I didn't touch a club last year from January until September, end of September. It was awesome. Didn't even think about it, because I was only doing TV. I never thought I'd be able to play on the tour again, so I just thought, you know what, I'm just going to kind of hang out and do TV and then we'll see where it's at.

If this opportunity hadn't come back, I was probably going to do TV for, you know, however long I could do it. That was probably going to be it, because nobody ever saw an avenue to come back.

When Brooks did, it kind of opened the door for some more of us. I thought, okay, well, you know, I'll try to play. Then that's what I talked to the tour. They said, Okay, here's what it is. It's basically going to be 16 months from now. I said, Okay, I appreciate the opportunity. Then I kind of got back into it a little. Then I realized I could play at three majors.

Really my focus changed in August to get ready for this week. I started thinking. I started counting the days. I got 144 days, and then, you know, I got to start working out. I got to start practicing harder and figuring out balls and clubs and all this other stuff and kind of get ready for this

week.

I didn't really have -- when you have the kids, you're not really worried about filling time. You're worried about the fastest hour in the morning is from 7:00 to 8:00, which is getting them up. You know how it is. Getting them up, fed, dressed, out the door on time. Then I'd go to Silverleaf, play, and then I'd pick up at 3:15 and then the night and then they go to bed.

I didn't really miss it, because I played. I've been on the road basically since 1998, and then I didn't play at the end of '24 and all of '25. You know, I started to miss it a little bit at the end of last year, but I was also so excited that I was going to get to be able to play here and then play two Opens.

You know, I think that's probably going to be enough for me, but filling time is not a problem. We've moved into a new house. I'm still unboxing shoes from Jordan, so it's like I'm trying to organize my shoe rooms and all these other things. I've got plenty of stuff to do before this big run of maybe ten years I got coming up.

Q. Just to double-check, you said you didn't touch a club, but that was not literal. You were still playing casual rounds?

PAT PEREZ: I did not touch a club.

Q. When was the last time you didn't touch a club for that long?

PAT PEREZ: Never, never. I said, You know what, I got nothing to play for. You know, I'm not going to go and -- I'm not going to bring my clubs on the road. I'm just not going to do it.

When I came home, the boys are, like, Are you going to play? I said, No, I'm just not playing. I have no interest in it right now. I have nothing to get ready for because again, like I said, I did not think that this opportunity would come. I thought I'm just going to take a knee for a minute and see what happens.

Q. How long was that exactly?

PAT PEREZ: Nine months.

Q. Nine months of not even hitting balls?

PAT PEREZ: Nothing, nothing. I mean, absolutely zero.

Q. How unusual? When you finally picked up a club again, how much of a reset was that for you? Was it

like getting back on the bike, I guess?

PAT PEREZ: It took a while. My hand strength was gone. My arm strength was gone. Shoulders hurt. Back hurt. All the muscles I hadn't used in so long, it was -- and then being 49, that's not easy either.

It took a while, and I knew that I was going to have to kind of slowly get into it, but when I started back up in September last year, I knew it was going to take like a process. Yeah, I just had kind of this six-month plan.

I feel like I've gotten to it now. So, you know, we'll see what happens. Again, this course is tough. I'm just excited. I'm just excited to be here. I didn't think this was going to come, but I'm really excited.

Like I said, all the players have been phenomenal. I've talked to a number of them, you know, at some length and stuff in the past and this and that. They've all been welcoming. They've been great.

Q. On that part, I wanted to get your feelings about reconnecting with these guys and eventually joining this family of mid-lifers? We call them mid-lifers.

PAT PEREZ: They've been great. Again, I'm rookie again. I've actually got something funny for you.

My first year on tour was '02. I played the Sony Open with Ken Tanigawa. This week is my first the senior event, and I'm playing with Ken Tanigawa. I mean, you couldn't make that up if you had to.

There's huge names out here, big careers. I'm just going to my owning thing. It's like a rookie. Do your own thing, keep your head down, shut up, listen, kind of learn again what's going on. Walking in the locker room is like 2002 all over again for me. These are the same names from 2002.

So it was actually pretty cool. I just saw Fred Funk. I haven't seen Fred in I can't tell you how long. 15 years maybe? It's been cool.

You know, these guys are champions, major champions, and all that kind of stuff. I'm the rookie again coming out, but they've been great. I'm looking forward to it. It's really like the first day of school all over again.

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