

ROUND 1 INTERVIEW
April 1, 2022

PADRAIG HARRINGTON (-5)



Q. Thirteen out of 14 fairways, you missed one.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I like the golf course, this course suits me. It's my fourth Champions Tour event and I found them interesting. Some of the golf courses certainly I've gone and said, well, kind of tough for me, but this one I come out and said this really does. I like the look of this, it suits me. I've got quite an advantage off the tee in places, so I was confident going out there.

Q. We talked back in December about your previous starts and what you had to do different this year and you said you've got to put your foot on the gas.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, these guys shooting 18 under par for three rounds most weeks, or at least 15 for three rounds, that's a lot of birdies. You know, somewhat my game has kind of got a bit anti-bogey, so you tend to be out there -- I think on the PGA TOUR I'm only making three or four birdies a round at most, two or three actually being generous. Yeah, I've just got to get used to making lots of birdies again and making some eagles as well because the par 5s are an opportunity.

Q. You're 4 under on the par 5s today, you had the eagle on 2, nice up-and-down on 11. Can you talk about that?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Well, I short-sided myself. I hit a 5-iron, it was a tight pin. Some ways probably should have played to the front of the green, but you've got 5-iron in your hand, you're trying to make eagle, to be honest, and I short-sided myself and it was terrible. But I ended up holing a 20-footer, which was a bonus I've got to say, yeah. That would be one you walk off a bit frustrated, but it was a tough pin. You're there in the fairway and you've got to -- you know, just not huge alternative for hitting a good shot. I didn't hit a good shot and I was short-sided. A good putt makes up for everything.

Q. Your mentality this week or all the Champions Tour events now, is it to go low as quick as possible?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, you've got to start well. Look, as I said, depends on the golf courses. Some of them, as I said, I find a little claustrophobic. This one, not so. This is a much bigger test off the tee, which is nice.

Look, horses for courses. Some courses suit players and I'm going to have to be better with my wedges on those shorter courses, for sure. But this week I feel like it's suiting a bit more off the tee.

Q. Is there any comparison going into (inaudible)?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Every golf shot is trying to hit your best mental shot at each time. You could say on the face of it there isn't a comparison between the golf courses. Golf is golf. Standing over a shot and not having any mental interference, if I can do that this week under pressure, that would stand me well going into next week because I'll be nervous the next two days now that I'm in the lead and I've got something to hold onto, something I don't want to lose. So that's great preparation, it's great mental preparation. From my past experience, that's kind of the way I like it. You can get yourself mentally sharp, it doesn't matter what golf course you're on.

Q. Is the mental preparation and playing well this week a boost for next week?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, no, no, absolutely. You know, I could be maybe at Valero and playing hard, grinding away and be 30th in the field. I could be playing better than winning here, but winning, you're under a certain amount of pressure. You don't want to mess up, every shot you take on there's a certain element of you want to make a birdie, but I don't want to mess up when you're leading. So this is better preparation, better practice to be in contention, no doubt about it.

Q. After going 5 under for the day, what's your biggest takeaway from day one heading into the weekend?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Trying not to overthink it really, just keep doing what I'm doing. You know, I think there's better in me, maybe not scoring-wise, but I think I can play a little better. But even then I'm not going to put myself under too much pressure, too much stress for that. I'll just keep doing what I'm doing. It's mainly a battle with my mental side and the physical side is plenty good enough. It's just getting my head in the game.

Q. You talked about how this course kind of suits you off the tee and you obviously did extremely well off the tee today, but what in particular about this course did you find challenging, at least today?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: There was a severe -- like the wind was swirling. I would have preferred a heavier wind in one direction rather than a light wind moving around. That definitely, my one bogey today was caught out with that change of direction in the wind and it made for a lot of doubt. Every iron shot you were hitting, you were, is this -- it's changing every shot. So that's more awkward. Wind that moves around I find tougher than a heavy wind in one direction.