

DICK'S SPORTING GOODS OPEN

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW

June 22, 2023



PADRAIG HARRINGTON

Q. Defending champion here at the Dick's, came here last year making your first start. If I could take you back to what your expectations were, and obviously pretty excited when you left last year?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, you know, this was -- I needed to start winning some tournaments. I was getting in contention, had a few second places, so yeah, it was important for me to get across the line, get a win.

The golf course is very good. There's some shots for sure that suit me out there, there's a few nice carries that I can make pretty easily, so there is an advantage on the course in some places. Then there's plenty of difficult holes. All the par 3s are tough with water on them. No. 15 is a dramatic hole. I know last year I think I had a fairly big lead coming into 15 and I wasn't settled at least until I got through that, for sure.

Q. How special was it having kids, family, everybody here?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, we didn't realize it at the time, they have never been -- the youngest was at a win when he was a baby, but they hadn't experienced a win, let's say. So the wins I've had since 2009 they weren't with me, so it was quite special actually to have the whole family, and they're back again this year.

Q. And one last question from me, great season so far this year, only finished outside the top-10 once in six starts, 18 of 20 subpar scores. How are you feeling coming into the week?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Look, I feel good about my game. Sometimes I get a little distracted away from -- you know, sometimes I try and get better for down the road instead of being focused on the tournament at hand. Yeah, so I can do better, but that's the burden I have, I suppose, all the time. I'm always trying to get better and better, which can hold you back in the short term for sure.

My goal is to try and get my head in the game. I finished my practice now so my head better be in the game now, but even if it's not quite there tomorrow, as long as it's there for the last nine holes on Sunday that would be OK.

Q. Last year we had a lot of rain and you mentioned it after winning, that kind of benefits your game. Obviously we have a lot of rain in the forecast this weekend as



well. I guess elaborate on how the rain kind of does benefit you compared to some of the other golfers.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I think the bigger the golf course, I'd be the longest out here. So if the rain comes, it means you've got to carry it all the distance, you get no roll and the rough gets heavier. Yeah, look, I want the bigger, tougher challenge all the time to give me an edge.

But just because you have an edge doesn't mean you're going to win. You've still got to hit the right shots, you've still got to be mentally sharp and you've got to hole the putts. Yeah, there's still a lot to play for.

And I don't actually like playing in the rain. I'm a pro 26, 27, 26 years now, 27 years. Yeah, I've gone soft, I don't want to play in the rain, I want to play in the sunshine. But I do know it's an advantage when it does get heavy.

Q. You mentioned trying to get better. What are some specific things you're working on heading into this tournament?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I'm always working on stuff. You know, the last couple of days I've been working a little bit, quite a bit on my core action, so trying to get a bit more stable on my left side. Sometimes my left knee drifts through impact instead of, if you were a young guy, your left leg posts up before you hit, just at impact, just before impact. Mine actually never posts up, so it's an area that I could improve for speed, for ball-striking, but it doesn't come easy to me.

So I worked on it the last one and a half days, but I gave up halfway through today because I know I've got to play tomorrow. Even if this makes my swing better, it doesn't make you play better in the short term because it's only a complication that gets in your head.

Q. What's the ball flight when that happens?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: It turns me in from, you know, my bad shot would be moving ahead of it and getting a slight glance fade, and if I stabilize, I get a better strike. But because I'm not used to it, I can get a pull draw. And if I'm standing there thinking that I can get a pull draw, I'll probably block it and push it right.

The reason I've got to play now, I've got to get all those thoughts out of my head and just play. While it does make me a better ball-striker to stabilize that left leg, it's not going to make me a better scorer on the golf course in the short term.

Q. But for long term, what are you working for?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: You're always working to be a better ball-striker, that's just it. It doesn't make me faster, but it definitely gives me a better strike when I stabilize that left foot.



And to be honest, it's actually all I worked on in around 2006, 2007, I did a huge amount of work on that left foot so it's kind of come full circle that I feel like I'm spinning out a little bit with my left foot. I'm on the outside of my left foot at impact whereas I need to be posting up more. That sort of bracing up at impact gives a better release of the club, gives a better acceleration there, a better strike. Doesn't matter if you're not used to it, it means you won't play as well in the short term.

Q. Is that what we see what Scottie Scheffler's doing with his feet?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Scottie's -- you know, Scottie, if you took a picture of Scottie at impact, you would be happy. It's only after impact that his feet start -- well, his right foot kicks back in a little bit before impact but his left foot is planted on the ground at impact and after impact it moves.

I think everybody would like to do what Scottie Scheffler does. At the moment he's proved he's the best ball-striker in the game, so his feet are working just fine.

Maybe, it would be interesting, we talk so much about in three, four year's time when he hits a plateau, maybe he can be convinced to change his foot action. But it's working now and I don't see why in three or four years' time if he's not quite the same ball-striker at that moment, I certainly wouldn't automatically jump to his foot action. It's certainly not having any effect now.

Q. You talk about getting your head into things very early. What difference, if any, in preparation for the Tour Champions with three rounds versus four?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: First and foremost you should prepare for Sunday of a tournament. Whatever gets you in the best mental place on Sunday is what your goal should be.

Unfortunately, the temptation, because there's a cut line at an event, you try and get ready for Thursday morning. Obviously on the Champions Tour we don't have a cut line, but we do have one other issue on the Champions Tour.

The Champions Tour is very, very quick off the mark. You've got three days to get to 15 under par, so you really do need to be shooting 4, 5 under the first day. You shoot level par the first day, it's a long way to shoot 15 under. Not that it's not possible, but it's a huge amount of pressure on you, so you need to get off to a good start on the Champions Tour.

You don't have to be leading after day one, but you've got to be somewhere up in the mix because these guys keep going forward. You know, if somebody shoots 6, 7 under the first day, they don't come out and shoot 2 over the second day, they come out and shoot 4 under, 5 under, and all of a sudden they're 12 under and going to 15, 16, 17. So you've got to be on your game pretty quick. It is a bit of a sprint.



Tour events are a bit of a sprint, too, they're like a 100-meter sprint whereas a major as like a marathon, you can be much more patient. Like the two guys who shot 8 under last week, they didn't finish even 8 under, so that's just what majors do. Somebody gets out ahead and you kind of go, hmm, unless it was Tiger. Everybody else, you go nah, they're gonna come back, whereas in a regular event, nope, they're going to keep going forward so you'd better be in that chasing pack.

