

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
March 20, 2024



PADRAIG HARRINGTON

Q. Paddy, thanks for joining us for a few minutes. Coming back for your second start here at the Hoag Classic, top-10 finish last year. Just a few thoughts on the course and how you feel it sets up and suits your game.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, this is -- last year was the first time I ever played a tournament where I hit a driver off every single par 4 and par 5 for the week, so no 3-woods, no irons off any tees. On the face of that, the golf course should suit me. It's a good challenge.

I think the difficulty is around the greens. They're poa annua greens, they're quite fast, there's a bit of slope. So yeah, it's a course that should suit me, but obviously you're just going to have to have a good week. Anytime you go on poa annua greens, you just have to have a good week on the greens.

Q. And you're coming off top-15 finishes in both of your starts this season. Just how you're feeling kind of coming into the week. Anything specific you've been working on or that you feel particularly good or bad about?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, you know, I had pneumonia during the winter so I'm still recovering from that. I kind of feel OK, but I suppose the central nervous system hasn't quite come back, I haven't quite got that spark. That's a day by day thing, week by week. We'll see how that is.

As regards to game, yeah, I would still consider this early season. I'm still finding my place this year, finding what I want to work on, maybe my key thoughts for the year. I'm not quite settled down yet. So every week there's probably something new, which isn't a great thing for performance. But as I said, yeah, maybe I need to get past that at the moment, but there's still a few new things. I've had a week off and I've been trying a few different things in the swing and a few different things in the routine.

Q. And then just one last question from me, you're so incredibly passionate about the game in general. We saw you out on the range yesterday taping stuff for amateurs at home that might want to pick up on some tips. You've had such a remarkable career, still ongoing out here as well as on the PGA TOUR. How much motivation do you get just from the love of the game to perform as well as you've been performing?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, look, I do love the game. You know, like a lot of pros, probably 20 years into my career I was fairly burnt out back maybe 2016, '17. A couple of things changed after that. I kind of figured out -- I tried a bit of coaching, tried a bit of



commentary and eventually I figured out I actually like playing golf. I really like playing golf.

I kind of took a new attitude to it. I make an effort to enjoy what goes in and around the golf, not just the golf. I got rid of some of the stuff that was just a burden, was probably trying to do a little bit too much. Don't quite put as much practice in, I don't quite put as much gym time in. I do a little, but not the same level as I was. I couldn't keep up the pace that I would have kept up as a young man on Tour.

But I also think the Champions Tour really gave me a new lease on life. You come out here, you feel comfortable. It's a nice environment and when you're in that sort of situation you tend to play a bit better and you realize your game may be a bit better than you thought it was.

So I've enjoyed it out here and that relaxed feeling that I know most weeks I'm going to have a good chance come Sunday afternoon of being in contention, and if you're in contention that's all you want, to be able to hit one more shot for glory.

Q. How's your preparation differ this week than it will next week in Houston?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: You know, it shouldn't differ, but I see myself when I played a couple of PGA TOUR events so far this year and next week, I panic a little bit. You know, I'll do a little bit extra practice, I'll do a little bit extra this, I'll do a little bit -- just try that much harder, which is exactly what I shouldn't do, but it's human nature.

That's the difference with not the results, but the way I perform at a Champions Tour event and a regular event. At a regular event, you're just under pressure. You kind of feel like -- when I come to this event, I feel like if I play my own game, if I turn up and be Padraig Harrington, I have a chance of winning. When I go to a regular event, and this is not a good thing, I feel like I need to be the best version of Padraig Harrington. I feel like I've got to play great and I can't afford any mistakes. That's not when you play your best. You play your best when you're very comfortable with who you are, when you're just being yourself and doing your thing.

