

## DICK'S SPORTING GOODS OPEN

### PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE

June 20, 2024



### PADRAIG HARRINGTON

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**Q. Two-time defending champion here at the Dick's Open, Paddy, fresh off induction into the World Golf Hall of Fame as well. Lots of good things to be excited about. Just some thoughts on being back here this year?**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** Yeah, it's always nice to come back here. You know, trying to win three in a row, that would be something special. Sometimes you get to keep the trophy. I'm hoping to get a Dick's store for winning three in a row, maybe the franchise in Ireland.

Yeah, golf course is very similar. Obviously the rough seems a little bit heavier, which would suit me. It's warm this week. My own game, I haven't been on a course for three and a half weeks. I played yesterday, it was a little bit ropey. Hopefully another game today, hopefully it settles down and my head's in the right place tomorrow.

**Q. Last year to win you went 7 under over the course of the last seven holes. I guess my question is, have you played a better seven-hole stretch since then?**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** Not that I can remember, and certainly not one that counted as much as this one did. We do do things like that at the odd time and you try and stay patient and wait for your run during a tournament, but it doesn't happen that often and it's rare that it actually makes a difference. Often when you shoot like a 29 for the back nine it gets you from 15th to fourth or something like that. It very rarely gets you over the top with a win. For once, it did. You're often there thinking, if I played the back nine in 7 under, I have a chance, but it never happens. Thankfully, not only did it happen, it actually counted.

**Q. After winning the tournament back-to-back years, is there any added pressure or expectations going into this time around?**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** No, I don't think so. I'm in a good position at the moment. I'm going into most tournaments feeling like if I can play well, I have a great chance of winning. It feels the same as that. I know the golf course suits me, so it's more about controlling what I'm doing with my game, getting my head in the right space.

Yeah, coming back as a three-peat really only matters after the tournament. At the moment I'm just trying to really get my head in the game and knowing that if I do, I would have that chance. But you never know. When you're coming down the stretch in a tournament, you can mess it up or somebody else can shoot seven birdies, 7 under for the last seven holes. You just have to get yourself in that position and hope it falls in place then at that stage.



**Q. Talk about this course suiting you. Talk a little more about that, why you've been able to do so well here.**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** I was brought up on poa annua greens, for starters. That's in there. A tree-lined golf course I find I like the definition of that. Four par 5s, a drivable par 4, so that plays into my game as well. I think more just that the aesthetics of the course, the look of it. There's a few bunkers that I can carry that maybe some of the other guys are struggling with. I think yeah, it sets up well to my eye and it sets up well to my game.

**Q. They just made the five-year extension with Dick's Sporting Goods. Just initial thoughts on having them on board for another five years.**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** Yeah, they're obviously one of the better sponsors out here. It's a great event coming up here, it's well supported by the fans. I think we're delighted to be able to come back here for the next five years and certainly it would be one for me, you'll probably see me every year.

**Q. Who do you think your top competitors are coming into this weekend?**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** Me, me, me, and me. Yeah, this is the game we play. If you start looking at other guys, they have to mind their game and try and get themselves in position. I'm just trying to get my game or my head right so that I get the best out of my game. Obviously you're looking at Ernie coming off two wins, he would be the main one that you would think of at the moment. I'm not really sure if this is a course for Bernhard or not, I don't know how he's done here in the past. I assume the normal stalwarts are going to be up there, but Ernie is the one that you probably would be focused on after two wins. So he's going for his three-peat and I'm going for mine.

**Q. One last one from me, we mention the World Golf Hall of Fame. Feel any different? Are you tired, a little extra pep in your step these days, or are you just kind of sticking to the old Padraig Harrington that's worked so well for so long?**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** Certainly I was tired after, it took a lot out of me, but I've had too much rest. I wish I played a bit more, as I said. But I think as regards that, it's nice to be in there and be fully on the first tee "Hall of Fame Padraig Harrington." Kind of half and half been saying it for the last 18 months, mentioning it some tournaments, some tournaments not, but it's official now. I'll enjoy that on the first tee this week when it's announced that way.

As I said, when you're out here, a lot of these guys which I would have come out, they're slightly older than me. When I would have started out as an amateur, they were the guys that I looked up to. Now that I'm out here with them, I want to be in with them, included with them and being in the Hall of Fame certainly gives me a lot of satisfaction and validation to what I've done in my career.



**Q. I guess last question from me, you're playing the pro-am, you mentioned you haven't played a tournament in three weeks. Is there anything in particular you're looking to work on today or is it just kind of knocking the rust off?**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** It's all routines, it's all getting my head in the game, focus. That's very hard to do in a practice round. I've hit loads of balls over the last three weeks, lots of practice, but there's a significant difference between hitting a ball in a big wide open field and trying to go out there and hold your focus on a target on the golf course. Yeah, I keep making the same old mistakes and I'm back here at the same point. I should have played more, I shouldn't have done as much practice, I should have played more, but I've done that before, I've got away with it and hopefully I get away with it this week.

