

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON



MODERATOR: Pádraig, back at the Dominion Energy Charity Classic, fourth time playing here. You've had some good results in the past. How does your game fit out here and what's it like being back?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: This course fits my eye very well. It's always in great condition, I like the greens, get to use my driver a lot. So yeah, you know, got to hit the shots. There's some risk-reward shots out there, kind of tight shots, a few out of bounds, It's a course that I play well, if I play well on I feel I have an advantage.

Q. Where's the risk-reward? Is it off the tee or more on the approach shots?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: A little bit of both. You have a very difficult par 3 early on, the fourth. Difficult second shot particularly on the par-5 sixth. You have out of bounds off the tee on nine, the par 5, which is a little awkward. Going around the back nine you have a couple drivable par 4s which is nice there, what is it, 13, 15. Yeah, pretty nice few challenges in there, it's potential 13, 15. On the par 5 on 16 and 18, two par 5s, you could actually finish -- you could have the miracle finish. There's always hope on this golf course.

MODERATOR: Coming into the Playoffs in fifth, last week at SAS had a good result, where do you feel like the game's at coming into the first playoff event?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: It's always an interesting time of the year when you come to the end of the year. There's an inevitability so you kind of start focusing on playing and not so much on the long term.

During the year I'm always thinking, well, am I getting better, am I working on things, what tournaments are coming up down the road.

At this time of the year you know you're going to have a winter break so it's all about just playing. Should be a bit more disciplined with the mental game and the focus, a little less technical practice. That generally leads to better play.

Some would say why wouldn't you do that all the time, but there's always the temptation of just trying to get better, which is sometimes a trap that I fall into. But you don't have that trap when -- I've got three tournaments to catch the leaders in the Playoffs, that's it, so I've got to probably win two out of three. That won't even guarantee anything but that will be the goal if I'm going to win the Schwab Cup.

Yeah, it's about just getting your head in the game. I've been reasonably disciplined so far.

MODERATOR: Is it easy for you to kind of make that flip mentally or is it a bit hard to adjust like that?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Oh, no, it's incredibly hard. I know how to do it. I tend to not bother doing it because it's difficult.

Yeah, it takes me at least three weeks to switch that light switch. That's basically it. To go from being in your left brain to your right brain for me takes three weeks. I know you can fall into it at times, but in general it's three weeks of discipline and by the end of that I do tend to be able to get into the zone.

MODERATOR: Last year, this event here, just any fond memories from your three times previously playing here?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: You know what, I'm not 100 percent sure of any individual holes. I'm trying to think. I don't necessarily think I've made any big eagles or anything like that. Maybe this is the year that I'm going to do it.

Q. PÁDRAIG, to a man everybody talks about this golf course and how good it is and how sad they are to have it go away.

For you, what is it that you particularly like about this place?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Look, this is a -- it really is a solid golf course and there's certain amount of risk-reward. It allows me to hit my driver. There's four par 5s, there's two drivable par 4s, there's plenty of risk in those holes but at least it allows me to challenge the course the way I want to. I don't have to play it the way everybody's playing it. A lot of guys are going to lay up on those two par 4s, I'm having a go at them.

The par 5s, yeah, other players will reach those par 5s but it's always nice when you come to a course with four par 5s rather than three par 5s. It just feels a little bit more like it would suit me. Yeah, then there's a few fairway bunkers I can carry, which is nice as well, that helps.

So I think yeah, it's a golf course that suits me, but it has its own difficulties. At the end of the day just because a course suits you doesn't mean -- you've still got to play golf, you've still got to play well, you've still got to make the right decisions and hole the putts.

Q. Next week you're going to a different golf course where you're defending. What do you like about that place?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Exact same as here, lets you get the driver out. Par 5s, good, long par 5s, some risk-reward in those holes. A couple of par 4s that can be driven. Very, very similar golf course.

It's tree lined as well. I'm a much better player -- as much as people might think I like playing tree-lined golf courses with a little bit more space, I'm not too keen on the ones with the houses down the left and right of every hole. You could go last week at SAS and like six or seven holes there's out-of-bounds stakes down the left and the right and just off the fairway. That kind of, that means everybody's got to play the course the same way where as an old traditional course with tree -- you don't want to be in the trees but at least you can challenge it a little bit more.

Q. Does that help you move the ball, those tree lines?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, it -- broadly, I think I do drive it -- I don't know if I drive it straighter. Clearly if you put -- like if you wanted to make a golf course the toughest golf course in the world, all you'd have to do is like 20 yards left and right of the fairways put white stakes. That's it. That will stop any long ball guys, it will stop a lot of play. It would be pretty horrible but like that's ultimately the way if you wanted to change the game back to the old style game, just put white stakes 20 yards left and right. Wow, would that be horrible but it would work.

We see that sometimes on Champions Tour. I've seen it. There's one out-of-bounds stake eight yards off the fairway on the first hole at Hualalai, isn't it? First hole, eight yards actually on the apex of the dogleg. It's eight yards off.

So that can be constraining. When we go to older courses, not so much, you know. You tend to find that they're bigger, a bigger test. I feel not necessarily -- it doesn't have to be a bigger test in length, it just has to be, you know, at least hit the driver and get out there.

Certain this one has plenty of opportunities. Now I have to hope that I drive well. It's not a foregone conclusion either. Certainly if you hit good drives on 9 and 18 you're reaching those par 5s. If you're 6 over, you need to hit a good drive because you don't want to go in there with a wood.

So yeah, there's plenty of opportunity here, but as I said, I much prefer, if it was up to me all golf should have a temptation to get you to take a shot on and be punished then if you miss that shot.

Q. Is there a difference and if there is, what is it, defending out here compared to a regular PGA TOUR event?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: No. I think the problem with defending is you start the tournament like you're leading. So you're starting off whether it's Thursday morning or Friday morning like you're going out with the lead on Sunday. There's a little bit of protection, a little bit of hanging on, a little bit of, you know, not wanting to throw it away sort of thing. That's a tough attitude to have the whole of the week, there's more stress involved in it.

So yes, defending is the same everywhere. You get interviewed more often going into it. It's just like you're leading the tournament but from day one.

And obviously it's actually hard to lead a tournament from day one because it's quite stressful. Not as hard out here on the Champions Tour because it's only three rounds and you actually need to get going very quickly, but if you're trying to win a major and you take the lead the first round, I know you want to but it's a long week.

Defending is a little bit like that. It's a long week because right from the start people are saying, hey, are you going to defend again, why did you win last year, and it just puts you in the exact same emotions as you would on a Sunday morning going out there in the last group.