

Sony Open in Hawaii

Wednesday, January 13, 2021

Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

Waialae Country Club

Harris English

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning from the Sony Open in Hawai'i. Harris, great win last week at the Sentry Tournament of Champions. What's it been like these last couple days bouncing, celebrating the win and also getting ready to compete and hopefully win again here this week?

HARRIS ENGLISH: It's been great. Had a lot of friends out here come up and say congratulations and obviously a lot of texts and phone calls from friends and family. It's been awesome. Just kind of, you never realized how much support you have from people back home and some friends that are watching that are pulling for you. It's awesome to finally feel that and people saying I made their night, made their week. It's cool to hear that.

But it's been -- I feel like I've kind of got the celebrating behind me and I've got a week off next week. So I'll get a chance to kind of soak it all in.

I feel like I've got a good chance here at Waialae. I love this place. This is a tournament on the schedule that I kind of circle every year that this is one of my favorite events. I love the golf course. I feel like each and every year I tee it up here, I can have a chance to win and obviously feel good about my game right now.

So I'm looking forward to getting the week started.

THE MODERATOR: Looking ahead to this week, only two players have won back-to-back, Sentry and then the Sony Open. Why do you think that is the case?

HARRIS ENGLISH: It's just two completely different golf courses. Kapalua is super hilly and the greens are crazy, huge greens, a lot of slope in the. Here is a pretty short golf course, firm, flat.

I don't know. Maybe they are tired. Maybe they relax a lot after the win at Kapalua. I'm not really sure. I know Justin did it most recently. I'm hoping to put myself in a position coming down the stretch to win again.

Q. I just realized you were using that putter that you

had from decades ago last week. Can you run us through the story of why you benched it, why you brought it back and how it's an old faithful?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I started putting with that my senior year of college. I guess PING, I was playing PING clubs at the time back in college and I guess they sent a couple putters to Georgia where I was at. And my assistant coach took it off the putting green, and he was like, "Man, if I can make these putts; I'm a terrible putter, if I can make putts with this putter, anybody can putt with it," like it's the best thing going.

So I started putting with it. It's called the Hohum, pretty funny name. But putted really well my senior year with it. Almost won a National Championship with it. Won, it was the Nationwide Tour at the time, the Korn Ferry event, the Columbus event. Played the Walker Cup with it. So I've had now two wins with that Hohum putter and another win with another PING mallet called the Nome.

But after my 2013 year, I switched to Callaway, so obviously couldn't putt with the PING putter those three years. But it's been a staple that I'll always go back to. It's something with the face: It's pretty soft; it's very unique; easy to aim. There's a reason why I go back to it. It's kind of an old faithful putter, and I feel like I've had some of my best putting weeks with that putter.

Q. I thought of your favorite astronaut but I had another question had a just came up. Why did you go to Callaway after 2013?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I mean, obviously --

Q. They made a nice offer, I assume?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, they made a nice offer. I just won twice in 2013 and I guess I was the next up-and-coming star. Yeah, it was a great offer. They are super nice guys. I had known a lot of the guys from out here on the PGA TOUR that worked in the truck and really liked them. Chip Brewer was a great guy. I went out there to visit them. It was awesome. Kind of like you're getting recruited.



I met Roger Cleveland, who is one of my favorite guys; obviously one of the best wedge makers, ever. So a lot of characteristics that I really enjoyed about that company and had a good run with them. Played really well in 2014.

But then after my contract was up, decided to go back to PING. It's kind of where I felt more comfortable. I played PING clubs since I was probably 12 years old, and just have a lot of confidence in them. It's tough to say, but it was a good run when I was in my 20s, but I feel like I'm really happy with what PING is doing and confident in what I'm playing right now.

Q. I guess all the equipment is good out there across the board, but there's been stories over the years of making switches, and you mentioned '14 being a good year, but when you started to tail off, was there any part of you that you thought, I should have stuck with PING?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Any time you switch clubs, there's an adjustment period. It's tough. You get used to something, and for me, I never really knew my specs of my irons or why I played a certain driver shaft or really anything like that.

And once I went to Callaway, I kind of had to re-learn why I played certain things or why I had a half-inch-long-degree upright, stuff like that that I really had no idea why I did it or just PING -- I had done that since I was a kid. It was a lot of new information. Stuff that I had never thought about before.

It's definitely an adjustment period. And I'm kind of back to not really knowing what I play. PING does it all and I have full trust in those guys to putt stuff in my hands that they know works and I know works. It's just that trust factor that playing stuff that I've looked at for, now, 15, 18, 20 years.

Q. Kind of out of left field, but curious, looking ahead a bit, preparation for the Masters, if it will be any different for you having just played one in November, and if there's any adjustments you feel like you have to make going back to a Masters in April.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I actually didn't play in November. I was sitting home watching on TV. I've played in two Masters before. Luckily at Georgia, we got to go there once a year. So I feel like I've played that golf course a good bit.

But maybe in these next couple months, I might go up there on a weekend and play up there to try to re-learn that place, because I haven't been there in probably four or five

years.

I'm looking forward to it. I mean, that's kind of the tournament that I always wanted to win when I was a kid growing up in Georgia. I watched it every single year, and it's tough watching it at home now when you're not in the tournament because you want to be there so bad.

I'll do some prep up there. I think it's a course that experience always wins there, and I've got to do my homework. I want to play with some veterans up there. I played with Freddie Couples two weeks ago back in Palm Springs. I mean, he would be a great guy to go around with and try to absorb as much information as I can from him and just kind of the ins and outs of that place.

What I've learned is going up there in February and March, the course plays so much different than it does when you're teeing it up on Thursday in the Masters and you've got to be able to adjust really quickly to the changing conditions. I've got to get better at that. I feel like I'm going to be better this time around at Augusta than I was previously.

Q. I was thinking, watching it on TV, from what you saw in November versus what you typically remember of that place and how different it was. I don't know if there's anything you picked up there?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, it definitely looked a lot softer. I talked to some guys after the tournament and I mean, it definitely looks softer. The ball wasn't running out as much. Some of the shots landing into greens, around greens, wasn't rolling as much. So it definitely looked different.

But I guess luckily, I've never really played it like that. So I'll be looking forward to getting firm and fast in April again and kind of getting back to the normal Augusta National that we're all used to seeing in April.

Q. When you went to the Greenbrier in 2019, when you tied for third, did you think you could win? When you got to the tournament, if you were being really honest with yourself?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I would say, no, that wasn't my goal. My goal was Top-10, Top-20 to get everything rolling in the right direction because it had kind of been rolling backwards for a while. So I kind of just wanted to have a good week to take something positive from a tournament that I could then go to Jackson with some positive thoughts and just keep it rolling.

I don't know, it was kind of that session back in Athens,

kind of back in my familiar territory at the UGA golf course that, I don't know, I got some confidence. I had a really good driving range session with my coaches and my coach back home in Sea Island and they were kind of pumping me up; you're back, you're ready to get rolling.

I trust them. They had seen me for a while and they had seen me play some really good golf and they weren't just blowing smoke. They truly believed that I was ready to go perform and it's been a whirlwind since then. I guess they could say that they saw it coming from there.

Q. I'm going to really take you back in memory now. I think, unless I'm missing something, I think Sony in 2012 would have been your first TOUR start; is that right?

HARRIS ENGLISH: It was. It was.

Q. Did you think you could win that week?

HARRIS ENGLISH: No. I was just -- you kind of start out just making cuts. Like I remember my mom would text me, "At least you made the cut." Or "Great job making the cut." You just kind of ease into it. Coming out here, I think I roomed with Brian Harman at the Kahala this week because we didn't want to pay so much to stay in a hotel room by ourselves. It's just little stuff like that that you're just trying to get used to it. That's why it's so hard being a rookie because you really don't know what you're getting yourself into. You've never seen the golf course before.

It's crazy how your expectations changes. I mean, now my mom doesn't text me "like at least you make the cut" now when I finish 55th or something.

Yeah, this is where I got my start and I love this place. I mean, this is one of my favorite golf courses and will kind of always have that special place in my heart of where my TOUR career started.

Q. I guess the root of that question is winning in Columbus, always a strong course and a strong field, and still being in college, a pretty big deal, and I'm wondering how much belief that gave you about yourself as you turned pro and as you made it to the TOUR later in the year?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, it was really big. I had won the Southern Amateur the week before down at Innisbrook, which is a TOUR course, and had a lot of confidence going into Columbus. It was weird that week. I think there was only one day where I played with an actual pro. I played with -- I was paired with Peter Uihlein and Bank Vonjonovic (ph), I don't know really know how to say his last name but

he played at Florida. After the first two rounds, I played with John Peterson.

So it was like I played with all these guys I was in college with, so it kind of felt like a college event. It didn't really feel like it was a next step above because I was just still playing with the guys I was used to playing with. I guess that kind of helped taper down the nerves a little bit or not feel like it was a bigger stage.

But it was huge closing that tournament out. It felt similar to Sunday. I had probably a 12-footer on the last hole to win that tournament; I made it. Those are the type of things that you can draw back on when you're in those situations. Like I've done this before. Like this isn't that hard. Like this is what it's felt like before; I can do it again.

Playing in those Nationwide tournaments back then when I was still an amateur was huge for me. I think that was my third one I had played in. I had played the previous two at the university course in Athens. So it was a huge experience for me to not feel like the stage was too big in that situation.

Q. But you were pretty decorated coming out of college, weren't you?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I mean, not compared to some other guys. But I think four-time All-American, and I think four wins. But I wasn't -- I mean, Russell Henley had a lot better college career than me. There are a lot of guys that you could say were better. I wouldn't say I was the most decorated guy coming out, but I had really started playing well my senior year and getting ready for professional golf.

Q. And the other thing I wanted to ask you last week, actually, when you talked about always a guy that wanted the ball with the clock winding down, I know you're not very tall, but did you play basketball?

HARRIS ENGLISH: I did. I did. I stopped in high school. I played like church league in high school with some friends that kind of played all the other sports, and we would come together and play basketball. But that was probably the sport, if I wasn't playing golf, that would be the sport I would play. I mean, obviously I wouldn't be in the NBA right now, but I love basketball. I love going to basketball games, watching it up close, because I think those are some of the best athletes in sports. It's one of my favorites to watch.

Q. Can you take Woodland?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Haven't played Woodland. I usually just stay behind the three-point line. I couldn't rumble with

him inside. We could have a shooting contest and it would be pretty good.

Q. Why didn't you do both through high school?

HARRIS ENGLISH: It was tough. We had a really good high school team. I don't know. I mean, looking back, I probably should have tried. But I think it would have -- for me, it would have taken too much time away from golf. But kind of knowing what I know now, it's just good to do it all when you're that young.

Church much league was good. It was probably two months out of the year and it was more relaxed and fun and we'd have a couple practices a week but it wasn't as intense as playing high school basketball and traveling and doing all that. One of my good friends, Russell Henley, was a really good belly putter in high school and played at Stratford in Macon and he loved it.

So I would recommend that to any kids I talk to now. I say play as many sports as you can because you're never going to get that time back.

Q. Can you take Harman?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Why, because I'm a little taller than him?

Q. I didn't say that?

HARRIS ENGLISH: We had some fun in college where some of our work outs out trainer would mix it up and we would play basketball. It was fun. I would usually have to guard Hudson and he loves to get a little rough inside the paint. So we had some good battles.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time, Harris, and good luck this week.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports