

JP McManus Pro-Am

Monday, 4 July, 2022

Adare County, Limeric, Ireland

Adare Manor Golf Club

Padraig Harrington

Press Conference



NEIL AHERN: You're very welcome back to Adare Manor, of course, a place you know very well; you're very friendly with JP and his family. How excited are you to be here after such a long wait?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: It really is like that. I'm thrilled to be here but it's amazing the relief. Obviously this got canceled in 2015 and then it got moved on 2020 with COVID. There's a lot of work that goes in behind the scenes. There is a strong sense of relief that we are here now, and it's amazing the work that JP and his family do. Like it's a lot of actual like behind the scenes day-in, day-out thinking about work for this.

I know it benefits the locality so much. I think the last one raised 39 million for the local charities. It's an incredible amount of work they have put in. For somebody who is somewhat on the inside and can see that, the attention to detail, and it's very hands-on by themselves. It's actually the family that do it all the way through.

So this isn't something that's pushed away to somebody else. They are actually doing the physical work, also. I think the great thing about it is because they are so involved, the locality of it have taken ownership of the event. They have actually taken over of Adare, Adare Golf Course and Manor. Everybody who works around here and lives around here genuinely loves the place and takes ownership and wants to see it doing well and feels like it's a part of the community, which is a testament to the McManus family; as much as they came in and bought and revamped it, it's literally a facility for the locals here to see and be proud of and see what can be achieved on a world stage.

NEIL AHERN: You've been heavily involved in the course changes, of course. How excited are you to see the fans out there and what should the professionals and amateurs expect over the next two days?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: The best way of me describing this golf course is, I could turn around to my wife and say look, I'm going playing golf and my wife will go, "Yeah,

fine."

If I turn around and go and say, I'm going to play golf at Adare, my wife will say, "Yeah, I'm coming." It's the best venue in the world as far as I'm concerned.

I've loving the reaction I've got so far from the players who have seen it because I knew how good it is. I hear they are going to go out there and be blown away. Bear in mind the golf course is set up, if you ranked it on a scale of 1 to 10 in terms of difficulty, it would be a 5 this week. This course can be really tough but because there's amateurs here playing, it's set up to be just a nice play this week.

So it will be interesting. I'm interested to see how the scoring is and how everybody likes it. For me it's a fascinating golf course because it can play -- I can come down here and play off the forward tees and it's really easy.

I know how hard it is when you play it off some of the tougher pins to the back tees. I think the players -- I was somewhat involved with -- Fazio designed the golf course, but all the Irish players were down here and somewhat involved with the theme of the golf course, you know, what's going to happen. I'm so keen to see how the players feel about it because I think it's the ultimate test of being pretty nice golf course and easy enough for the amateurs, and yet can be very difficult for the pros.

Q. Why do you think this field is so good? Why do you think so many players came out?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: JP, and his extended friends. There's a few others involved. If you support JP, he'll support you for the rest of your life in your charitable endeavors. I have a Paddy Harrington Scholarship to Maynooth University has put 174 kids through scholarships, and that's fully funded by JP.

He supports charities all around, and if players support him, he'll be there for them and plus, if you become a friend to JP, which these players will, there's very few people, professional golfers, can reach out to and talk to and look for advice from. JP, as I said, there's others whether it's Joe Lewis, Derrick Smith, Michael Tabor, they are all there involved in the golfing community. These are people that



golfers, you know, when they are looking for advice in the world, they can reach out to these people. These are friends that will help them out.

Q. You've worn a lot of hats for The Ryder Cup. What kind of venue do you think this will be?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: As I said, I think it will be interesting because when myself, Shane, Paul McGinley and Rory opened the golf course, we opened on a beautiful day, sunny day, perfect, hardly any wind and none of us broke par. So this course can be set up whatever way you want it in terms of difficulty. It's obviously got some very dramatic holes, especially here around the Manor. So I think it will be an exciting course.

But I think it's going to be an even better venue. It's purpose-built. They doubled the size of the hotel to make sure there's room for two teams. There's space for everything that goes with an event. I think the biggest key, I know with a Ryder Cup, you get a lot of international people coming in.

But I think the biggest key is the fact that the locality here, the people of Limerick have taken ownership of Adare Manor. As much as JP is the actual owner, the people of the community have genuinely taken ownership and they will make sure there will be no stone unturned to make sure The Ryder Cup in 2027 is a success for everybody who comes here.

Look, obviously the European Tour and JP can look after the players and the people on site, but it's the community that will look after the guests that come into the country.

Q. Would you be saddened if people like Lee Westwood, Paul Casey, Ian Poulter were no longer allowed to be involved in The Ryder Cup?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Honestly, all these guys are my friends, 100 per cent. I haven't got that deep into The Ryder Cup side of things yet. I know I talked about it the other day about the competitive side. I really don't know what the right scenario is going forward for The Ryder Cup.

I know when it comes to this week, they are my friends. This is a little bit like -- being here is a little bit like Christmas dinner or Thanksgiving for your family. You could have a sibling sitting there and -- we'll Americanise it: You could be a Republican; they could be a Democrat but you're friends at that particular time, and maybe politics isn't mentioned at the dinner table.

We are here for two days of -- and it's great to see. You know, golf is getting a bit of a hard time at the moment. It's

great to see, look what we can do with golf. Look at the money that's raised here. Look at the people that are going to enjoy this weekend. It's great to see what golf can really do in a situation like this, and as I said, it's fantastic.

So it is a little bit like, as I said, like a Christmas dinner, everybody here, and they are all our friends. Everybody is friends here, so on an individual basis, this is not a difficult situation here this week. We are all friends.

And as regards, as you said The Ryder Cup, I really haven't gotten into what's on the table, what's the proposals and what's going to go forward.

Outside of that, this week, we are here to have fun and it's so far, so good.

Q. Should they not be available, would you throw your hat back in the ring?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: I think there's plenty of people who have got a future in being Ryder Cup Captain and I think everybody should be given that chance. I had my chance. As much as I loved the experience of being Ryder Cup Captain, and I really did, it was a tough call, and I don't see myself going back into that arena again. It's just the nature of the business. It's a one-and-done, and it's a bigger events than the individual.

So there's loads of worthy captains. Whatever happens, there's plenty of people out there who will do the job justice.

Q. Talking about the LIV Golf, some people see DP World Tour as becoming a feeder tour. Are you concerned or where do you stand?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: I like the fact that they made the announcement last week that was more focused on DP World Tour and the PGA TOUR. It gives great pathways and gives a bit of foresight going forward.

You know, at the moment, there's no doubt that the PGA TOUR was the dominant tour in the game. It's amazing how much it's evolved from the '80s where there was that contention that Europe was very much a second -- not a second, but a competing tour.

The last ten years, the PGA TOUR has stolen the lead, all the players at the very top end have wanted to go. Now with this new announcement and partnership, they won't go as quick. I think for me it was ideal that I played in Europe from '96 to 2005, even though I was eligible to go to the U.S., but I was patient and learnt my trade and grew and went when I was very confident and ready.

You know, it's very difficult to go into a new pond, be a big fish in Europe and you go to the states and you're a little fish. It's tough to change, even when you're good enough, it's tough to change and we've seen players step back.

The future, I liked what they said and I look forward to seeing this because you know, it definitely looks like there is a nice future for The European Tour and a nice pathway for young players to stay and grow their game and become mature. The college system is not for everybody, so definitely was very positive.

Q. So is it sad for you to see with LIV Golf what it's doing to golf?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: As I said, personally, I believe there's room in golf for lots of tours and lots of competition. You know, I think the PGA TOUR and European Tour have upped their game, have improved their game and I like the fact that they are focussing on themselves.

It's great to see that there is, you know, the more the merrier, if you ask me. Everybody will find their place, and in three or four years', five years' time, things will have settled down and we'll all know where we stand.

At the moment, there is disruption, there's no doubt about it but disruption is not bad at times. It looks at the moment like as I said, the PGA TOUR look like they have strengthened their position and European Tour are strengthening their position. I feel there is plenty of room and time will tell and show it up. That's where I'm at. I don't have a fear at all to be honest at the moment. I think we'll be surprised in a couple years' time how everything sort of finds its place.

Q. Alan McDonnell, the course superintendent here at Adare Manor, has as lived this golf course I think for many years at this stage, and he's provided Pure Distinction bentgrass greens here in Ireland, a great achievement in itself. You've played on the best golf courses in the world --

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: It cannot be better. The golf course cannot be better than it's condition. That's the way it is. It's perfect, and -- it's as perfect as you'll ever see a golf course today. I can't -- it's nearly like that 365 days a year. Like it is -- the attention to detail, the time and effort put in is second-to-none. Anybody who goes out there, you know, if you come here on a quiet day, you look out to the golf course and you just think, this is the most luxurious park you've ever seen in your life.

Obviously it's busier here today, but I hear back people

saying they don't even want to walk on the grass, like it doesn't look real. Yeah, look, the attention to detail. But not just today. It's like close to all the time. Like they try and obviously put attention to detail all the time but it's nearly in perfect condition 365 days a year in Ireland, can you imagine, in Ireland. I can't see that there's any effort, any more effort put in anywhere in the world to get a golf course as good as this.

This what I was saying, the greens keeping staff, they have bought into it and they want to be the best. Everybody in this community wants Adare Manor to be the best it can be.

Q. We are all very proud to see you winning the you U.S. Open seniors. What sort of balance will you strike the rest of the year between playing on the normal tour and playing on the Seniors Tour?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: I'm certainly spoiled for choice for sure. I've got some PGA TOUR events, some European Tour events and some Champions Tour events and it is trying to get a mix. At the moment I'm playing six events in five weeks and I have to walk them all, imagine that. Normally I get to ride in a cart.

Yeah, look, I love playing golf so that's a good thing. And I do, because of that, I just have to balance how much work I do in and around the golf but there's no doubt I probably couldn't keep this pace up all the time. Maybe because I'm such a young guy on the Champions Tour at the moment I'm trying to push myself out there but a balance will have to be struck at some stage.

The events I play, I choose my events now based on what I like which is I suppose a nice way to have it, and so when I like a venue and like a place I'm more likely to go play it rather than, you know, I nearly choose a venue over a tournament now, just something where I know I will enjoy myself.

Q. You're heading to St Andrews, and all the very best there. Can a player over 50 win a major?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: A hundred per cent. Phil did it.

Q. Second player over 50 win a major.

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Tom Watson proved that it's certainly possible. I'm sure there's been others. Phil has done it. Obviously when it comes to a links golf course, it's even more of a chance at St Andrews.

Yeah, look, I wouldn't care -- I don't see myself, I don't have a barrier of 50 years of age. In my head the only

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

barrier I have to winning tournaments is a little bit of nerves, how I manage my mental side. So it's not a physical side that's an issue.

So yeah, every time I tee it up, I think it's going to be the week. I think I can do it. It's probably at my stage a little easier to win a major than it is to win a regular event because, you know, everybody else is going to be feeling it as well, which I tend to perform better when I've got my back to the wall and I know coming down the stretch in a major everybody else is going to feel the same way as I do.

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