

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Thursday, June 27, 2024
Newport, Rhode Island, USA
Newport Country Club

Padraig Harrington

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Please welcome Padraig Harrington to the interview room after a 4-under 66 during the first round of the 44th U.S. Senior Open at the Newport Country Club. Padraig, explain how differently the course was playing today versus the practice round?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: (Laughing.) Yeah, it was a remarkable change. I wasn't aware -- I was told it was going to rain half an inch last night. I don't know that it rained more, but really changed those greens.

Like yesterday if you short-sided yourself you really had no chance. Today sometimes you were short-sided and trying to get to the ball to the hole. Not always, but sometimes.

So it was trying to take spin off and, yeah, it was tough. If you had a wedge in it was not great today. You preferred get a bit closer so have a long chip shot. Yesterday you needed to lay back up at times to get the spin on it.

It was quite a change. You know what? We seen it before. It's going to happen again. Even maybe this week could firm up a bit as we go through the rest of the week. I don't know what the forecast is quite.

My practice round on Tuesday the course, I played both nines nearly downwind and the course was very benign. Yesterday with the wind it was an interesting difficult test. Then today it was kind of -- it was very pleasant for most of our round today. Wind got up a little bit at the end, but even then it wasn't hampering us.

I think we got the best of the day for sure. It was very, very good morning for scoring. I know myself, I had a very poor ball striking day. Really, really poor ball striking day and had a very good scoring day. I don't think I can get away with my ball striking for the next three days if it's like that, but hope my scoring stays the same.

One of the strange things in golf. You never seem to get everything together.



Q. So you had a great round but it's only 1:00. What does the rest of the day look like for you? Are you a rester? Go explore Newport?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: No. I used to be the guy who would close the driving range at 6:00 and beat balls, especially after a poor day. Got a little bit of sense in my old age and I'm going to wait and see what it's like tomorrow before I start pulling it apart.

So I will rest up this week. The win last week as well has taken a little bit out of me. I'll rest. I have my wife with me, so rest for the rest of the day and we have plans for a nice dinner tonight, few friends, so we'll enjoy that.

I think that's mainly the life of a professional golfer. Chilling out most of the time and then that evening meal is our whole social structure and something that we -- Newport is nice. We've been lucky enough been able to get some bookings so been very good we found some nice restaurants.

Maybe they're all nice restaurants and that's why we're finding the nice ones.

Q. I know you added some club head speed. What's your philosophy on speed training and how do you go about it?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: You know, I've always been capable of getting club head speed back in the day, but it would take me a lot of shots, 150 balls or so.

So my goal over the last couple years has been getting my first shot fast. So I don't do any of the -- I'm not worried about the peak as much as the average. So I focus on speed every day when I hit shots.

I do a certain amount the speed drives in my warmup. Yeah, just trying to get used to it mentally. For me, it's definitely more of a mental barrier than physical barrier.

You know, I know I'm capable. I struggled this year a little bit. I had pneumonia in the winter and haven't really recovered. I'm still down four miles an hour. I notice that and does annoy me at times. If you chase speed, it's a never-ending road of misery. You could hit one out there



330 yards and wondering can you hit the next one 335.

So it's a miserable road, but so is a lot of golf when you start chasing things.

Q. So would you say you got the most out of your round today?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Absolutely. Yeah. You know what? I could say I bogeyed the 5th hole and might have had one or two chances on the way home. Yeah, I played particularly poorly for my first -- to get to 5-under par I played particularly poorly. I nearly holed out on 12 with a chip shot.

Chipped it close on 15 to five feet.

I hit the out of bounds fence on the first and came back into play and chipped up to five feet and made birdie. Hit provisional. I hadn't seen to come back off the fence. Two bunker shot -- hit a greenside bunker shot and hit a good bunker shot to ten feet.

4 I hit a 5-iron but wasn't a great strike. The five birdies were -- yeah, I struggled all day. Be a tough week if the next 54 holes are the same ball striking. Very long week for me because you can't always get away with that.

Q. Because you played so much in your career, if you were a 25 year old guy and playing on TOUR and this happened you would probably be struggling to figure out what to do. You feel like you have a way of dealing with this on the other hand?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: No, I would've been the 25 year old who went to the range and hit balls all day. I think as you get older you realize you need to give it at least a couple days before you figure out, okay, I need to work honest my game.

You just don't know from one day to the next. You could hole an eight-footer and make you feel like you're swing being the club well. It's a crazy game. You could play a hole great and get a bad break and stand out on the next hole thinking you're playing badly. It's bizarre, but results tend to lead us down the road of -- into this trap of the score is how we played. That's not necessarily the case in terms of -- so you got to be patient and see what it's like.

Again, if I don't play well tomorrow -- maybe I didn't play well today because I was tired from last week. Let's leave it at that. Didn't strike it well today. Obviously played well. Go out tomorrow and see what happens, if my head is in the game. If it's nice, nothing to be done. If not, maybe I do need to go to the range and hit some shots.

Q. How important to start off the day and then realize that you may have got out of bounds but as you walk up there you find the ball? How important was that to keep anything going?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I think I was in fight mode anyway, so I was trying to shoot -- if I got home in 1- or 2-under par for this round I would've been thrilled.

I hit the provisional to the front of the green. Maybe I was going to make 6. I had -- I was battenning down the hatches all the way. As much as I got a huge, break in my head I had already dealt with it. I didn't realize I got the break.

Yeah, I was just running with it. I made a great up and down on 3 as well. Just didn't strike the ball very well. Some days you just got to get it done.

As I said, did I say it here -- I don't know, did I say it here yesterday? Whether you get good or bad breaks you got to deal with them.

I didn't get too much of a high out of the good break but certainly then don't get too low if I feel like I'm getting a bad break.

Q. You talked yesterday about hitting your short putts really. You had 26 putts today. How would you rate your putting on the day?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Clearly I scored well. Chipped well. I hit four long pitches in close. The one on 12 was like 38 yards. Nearly holed it.

The one on 16 was probably 48 yards and I hit it to five feet.

The one on the first of 35 yards off a wet fairway and I hit it to five feet.

The long bunker shot on 3, if it's a 30-yard bunker shot with out of bounds behind you, it's never any finish. Actually skipped eight feet by. The putting was good. No doubt about it.

It was definitely the chipping was excellent.

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