

The 151st Open

Mixed Zone

Sunday, 23 July 2023

Padraig Harrington



Yeah, looking forward to getting my head in the game next week.

Q. Padraig, 74, plus 8 --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: That really sounds miserable.

Q. At the moment, looks like play is getting more miserable, more rain heavier and wind towards the north. What holes are playing more difficult today?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Well, I think the course itself is set up very generous. Pin positions were easy with the softness in the greens. Obviously they knew the weather coming in. They knew the difficulty of the wind.

I think if it clears up, you could definitely see somebody shooting a low score out there. I think if it stays windy -- windy will probably be the most challenging day for Brian because somebody still could shoot a good score.

The pins are quite accessible. If it's really tough -- I think Brian wants it tough for everybody because he's not only a solid player but he's got a good short game, so he won't mind it being difficult.

But it is set up nice. The R&A have done a good job in getting it ready to play.

There wasn't really a shot out there or pin position that you looked at and went, that's a bit -- which sometimes you do get on the Sunday of an Open, but not today at all.

Q. Next week's course you've got good memories from there. Have you been back there, and do you look forward to it after today's performance?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Look, today was a bit -- today was two hours of abuse of myself on the range. My head was well and truly melted today after that.

I wanted to do a little bit of stuff yesterday, and I think now the next three days, get myself ready, get myself back into the form I was at the start of the week. Certainly I was a bit scrambled out there today, so it wasn't a great day in that sense.

Q. What advice would you have for Brian Harman?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I did put psychological tips on my YouTube, Instagram, and nobody had any interest. They were the least watched things when I did it during COVID. No traction whatsoever. Not interested. All those pearls of wisdom.

Look, I think Brian Harman is a very dogged person. He's the right person to hold a lead like that. Clearly he hasn't won a major, but he's a very tough, experienced character.

Sometimes we see somebody leading a tournament and you kind of go, oh, is he going to hang on. I don't think that's the case with Brian Harman. Nearly every day he goes out on the golf course he's like playing with a chip on his shoulder like he's fighting something. I think this is ideal for him.

Q. If you were Brian Harman or if you were Jon Rahm or Cameron Young or Sepp Straka --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Look, he has to understand he's got loads of ways of winning. He could play great and win, he could play average and win, he could play terrible and just hang in there and win, he could play terrible and he'll still have a chance coming down the last couple.

He's got so many scenarios, so many outs. He's holding all the cards. That's just the way it is.

It doesn't mean that he will win, but he's holding all the different options. Unfortunately with golf you don't get to declare; you have to finish it out. Nobody gives you the tournament.

He will have to play the 18 holes, and yes, a bit of rain and a bit of wind just adds a little bit to that, but he's a tough nut. I can tell you that.

I would expect him to knuckle down. I think the guys behind are looking for that rain to go ahead. I don't think they're necessarily looking for the wind to go away, but if the rain goes away, I think the guys behind, somebody could shoot a 6-under



par and at least get up close to him and put some pressure on him.

Q. Bernhard Langer has won two Senior Opens at Porthcawl, won the U.S. Seniors earlier this month. (Indiscernible).

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I'd love to go down there and win it. I'll wait and see what the golf course is like and the conditions for the week. It's a long time since I've played it, so we'll see.

But the main thing is getting my head in the game. As I said, I really, really messed up my ankle badly hitting shots and I kind of overdid it. Next couple of days I've got to get my body and mind ready for the tournament.

Q. What you did do to it?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: It was a bit strained beforehand, but I just hit so many shots, I really have put it under a lot of -- the tendons are stretched or strained. It doesn't seem to affect -- it affected me walking. I'm not quite sure what it does to me hitting the ball, but it does affect my walking a bit.

Q. Have you been back to Porthcawl since --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: No, I haven't been back to Porthcawl. Bob MacIntyre wasn't even born.

Q. You're pretty much the only guy with the status you have -- take Tiger out of it --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Still playing golf?

Q. No, not still playing golf, with the kind of status on Tour that you have.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I suppose it is 28 years. It's a long time to be -- and I was old when it happened. I was 24. Most of these kids now are 18 when they play the Walker Cup.

Q. In your wildest dreams --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I could have had another six years.

Q. Did you think you'd be going back there 28 years later with three majors and a Hall of Fame --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I don't think I've kept my yardage book from '95, no. I was walking around here and saying, am I going to keep this yardage book? No, I don't think I'll be back to another Open here. Eight years? Maybe. Seven years, I'll be 60.

Q. You can always qualify, can't you?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah. A bit disappointing to go and win it and only get seven years, wouldn't it? If a 20-year old gets 40 years, and I go win it and I get seven, it would be terribly disappointing.

Q. Did you get any momentum out of today at all for --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: No. Today was -- the mind was muddled. I did a lot yesterday, and it really isn't the right preparation.

But look, sometimes you do that. I wasn't in the tournament.

I'm going to chill out for 24 hours, drive down tomorrow, and play Tuesday and probably play nine holes Wednesday.

Q. Barring a miracle today it looks like (indiscernible)?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: He's easily good enough. We all know that. He could win at any stage. But as I said, it's a little bit more complicated than just being good enough. There's other guys who are good enough. There's plenty of guys out here. The standard is very deep. Plenty of guys who are competing and playing.

Rory has to bring his "A" game. That's just it. I see he's pretty much down where I am putting this week, and I can tell you that's pretty miserable. He's not going to win tournaments putting like that this week.

Not saying he's putting badly, but the fact is he's probably given up 13 shots to Brian Harman, 12 in putts. I only had given up 14.

But that's what I'm saying. You just can't -- there's too many good players for you to go out there and not have all of your game at a decent level and some of your game at a really good level. That's just the way it is.

You can't just rely on -- it all has to fire. That's the reality of it, and you only get four of those a year.

But as I said, he's got four goals a year for another 20 years.

Q. (Indiscernible).

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I don't think they do, no. I'm not sure why that -- I think that could be just circumstantial. I'm not sure that's necessarily -- there's obviously more pressure in a major, but there's more pressure for everybody.

Could be the thing with the majors that we're looking at one person. There's 156 guys and everybody is focused on one



person. That kind of puts him -- when you look at one, what's the chance of any one person winning in a given week; whereas if you had a group you could probably pick the winner from the group, and Rory is obviously part of the group. He's just not he one coming out on top.

Q. (Indiscernible).

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, look, it would be hard to see anybody who wouldn't want to be in his shoes. Maybe there's somebody, but it would be an interesting one, wouldn't it?

If you were told you were starting in Rory's shoes next year at the majors, I think you'd be pretty stoked.

Q. Other guys don't get the same scrutiny like a Tommy Fleetwood --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Everybody is under their own personal pressure. They feel it themselves, and there's a saturation point to that anyway. There's a certain level and that's it. It doesn't get any more. I can guarantee you Tommy Fleetwood is feeling it this week, home crowd, and it's probably tougher on him that he shot such a good first round. Puts a lot of stress on the week. I know you want to shoot a good first round, but fair bit of pressure on him.

Yeah, look, it will feel it to Tommy and it will feel it to just about anybody, I suppose.

Q. How far back is too far back today?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I don't know. Like Brian Harman has all -- look, you take him out for whatever reason, and 2-unders have a chance, 2-, 3-unders.

If you didn't have a leader, like if you were looking at second place, it's quite possible that 7-under par would finish second.

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