

Senior PGA Championship

The Concession Golf Club

Bradenton, Florida, USA

Tuesday, April 14, 2026

Padraig Harrington

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Padraig Harrington is with us now at the 2026 Senior PGA Championship. Padraig, what can you tell us about the state of your game heading into another major?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, I'm reasonably happy where I'm at. It's Tuesday. I'm not panicking. Waiting to see what comes out on Thursday. So, yeah, I seem to be in decent form, so we just kind of have to wait and see.

THE MODERATOR: Questions.

Q. You were recently in that position of the new guys coming and the top guys. So we have three guys Pat Perez coming this week. Stenson is coming starting in the TOUR Championship. What are your thoughts about that, about new guys that come and hit the ball as they hit it?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I still feel like a new guy (smiling). Yeah, look, I suppose there's new guys coming all the time, and I know when I started, I was told that there's a kind of sweet spot 54 to 56 or 57, and then it kind of gets hard after that.

Yeah, I think with the three new guys? I know Henrik is here. Sabbatini is here.

Q. Yeah. Johnson, Zach Johnson is here.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Zach has been here a few weeks. Pat Perez as well is playing.

Look, the thing about golf tournaments, you can only manage what you are doing. You know, you've got play well, and then you've got to get the breaks with your own game. Trying to manage what anybody else is doing or wondering how they're doing or anything like that, yeah, it's well out of your control.

I feel like my game is good enough, you know, to be in contention, and if I can get in contention, then it's about making some good decisions, you know, not getting any

bad breaks and maybe getting one or two good breaks.

You know, it's about controlling what I'm doing and not looking over my shoulder so much at anybody else. Certainly, you know, those three players you're talking about there are pretty strong players, no doubt about it.

Yeah, they look like they'll have a very good Champions Tour career and senior career. I think what you're finding in golf now -- '96 is about the cutoff. I would have been the first that would have got, let's say, the Tiger money, and because of that money, there was more the ability to have a trainer and a fitness coach travel with me and, like, a physio and all that sort of stuff. So guys are going to get to 50 a lot fitter and a lot stronger because of that money that came into the game.

So, yeah, the guys coming in, you know, those three particular guys are pretty fit and strong. They're not carrying too much weight. Should compete well on the Champions Tour and be very competitive out here.

Q. I'm assuming you were watching the Masters on Sunday.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I was.

Q. So any reflections about that and the state of Irish golf?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: It's great for Irish golf. We've added another major title, which is very nice. We've been doing very well at the top of the table. Not so well at the bottom of the table. We haven't had a lot of new guys come onto tour.

I think when I started out on tour, there was 15 Irish guys on the European Tour. I played the first four events. This year I was the only Irish guy. Yeah, we're strong at the top.

As regards to Masters, Rory could win ten of them at this stage or five of them, anyway. He probably will still be competitive at 50 years of age around that golf course. For him, it was interesting that he won that one with his short



game, which makes him even better a player.

Over the years it's physicality to driving and the iron play. He's always been a superb chipper, but now it's with the putting and things like that. A very rounded game and a game that looks like it has a lot of longevity in it. So he's in a very nice place going forward, particularly at that tournament that you would think. It's amazing when you win one, that he's now got two, and we're thinking that maybe two or three or five would be realistic around that golf course.

But, yeah, he showed some real good character there. You know, psychology-wise he really won that tournament. His mentality and how he went about things, that's a very strong showing for him.

He obviously still has the physical side of the game, but to show that short game and the mental side of the game means he looks like he would be a very strong force for a while to come in the game.

Q. Padraig, what do you have to do well to play well on this course? What will your strategy be like on a course like this?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, this is interesting. The tees are obviously a long way up, but you still end up hitting to the same driving area. It's not like you can hit past. Any time you try and challenge the tee shots, there's a lot more trouble if you do, if you try and hit it down there.

It's a lot of strategy off the tee. Pick your battles, which means the second shots are going to be a little bit longer. Obviously we know the greens are extremely difficult, so just patience there. Patience with where you're playing to, what shots you're hitting. Accepting some of the misses that will feel a little bit hard done by, and hopefully having a good short game on top of it.

But I think as much as you would like to play great physically and do that, I think this would be a very strong week for the mental game, both in decision-making and in acceptance of the outcome, because there's some big slopes on those greens that you can be not just marginally off, but maybe just a slight change of wind, and you could be 10, 15 feet from the hole, and it runs off the green, and you're left with a very risk/reward chip shot.

It's not that the chip shots are impossible. It's just that there's a lot of -- if you take them on, you could end up back at your feet. Yeah, it's going to be a strong test mentally this week, no doubt about it.

I'm looking forward to playing the golf course to see how it

plays, as I said, but at the moment it's not a lot of drivers off the tee. It's a lot of laying up and being patient and then the rest of it will be, I suppose, how they set up the pin positions, how difficult, how tight and that sort of challenge.

Some of the issues will be, you know, if you are too conservative off the tee, you're kicking the can down the road and making the second shot very difficult, but you know, at the moment for me anyway it's certainly not a lot of drivers. Probably if I start hitting drivers, it means I'm not doing so well (smiling).

Q. Padraig, what's the balance with these greens? What's the balance between trying to be aggressive and get it on the right places on the greens without biting off too much and taking risk?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: It will depend on pin positions, but a lot of times there is only one place to hit it. It's not like you can play safe 20, 30 feet away from the hole could end up going off the other side of the green.

The challenge is being committed to whatever shot you're picking. If you lay up off the tee and, you know, you're leaving yourself a bit further back, that second shot is going to be difficult to get it in the right placement on the green.

If you take it on off the tee, obviously the tee shot becomes more difficult, but the second shot becomes a little easier. So it's really going to be how each person sees it and the feel they have for it. You know, depends on the wind on the day. It depends on the pin positions, but there is a lot of variability on the golf course on each hole based on the pin position you see at the green and the challenge from that.

I think we've got to get and play it in the tournament. I haven't played it before here in a competition, and I think I've got to see it in competition to understand more about it.

I've had a good look around. I walked the course yesterday rather than playing it. I had a look at all the greens and the pin positions and things like that. So it really will be a question of -- some of it will be a question of the setup, but it does seem like it's going to be short, like all the tees are well forward, and they look like they're going to go even further forward. So seems like it's going to be short off the tee, but then there's nowhere to go anyway.

As I said, it will be a second-shot golf course this week. Approach shots. It's all about the approach shots.

Q. Understanding that you are still getting a look at it,



but does it this course remind you of any other championship courses that you've seen on this circuit?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: You know, trying to think of other courses that I would have played like it. Maybe a Mirasol back in the day. Yeah, Mirasol would have been something similar. That type of golf course with some big runoffs.

I picked that up because I won there (smiling). Outside of that, I don't know. It's reasonably unique, I would think. As I said, it's a lot of pressure on those approach shots and a lot of pressure on the referees this week to get the pins in the right places. It's going to be those two things are going to be the big -- it looks like we're going to have a lovely week. Weather, a little bit of wind. Just a nice golf course, fantastic conditions. The greens are great.

So it will be a lot of mental strength this week and decision-making and then good approach shots.

Q. I see the brace on your knee. I know how hard you've worked to keep your body in shape, but you still have to deal with pain out here. Just talk about personally how you deal with the pain and balance that of trying to play well, but also make sure you have longevity.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: This is just the way it is. If you want to compete and you're trying to physically, you know, give it 100% every day, you're going to have issues. I work out in the gym. I do my stretching. I have my physio, but you know, there's plenty of natural attrition as you go along.

My right knee, I was told I will need to have -- in 2020 I was told I was going to have to have surgery sooner rather than later. Six years later I haven't had that surgery. I keep looking at those things that come in in Instagram saying they've cured how to grow back cartilage, and I'm hoping I can wait another two or three years so that something like that will come along.

Look, I can manage it. Like, I have a disc replaced in my neck, which is way better now than when I was in my career. I probably lost 33% of my tournaments -- like 33% of my tournaments I had a serious neck injury while I was playing.

Players deal with injuries. You just get on with it. Usually nobody knows about it. You just keep playing through it and working around it.

I would suggest to every person that every person needs to

find the choke point in their body. When you're a golfer, you'll have one golfer who complains about lower back, one who has a neck problem, one who has a wrist problem, one has a knee. Everyone seems to have one point in their body that takes that pressure. You better find it quick and spend 50% of all your training focusing on that area to keep it at bay.

You know, there's no point in doing somebody else's training program that you see on Instagram. You got to do the program -- you got to hit the area that you have an issue with. Mine was always my neck. The knee is just old age. I still to this day -- you know, I've gone and worked with Tom House on my shoulder work programs. A lot of my exercises are focused on keeping my upper back and my shoulders and scaps stable because of those issues.

We're all dealing with it out here, and it would be a surprise if somebody wasn't, especially if you're somebody like me who practices a lot and is trying to go full tilt at it pretty much all the time.

Yeah, it's just natural out here. We know how to work around it and get on with it. As I said, I struggle a little bit with my knees, but I can play golf with it. I'm going for physio now when I finish up here and just manage it and get in the gym and try and strengthen up. Just normal stuff really.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports