

BMW Championship

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Olympia Fields, Illinois, USA

Olympia Fields Country Club

Harris English

Press Conference

AMANDA HERRINGTON: We'd like to welcome Harris English to the virtual interview room here at the 2020 BMW Championship. Quite a difference a year makes from where you were last year at this time but incredibly consistent play starting early in the fall. Obviously took some time off with the pandemic, but here you are No. 6 in the FedExCup standings. Can you just take us through a highlight of the season and what's gotten you here today?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, like you said, this has probably been my most consistent year by far of anything in my career. This is my ninth year playing on the PGA TOUR and had a lot of top 10s. Feel like I've been in contention a good bit, and it's been a lot of fun.

I was pretty bummed that I missed out on my card last year and barely missed getting my card again at the Korn Ferry finals, and I would say that really sparked me to work really hard in the core golf season and kind of rejuvenate myself to get back to where I was back in 2013-14 where I felt like I know I can play out here.

Got off to a good start at the Greenbrier this year, finished I think third our fourth there, top 10 at Sanderson Farms, and that really kicked off my season in a positive way and kind of kept the momentum rolling through the whole year.

Even when the pandemic hit, I played really well at the first round at Sawgrass. I think I shot 65, was in second. But I didn't really take a whole lot of time off during the pandemic. I used that time to get my body stronger, work on my game a lot, work on some shots that I didn't have in my arsenal and felt like that was a good time to get better, and when we did get the call to come back and play, I was going to be ready and had my goal of getting to the TOUR Championship and having a run at the FedExCup.

So I feel like I've done all those things and I'm ready to take on this week here at Olympia Fields and see if I can keep the momentum going.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: You actually have a great history here at Olympia Fields. What do you remember



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about I think 2009 was the year with the collegiate event here at Olympia Fields? What do you remember?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I remember how great of a test it was. In college we don't play many courses like this, how hard the golf course is, and it was really a PGA TOUR setup in my eyes. You had thick rough, you have firm greens, you had fast greens and I think I shot maybe even par or 1-over and won the tournament, so have some good history here. I really like the layout. I played the front nine yesterday and it started coming back to me.

It's just a tough golf course. I don't think you're going to see the scores like you did last week at Northern Trust. The greens are going to probably firm up through the week. They were really firm yesterday through a Tuesday, so I'm excited about it.

It's going to be a good warmup for the other tournaments coming up with the TOUR championship and then the U.S. Open a couple weeks ago. I know we're all excited to be here. We've got a lot to play for this week and next week, and I think everybody is going to be atop their game and give it their best.

Q. I just have a question about your strategy off the tee this week. Here at the North Course the landing zones and the fairways are guarded by a number of bunkers providing a challenge off the tee. What's your strategy this week to avoid difficult approaches in so you can attack the greens at this course?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, from yesterday seeing it -- I'd much rather be in some of these bunkers than being in the rough because the greens are so firm, I felt like I could spin an 8-iron or 7-iron a lot more than I can coming out of the rough with the same club. I'm feeling like I'm going to be pretty aggressive off the tees because if you do lay back and miss the fairway, it's kind of a double whammy of you're hitting a lot longer club in and you can't hold the green.

I'm going to play pretty aggressive off the tee because I feel like my short to mid-iron game is really good right now, and like I said earlier, I feel like you can challenge the bunkers because I'd much rather be in the bunkers than this thick rough this week.



Q. Would you just share a little bit about the role that Justin Parsons has played and the changes to your golf swing and how did you decide to begin with him, how long you've been working together? A little backstory there.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, when he was in Dubai, I sent a couple swings back and forth to him and we talked a little bit and didn't really start working until he came over to Sea Island and we could see each other in person and really started working with him Hilton Head of last year and I had a good finish there and felt like my game was trending in the right way and getting close even though I had missed my card last year and barely missed in the Korn Ferry finals. I feel like my game was trending in the right direction and was starting to see some results off the tee and my approach play were getting a lot better.

He's been great, really keeping me on a system. Like all golfers, it's easy for us when we hit a bad shot, our brains start going wild and thinking about all these different things. There was a time there for a couple years where during a tournament I was using three or four different swing thoughts, and that can work for six holes, that can work for nine holes, but it won't work for the duration of a 72-hole event.

He's been really consistent with me, working really on the same things over and over. It sounds boring, but sticking with the fundamentals of alignment and really getting my takeaway under control. That's really all we've worked on, and he's been a great guy from a swing mechanic thing as well as more my mental coach of pumping me up and really been a great mental coach for me kind of off the golf course. He's been awesome. He's been a great addition to the team, and I can't say enough good things about him.

Q. When you haven't won since 2013, how do you deal with that and what do you think it's going to take for you to get back to the winner's circle?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I love being in contention like that. Ever since I was a kid, whether it was playing basketball or soccer or football, I always wanted the ball in my hands during the last seconds of the game. I take that with golf, and I feel like I've been a good closer when I've been in contention like that. It was good to just get a taste of it last week being in the final group with Dustin. I feel like I put some pressure on. I feel like I was 4-under through 8 and lost some ground, but I feel like I came out of the gates good. I had some nerves early but made some good solid putts and got it rolling.

I feel like the more and more times I can put myself in those positions the better chance I'm going to have at

getting a victory.

Q. Last week was a shootout. This week looks like it's going to be a lot harder. Talk about the contrast of adjusting your game to that style.

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, it is a big difference. Last week you could shoot at the pins pretty much every single hole because the greens are so soft and it didn't really matter if you were coming in with a 7-iron or a wedge. I mean, you could be super aggressive and you saw it with the scores.

Any time you get thick rough and firm and fast greens, you can't be as aggressive because short-siding yourself is way harder. Playing the front nine yesterday I could see that, this is more of a U.S. Open style golf course. I know they had the PGA here back in 2003.

But it's going to be tough. We all love tough tests like this, but you definitely have to change your strategy a little bit to shy away from some pins, to try to leave yourself uphill putts and uphill chips whenever possible. It's definitely more for conservative play out here than trying to make birdie every single hole and being super aggressive. But you've got to pick your spots out here.

I'm going to be pretty aggressive off the tee so I can get a short iron in to really pick my spots where I have some green flags.

Q. Do you feel like you're sort of playing with house money for how well you did last week and now you're sort of positioning yourself, as well?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, for sure. I feel like I can roll with the momentum over the past few weeks. Had a good finish at the PGA Championship the last day. I played really well over the past five or six weeks. I've been in the position of being 32nd, 31st, 30th a good many times, and that definitely adds a lot more pressure to this week than just a golf tournament. But I feel like I'm in a good spot. I can really just focus on this week and knowing that I'm already in the TOUR Championship that I can focus on this week and do the best I can and set myself up to be in the best possible spot for trying to win the FedExCup.

Q. Was there a low point either last year or just kind of along the way the last couple years without having a win and not playing kind of up to your previous level? And if so, what was it?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, I would say the lowest point was not getting my card through the Korn Ferry finals, the final round at Victoria National. I think I finished 14th at the Nationwide Children's Hospital Open at the Scarlet Course

at Ohio State. When I was playing Victoria National and really had to play decent the last nine holes to keep my card, and that was really the only point in my career where I feel like the ball was in my court and I didn't do anything with it.

Really bummed after the round. Drove back, stayed in Chattanooga with one of my buddies Steven Yeager, so we had some cocktails that night and hung out and started feeling a little better, but it really sparked me to work harder and to never put myself in that position again. I knew I was better than that. I knew I had to overcome that, and sometimes you need to have some adversity like that to be able to change some stuff in your game and for me to start having a lot more trust in a guy like Justin of, okay, what I've been doing the past couple years has not worked clearly. I've got to change some stuff, and I'm all in with buying in on whatever system we have, whatever strategy we have of making myself better.

I feel like I needed that to kind of give myself a kick to get back to where I needed to be. I mean, starting in the 126-to-150 category was pretty tough, not really knowing what tournaments I'm going to be in this past year, but sat down with my team and knew that when I did get in a tournament I was going to be 100 percent rested, I was going to be the most prepared player in the field, and I feel like I've come with that mindset this year, and it's worked out really well.

Q. Have you taken a moment -- is there a moment in time that you kind of celebrated the success that you've had yet or is that still to come?

HARRIS ENGLISH: It's still to come. I don't want to be complacent with where I'm at right now because I feel like some complacency can lead to me not working as hard or not trying to strive to be the best.

I think after the TOUR Championship ends, probably that week during the Safeway Open, I'm not going to play the Safeway, I can kind of sit back and relax a little bit and enjoy it because it's been kind of a whirlwind these past couple months of obviously COVID happening and then I ended up getting coronavirus so I haven't had a whole lot of chance to sit back and enjoy the success and to take a deep breath of kind of living in the moment of wow, I've done a lot this past year and I've gotten back to the TOUR Championship, which was a huge goal of mine.

I'm still going balls to the wall here this week and next week and see if I can finish out on a high note.

Q. I just wanted to ask you about your experience with the Sea Island boys, the series on social media I've

been seeing with you, J.T., Keith and Patton. What was your experience filming that, and how has Sea Island developed you as a golfer?

HARRIS ENGLISH: Yeah, it's been funny hearing mainly a lot of the PGA TOUR players saying they've watched the series and how funny it was or how good it was. It was really easy for us to shoot that. I mean, I've never really done that before, but it was really kind of an insight on what we really do on a week-to-week basis down there. That's why I enjoy living down there. I have a lot of good friends outside of golf but on the PGA TOUR, as well, and we can compete really in a lot of different aspects like that. I think that's what we all enjoy doing, and when we're not on the road competing at a PGA TOUR event, we still get that same thrill of trying to beat each other in ping-pong or bowling or you name it.

It was really cool for a lot of people to see kind of what we do on an off week, and we do have fun with each other and enjoy it. But I moved down to Sea Island right after I graduated from University of Georgia, and it's been a great experience and a great move for me of being down there with a lot of really good golfers. That's why I pretty much moved down there is there were a lot of veteran players down there. Davis Love has been kind of a mentor to all of us, Lucas Glover was down there, Zach Johnson, Matt Kuchar, all guys who I have a lot of respect for on and off the golf course.

I wanted to surround myself with those kind of players of how I can get to the next level. Surrounding myself with better players than myself. I feel like it's been awesome for me. I love the small-town feel. I feel like the whole community gets behind us and really looks after us down there, and we have a good time. A lot of good golf courses down there. And with the new Sea Island GPC fitness center, everything we have is within a five-mile radius that we can use to get better at golf, and it's been a great experience.

AMANDA HERRINGTON: Harris, thanks so much for your time today. Good luck this week.

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