

PNC Championship

Thursday, December 15, 2022

Orlando, Florida, USA

The Ritz-Carlton Golf Club

Padraig Harrington

Paddy Harrington

Quick Quotes

Q. Start off with a couple quick comments about how nice, fun you guys are looking forward to this weekend?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, it's that time of year. I think it's our fifth time playing. It's kind of a post-holiday for me. It's a holiday for the whole family, so everybody comes over. I think we're more relaxed about it now. I think at the start there is an element of, you know, you want to do okay. We're not talking about winning it, but you just want to do respectful.

We know we're okay now, we're here to enjoy it, and anything past that is a bonus.

Q. Any nerves about playing an event like this with Dad? And same question to you, any nerves about playing well in front of your son?

PADDY HARRINGTON: Honestly, like this week, I have not been as nervous as previous years. But I feel like when we actually get to Saturday and I stand on the first tee that I will be nervous.

Definitely in terms of preparation and stuff, like previous years would have been very like, yeah, if I'm hitting it not well or something before, like I'm very like --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Stressed.

PADDY HARRINGTON: Yeah. But I wasn't that stressed this year.

Q. Are you nervous for him?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: He's been doing exams this week. He's been doing his end of term exams, first year in college, on Monday and Tuesday online. And so, you know, life's going on as much as the tournament is.

Yeah, we'll be nervous on Saturday morning. I want him to



play well. As I said, the great thing about this event, everybody will hit some good shots. And when it comes to the TV coverage, it generally will show a few good shots from everybody. So everybody kind of looks well at the end of the week. And they know that. They set the tee boxes up so that everybody has a chance and everybody can play.

At the business end, winning it, certainly, you know, that gets quite competitive at the very end, historically, the last couple of holes, there's pressure in it. If we get to that point, that's a huge bonus. For us, we're here to play well, enjoy it, have fun and see what happens.

Q. Which one did you spend more time studying for, the tournament or the exams?

PADDY HARRINGTON: Definitely exams.

Q. What was your hardest exam?

PADDY HARRINGTON: Well, I only had two. The harder one was probably the one I had to get up at 5 a.m. to do, because they didn't exactly give me like a break to the time difference and stuff. So that was hard.

Q. What's the energy like around this tournament and this event?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: It's really good. And obviously it's -- I like coming here because there's guys playing here who were my heroes growing up. And in some ways I'm bringing my son along so that he can have some of that: That's Gary player over there. And Gary has been particularly nice to him over the years. He would kind of Gary now.

So this is something that's great for me because you want to share that. Obviously, then, there's different generations here, younger people obviously playing with their dads and things like that.

So that's nice as well because, let's face it, I don't get to see Nelly Korda play in person. I might see it on the TV, but, you know, somebody like Nelly, this is a good week for me to go, I want to see where she's hitting it, how she's hitting it.



As I walk down the range, Nelly Korda is the one I'm going to look at. Lee Trevino, Gary Player, I've seen enough of Jordan and J.T., I don't care what they're doing, but I want to see the players that I -- guys that I played against, not played against, you know, would have grown up watching and then a few of the younger people that I want to see.

Q. How about you, Paddy? What's your favorite bit? Like who you like seeing each year?

PADDY HARRINGTON: Probably making birdies and nice shots.

Q. Is there any player?

PADDY HARRINGTON: Getting to watch the highlights, seeing if I made any of the -- yeah, I mean, love Gary. I'm great friends with Jordan. We always have a good time with them. Dad is probably my favorite player here I'd say this week.

Q. How surprised were you by how much success he had this year?

PADDY HARRINGTON: What do you mean? I wasn't surprised at all. Yeah, I mean, I've been watching the behind the scenes for the last number of years, working on the speed and all that kind of thing. Safe to say it's been paying off lately.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: He's been giving me a hard time about it.

PADDY HARRINGTON: Yeah, no, when he came out on Tour this year, I was on him, Pitching, Dad, pitching.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I get a text, like you played the par-5s, there were only two under par today, what --

PADDY HARRINGTON: There was three. There was three on the course, and you played the three under.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, so he's -- Paddy, he's been keen on -- he's keener on what I'm doing in my golf than he is on his own golf, which is -- you know, you watch it, you pay attention, he knows how I'm playing. I often think put that energy into his game, you do like -- he likes to -- quite like being the spectator and understand --

PADDY HARRINGTON: Except for the back nine --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Get stressed. Which I do. I get stressed. My other son who's here was playing the semifinal of a rugby cup at home, was so stressed. So I couldn't stand it. I had to walk away. I had to get away

from people. And Paddy knows more about rugby than me, so he was giving me a bit of a lowdown. I wasn't happy. He was telling me the truth, and I wasn't happy at all. I didn't need to know the real truth of it. I wanted to know -- yeah, they can still win from here if they lost matches. So he's a better fan than I am. I'm just -- yeah, I get a bit excited.

Q. You have always been a great observer of this game. We just had Jordan up here. You've seen a lot of guys that have lost form and do and don't climb out. How much respect do you have, a guy who kind of finds it again --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Well, I think that's the absolute outlier. As I see, everybody gets -- up to my age, anyway, in my career, everybody before me, you got that 20 years of a golfing career, you got about 10 years -- well, three or four years to build up, then you play your seven, eight years.

In that period, you have a two-year period where you peak. You have two seasons, 18 months, where you've peaked. And you could go to everybody's career, they have two seasons, 18 months, where they play above themselves.

And, of course, once you've done that, it's very hard to live up to it because not only are you trying to live up to the best you played, you're trying to live up to the best you thought you played.

Jordan obviously clearly had that role, no different than myself in 2008. And I would say with me, I played better in 2009, '10, '11. I didn't have the results. Maybe I was getting in my own back, whatever, getting in my own way.

What I do like with Jordan is he's coming back. You know, that's very unusual. Very unusual to have that peak and then to have another one. Jordan is coming back, which is quite impressive. It's quite a testament to him.

And maybe the guys seem to have the peaks earlier in their careers now. All the young guys seem to come out. Like when I came out, you still had to learn, you weren't allowed to win a major. You had to, you know -- literally, we bought into you had to learn how to do it.

The young guys now, they're having their peaks earlier, maybe they can have a second one, a second go at it.

Jordan is certainly the one I'd be looking at. You know what, I look at -- when I mentioned the two of them, J.T., obviously you always think Jordan, J.T., J.T. is nearly -- he'll be better off because his majors are just steady. I don't stand here and think J.T. -- I don't think J.T. has had

his two years, his 18 months.

So he actually could end up being the six or seven majors at the end of his career, or whatever, because of the slow -- the slow burn is better for a long career. A quick run is just hard to live up to.

And, again, pick a player, you'll see it. Maybe it was made a major, Ryder Cup, maybe won two or three tournaments that year. Maybe he just kept his card for two years. Everybody seems to have that run. And I don't know if it's because you played your best, but it's because you're always comparing yourself to an unrealistic version of yourself because you'll always think you never missed a shot.

Q. What would you say is Paddy's strength on the course and then maybe his weakness?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Highs and lows. Strength is he can be great mentally, and then he can beat himself up mentally. Like he plays rugby. He doesn't have that in his own sport. It's you're solid, steady in his own sport.

But in this sport, bad shot means I'm playing badly and a good shot means I'm playing good. It's leveller, steadier. You know, you don't want to have -- to be honest, he does want to have the highs and lows because he's only an amateur. That's it. It's not his game. He's just here for -- you know, to enjoy it.

So he hits a great shot, he just thinks this is brilliant. If he hit a bad shot, he goes, oh, it's never going to be a good one again. But that's true amateur. It's true enjoyment of the game. You hit a shot, and you think, wow, that's like as good as a pro; and then you hit a shot, and you go, that's as good as an amateur.

Q. Do you agree with that assessment?

PADDY HARRINGTON: Yeah, I agree. Definitely. One of the things that definitely was a big focus for us was that we are here to have fun, and there's no reason for me to be beating myself up because I hit a bad shot.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I think the biggest problem for all the parents here, I've said this before, it's really like we should have a (indiscernible) obviously where we do the coaching because it's so much pressure on the kids because everything is compared to how their dad did. Oh, you're not as good as your dad, or you are as good as your dad, or you're this.

There's a lot of stress and pressure when it comes to trying to play the same sport as your dad. So that's tough. So

you could see why the highs and lows in his game could be like that. Whereas at the end of the day --

PADDY HARRINGTON: (Indiscernible) if I can assist you, then that's --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: In the tournament.

PADDY HARRINGTON: Yeah.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: And my goal for Paddy when it comes to golf is that he loves the game and in 80 years he still loves the game and playing the game. That's my goal. Like I -- you know, --

PADDY HARRINGTON: I'm 19, 80 years from now --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, you'll be on. (Laughing.) I put money on it that you'll be playing the game in 80 years. 99 years of age. Yeah. You'll be living longer.

But it is -- I want my son to be respectful at the game, love the game, have the etiquette of the game.

To wish your son to be a professional or to be as good, that's just -- it's just a different -- it's a different completely -- a different obsession. So at the end of the day, an event like this is, okay, we're on the big stage, but we're actually here just to be involved in the game and enjoy the game, hit good shots.

Now, I can guarantee if we play well and everything goes well, we'll be stressing and trying hard on the last couple of holes. But it doesn't mean we have to do that all week.

Q. When you go out on the range tomorrow, Saturday, Sunday and see Tiger and Charlie, which one are you going to be more intrigued to watch?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Charlie. Charlie. Actually, to be honest, definitely Charlie, Charlie, Charlie. But kind of just strange enough, after watching Tiger in the match, to me, with a bit more speed and a bit more of that, like you never doubt Tiger's mental ability, and it's always one where is he able to come back, and you don't want to give up -- like he looked better physically at that match and the speed.

And you know me, obviously, I'm interested in that stuff. You know, you'd never run Tiger off, but I actually think he might be even better than that -- in a better place than I had thought. So I will take a little sneaky look at Tiger, no doubt. But Charlie, to be honest, I'm more interested in Charlie.

It's very interesting for a 13-year-old. And he did it when he was 11. It's hard to support the angles in a golf swing when you don't have -- at 11, he could hold the club at the right position. Like most kids who are good at 11, 12, 13 years of age, their swing hasn't even come close to developing.

Like I bet you if you went back and looked at Rory at 12 years of age, he was hitting a big loopy, you know, drop kicking. Because that's what they do, kids. But Charlie has always managed to pressure the golf ball, which is exceptional at that age. It really is. So, yeah, I'd be looking at and looking at the swing to see how it is.

I said this before, doesn't really matter how good you are at 11, 12, 13 years of age. It's how much he loves the game when he's 22 years of age and, you know, it's kind of at a plateau level. So it's fascinating to watch now, but it will come down to how much he really loves the game whether he -- you know, how successful he is.

Q. What about Tiger's swing specifically or his body that made you think that?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Saw the numbers. Looking at the speed numbers. So I want to go and see it in person and see. He's got that, clearly he -- which was at the Masters, which was when he won it, which was phenomenal. Tiger, if he's not in contention, I don't know if he doesn't lose interest, but he's -- when he got in contention in the Masters, everybody took note, as in the rest of the field took note.

So Tiger knows if he can get himself into position, that he'll raise his game and put a little bit of pressure and stress on the rest of the field. I think he needs a little bit of physicality as in that ball speed. It's just tough if you go out there against these young guys, there's so many of them that they're hitting it and they're overpowering golf courses.

If you're not somewhat able to keep up there, initially, I don't think I would -- you're not doubting Tiger being good down the last nine holes, but the little bit of extra speed will help him because in the first 63 holes, that the last nine holes, you know, who would want to be coming down the stretch against Tiger, all these young guys, you know. You know he's capable of doing anything at that stage. And, yeah, I think he's in a better position to get himself into that last nine holes.

Q. Growing up as the son of a major champion, can you imagine the -- do you have maybe a better perspective of what it must be like to be Charlie Woods?

PADDY HARRINGTON: Yeah, I'd say, back home,

definitely I would get -- maybe not over here, but at home, back in Ireland, I would get a similar kind of perspective: Are you going pro? No. What's your handicap?

You know, like everything is -- yeah. There is -- there is definitely a judgment there. And like --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, people would know, and people would -- in an Irish context, you know, ten years ago, I'm not saying now (indiscernible) best sportsman ever in Ireland, so you can understand there is that level of focus that Paddy would have been -- everybody's, Oh, you're going to be a pro, you're going to follow your dad's footsteps, you're going to do this.

And then if Paddy turns around and says, Well, you know, I'm an amateur, I play off this handicap, you know, there's a lot of judgment. There's an awful lot.

I think Charlie's got past that now. I think he is pretty darn good. So it looks like Charlie's life is going to be in golf at this stage. And that's only looking from the outside. I'm not -- I think at home in Ireland, yeah, Paddy has to put up with that. People know -- just like I would, you'll be in places and you think you're on your own, but people know who you are.

Everybody pays a certain price for everything they get in life. So the more famous you are, the better you're doing, you're going to have to put up with that. I say that to him in times. People have come up to him at times and said things, done things, whatever, and I said, Well, that's the price you pay for being my son. And everything, all the good, all this, all this money we make out of golf, the lifestyle it's given us, there's always something you have to pay back, and sometimes it's a lack of privacy, even for Paddy at times. But as I point out, that's -- we'd rather it that way because that's why we're doing so well.

Q. When you come to an event like this and you see a Trevino or you see Gary Player, can you see yourself do that in 30-plus years?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I really, really hope so. The one thing I know, and I've seen this, some people can win major tournaments, and it can be a bit of a burden to try to live up to it. I've won my three tournaments. I'm going to take that glory all the way through my retirement. I'm going to -- if somebody wants me to sign a flag, if they -- I'm going to wave at the crowds. I did it. There's no question about it.

And I'm going to enjoy that. I'm not going to beat myself up. I've tried that in golf, and you just burn out. I'm going to enjoy the fact that I won three majors. There's not very

many people who have done that in the game.

And I'd love to be back here when I'm 80 years of age, enjoying it, waving at the crowd and saying, Hey, guys, I did it.

Q. 99?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I don't know if people my age will get to 99, but the young people will. A 10-year-old, if you start your kid off playing golf at 10, he'll play for 90 years. There's no way 10-year-olds aren't going to make it to a hundred. We might not, but the 10-year-olds will. He's only 9-years-old, you'll be -- remember, golf extends your active life by about eight years. Extends your actual life seems to be about five years. Keep playing. Never give it up. Just go to a shorter golf course.

Q. What kind of perspective do you put on what Tiger actually accomplished this year?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I'm so disappointed that the World Cup Final is on 9 o'clock on Sunday morning. I believe it's 9 o'clock Eastern Time. I really wanted to be on midafternoon at 3 o'clock going up against the PNC Championship because I think Tiger might win over on the TV ratings to the World Cup. That's the difference he's made to golf.

And it's bigger than it was when he was in his heyday. So back in 2000s, 2005, whatever, big star, unbelievable, huge crowds, great vibe. But when he came back in like -- I'm trying to think when he came back to Valspar that time, there was definitely a different feeling. There was people coming out, grandparents coming out because they'd seen Tiger. Their children. And then the young kids were being brought out for a once-in-a-lifetime, maybe you'll never see him again.

There really was a different atmosphere to a Tiger event. It is incredible that you think he could -- he actually got -- like you can tell now, like you can definitely tell where he is on the golf course. Everything about Tiger on the golf course, it is a different vibe than it was. It was big back then, but it -- I don't know, there's an emotion to the crowd. They're not just excited about the great shots, which is I think what they would have been 15 years ago, there's a genuine emotion about they want to see him, they love him. They love the whole thing, the atmosphere.

There's -- I think a lot of people think, and maybe this is it, it's like this might be the last time we ever see him play. And they come out and they watch, as I said, all generations, and it's a moment that I'll never forget.

So it has changed. There's no doubt about it. It is a different emotional atmosphere around it. In many ways, it's bigger.

Q. Do you sense that what he did this year, you know, sort of epitomized his resiliency and his determination just to be able to play in three tournaments?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: There's two things that make a golfer: how talented they are and how resilient they are. And generally you get -- usually you get very talented, not very resilient; or you get very resilient and not very talented. That's normally the way it is.

Tiger, through his whole career, have both of those. Which is very unusual. To have the talent -- like Tiger never gave up on a shot in his life. He has that resilience, that toughness.

So I would never doubt. And it's just like I said, he'll play 63 holes. That's the hard part for him. If you've gotten in contention with nine holes to go, he's going to be there. The resilience is there. Everything about him. So I wouldn't be second guessing that part.

Yet, you know, he's struggling, the walk. You know, I'm like that. I'm on the Champions Tour, I get to go in a cart, which is great. Tiger, if you can get him to the last nine holes of a tournament, I don't think you're going to have a problem.

And he looked good physically. As I said, he looked better at that match. So, you know, I'm not saying he "could be," I actually believe he will be a danger. I think he'll win another major. The way I looked at him, I think he -- I genuinely think he will be in contention. And as I said, I'm sure he wishes every tournament he could play, if it's like a major, he's going to have a chance.

Q. Do your friends think it's cool when you say you're coming to play with Tiger Woods? What do your friends say? Not many people get the chance to do that.

PADDY HARRINGTON: Yeah, I'd say they think it's pretty cool, I guess. I just entered, so I don't, you know --

Q. Tell it.

PADDY HARRINGTON: I don't go spreading it around very much. Very low key. But, yeah, the ones that do know, they think it's awesome. So, yeah, that's cool.

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