

U.S. Senior Open Championship

Friday, June 24, 2022

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA

Saucon Valley C.C. (Old Course)

Padraig Harrington

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Padraig Harrington, 6-under 65. Bogey-free round at any U.S. Open is impressive. Talk us through your round a little bit.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Plenty of good stuff yesterday. I played really well yesterday, creating an awful lot of chances. I was happy with the level par even though it could have been a lot lower.

I knew with the better weather today, just stay patient. I holed a few putts. They didn't drop yesterday, and I holed a few putts on the first green and that gives you momentum.

I got under par early on. I felt I lost my way a little bit in the middle of the round, and then I came back strong later on. You try a little too hard at times.

I certainly end up, as I said, in the middle of the round I was trying to do it. It was nice to see I kind of got it back towards the end there where I felt pretty comfortable.

It will be interesting the next 36 holes because I've got to do more of the same, but not push it too hard either.

Q. Your first Senior Open experience. Where has it set in terms of what you thought it was going to be like and what it has felt like so far?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: It's a much stronger test than I expected. This is way, way tougher than our regular Champions Tour events. I knew this was a big advantage to me starting the week, both length-wise and being able to play from the rough if I am in the rough.

Certainly this is a real strong test. This is a big golf course, well set up. I know it's gotten a little soft, so the scoring is better because of that. Certainly I'm very impressed with the USGA.

Q. Padraig, you said you lost your way a little bit in the



middle of the round. Did you have to scramble?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I didn't really have to scramble, but I did -- I missed a couple of -- I drove it into the greenside bunker on 15 and I missed a short putt. I missed a three or four footer and it kind of set me back.

I didn't hit a good tee shot off 16 afterwards. Just felt at that moment I was just trying a little bit too hard.

I did have a bit of drama before the round started out. I broke my driver in the middle of the warmup. I had to replace the driver I played with yesterday, and this one flew a little higher, a bit more spin, so it was a little different.

Outside of that, just a couple of holes where I just felt I was trying to do it rather than letting it happen. I definitely got back into it later on in the round. More of that for the weekend.

Q. 72 holes, do you feel that's to your advantage?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: No. I'm leading the tournament now. Pity it's not 36 (laughter). I struggled with my knee.

So I was really bad here Monday. I've been getting great physio and we're right on top of it.

No, the physicality of 72 holes is tough at this stage. I don't hit as many balls now because of it. I've got to take it easier. I carry a few injuries, and you just have to mind yourself.

I don't relish 72 holes. I suppose, if this is what you're really asking, I knew yesterday's bad side of the draw didn't make any difference. I knew I had time to catch up, so I didn't -- nobody got away yesterday, and I didn't do myself any harm shooting par.

If that's what you mean, yes. If it's a 54-hole event maybe you would be thinking, you know, you don't want to be on the wrong side of the draw. But with 72 holes and it being a U.S. Open, everybody, even myself, when you get in that lead you tighten up and get a little bit cautious.

It was one of those, yeah, wrong side of the draw, but it didn't make much difference.



Q. Did you feel that the greens were speeding up as the day went on?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Greens were very, very quick yesterday morning. I charged a few putts by and it really, really upset me for the day. I just never had confidence with the pace of the greens.

Today I found the greens much more manageable. I assumed there was a little bit of growth as you get on during the day. Yeah, they were very, very smooth and fast yesterday morning. Sometimes you get that early out.

I ran my first by to like an 18-footer on the first hole for eagle. I ran it eight feet by and did a three-putt with a 50 yesterday; same thing. 18-footer, run it eight feet by. You know, I had a 35-footer and putt it up to 15 feet like left of the hole and it broke away.

So, yeah, I struggled yesterday on the greens, but today the pace was -- yeah, the pace was a little bit better. One or two weak putts that I would like to -- but it's hard out here at times to really give every putt a go because, if you do hit a good, confident putt, a lot of times you're going to -- if you miss, you've got four feet back.

So there's a lot of work to be -- to really be truly giving every putt a go, you've got to be very confident in your four-footers.

Q. How did you break your driver this morning?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I just hit a lot of drivers, and they eventually crack. I don't even use my tournament driver now when I'm at home practicing. Certainly wouldn't use it with a range ball or anything like that.

But I do a lot of driver work, a lot of speed work. Especially with speed work, you're not hitting the middle of the club face, yeah.

I think I'm the only one who's ever cracked one of those drivers, and I've done it three times now. I'm told the metal is the same metal they use in a Chinook helicopter blade, so I'm able to go through that.

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