

# U.S. Senior Open Championship

Sunday, June 26, 2022

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA  
Saucon Valley C.C. (Old Course)

## Padraig Harrington

### Press Conference

**THE MODERATOR:** It is my pleasure to introduce the champion of the 42nd U.S. Senior Open, Padraig Harrington. How do those words sound, champion of Senior Open?

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** Really good. I think I said it yesterday. When you come to the Champions Tour, it's here to win tournaments and win the big tournaments, try and win the majors.

I really appreciated the type of week it was. The USGA set up a fabulous course, much tougher than I had expected. I knew that would play into my hands, but it was really nice that -- really solid, tough golf course. Saucon Valley is excellent.

Obviously, there's a lot of pressure on this type of style of golf course when you're leading. You don't want to make a mistake. Any time you're more than 20 feet away from the hole you're in trouble in some ways. So it was definitely a tension-filled day.

**Q. Padraig, interesting to know, when you were a kid trying to one-putt to win the Irish Open, why don't players ever say I get a two-putt to win the championship?**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** Because there's no glory in that. I told you, there would be no glory. If I didn't win from the wrong side of the draw, there would be no glory.

As kids we certainly want it to be magical and dream about it. Golf's not like that, to be honest. It was a tough day. I said it to you yesterday, where having a five-shot lead going out there, yeah, if I went out and played great and ran away from the field, I could wave at the crowd and take shots on.

If anything, maybe even improve my position. But golf just doesn't be like that. It always, always -- how many times do we see it? It always comes down to the last couple of



holes.

You know, when it got very tight, my caddie just kept reminding me that, if we were told we were going to be in this position on Sunday when we arrived here, a week in advance, if we were told we were going to be with a one-shot lead, we'd be very happy. I had to take it as an opportunity the last couple of holes.

I think it's harder -- it is very hard with a five-shot lead. You're definitely very defensive. The last couple of holes, I suppose when I got back to a one-shot lead, I was still somewhat defensive, but it's a position you want to be in.

I didn't enjoy hitting that putt on the last from three feet, but you just have to accept it. If you want to win tournaments, you've got to put yourself out there. It could have been bad, but I got the glory instead.

**Q. Were you aware of what was going on ahead of you with Steve?**

**PADRAIG HARRINGTON:** I'm not a leaderboard watcher, but when I got through nine holes I looked up and saw a six-shot lead. I was quite chuffed with that. I hadn't lost anything. I didn't think I played 10 and 11 badly, and I ended up making two bogeys, which really set me back.

Yeah, at that stage I had to start thinking about the leaderboards. When I got around to 13, I think I saw a leaderboard that Steve was 7. I thought he was 6, then he was 7, and that meant a two-shot lead. I knew things were tight.

I heard a few cheers as I played 14. Then as I was going to 15, I heard cheers. I couldn't tell who they were for. I'm not sure.

When I birdied -- I didn't look at the leaderboard on 15, even though there's a big one there. When I birdied it, I hit a nice tee shot down 16. I asked Ronan -- well, we heard a big cheer on 18. I said, I assume that's Steve. Ronan says, yeah, he's making birdie at the last to be 9-under.

I knew I had options the last couple of holes. 16 particularly, I was hoping to birdie 16 to give myself a cushion.



17 is obviously -- it's a great pin if you're trying to make a birdie, but it's a really terrible pin if you're just trying to make a par.

Then 18 is another pin that's a great pin if you're trying to make a birdie. It wasn't so easy from where I hit my pitching wedge.

But as I said, I knew I had that -- if I hit a good second shot, a good third shot, or a good fourth shot, I was going to win the tournaments. As Arnold Palmer says, if you're going to hit one good shot, make it the last one.

**Q. Where was your mind at at 10 when you're trying to take that drop?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I was very happy. I was pretty comfortable where I ended up. I was pretty confident I was going to get that up and down. Where I hit it to was horrendous. I ended up in a little cupped area on a down slope. I had no shot for my third shot.

I thought for my second shot, I was happy. I thought that was a major break for me. If that had plugged into the sand I would have been hacking it in the sand. I would have been 5 if I plugged it into the sand.

I thought plugging in the bank, place it on the upslope, maybe the stance was a bit awkward, and certainly I could have placed the ball gently and made it so I could have gone further and further away, but I knew I could place it there and play it. I didn't think it was a bad spot even though my foot was -- even though it was a funny stance.

I just mis-hit the shot. It was a bad shot I hit.

**Q. 274 is an unbelievable score on this golf course.**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I got it to 10-under par at a USGA event. I was very anxious about that. When I got to 10-under par on day two, I said, oh, no, 10-under par at a USGA. Is it that number, isn't it? Guys get there, they come backwards. Thankfully, I finished that.

**Q. I know this question is a little crazy, but if you took you and then 155 guys from last week and brought them here, exact same golf course, do you think anyone would shoot lower than 274?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I would think so, yeah. But I would have shot lower than 10-under par if the other guys were here. I wouldn't have been defending. I would have been attacking. I would have shot lower. If there was somebody out in front of me, I think I would have shot lower.

But if you put a field of those young guys out there, the depth is very strong. You fancy your chances playing one-on-one against a player, but when you're playing one against 155 of those young guys, they're pretty good when they're on form.

**Q. To my mind there's three really great senior majors: The British Open, U.S. Open, and the PGA.**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: There's five of them. I'm not going to -- there's five now. Let's play five.

**Q. Okay. You answered it, thank you.**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: It's the same with the four. We're not going to decide at the four regular majors who's the better ones. It's nice that they're different.

**Q. Yes. I wonder if there could be -- with so much attention to the four grand slam for the kid majors, I just wonder if there could be some kind of special name for these three.**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I think it's special for me to win this one just because I've never won a USGA event. I think that adds more than if you could turn around and win a different senior major. But because I was never a U.S. Open normal champion or a junior champion, it's great to come and win the senior one. It adds something that I never had in my career.

It adds something. A gold medal.

**Q. Can you talk a little bit about your play out of the rough. It wasn't like you hit every fairway off the tee. It seems like you had some real quality shots.**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I drove it great this week. Obviously I took on those two par-4s and things. The one thing that I really did this week is drive it well. Very rarely got myself in trouble.

Obviously on the couple of times it was in the rough, I seemed to get some bad lies on that -- well, I hit it in the rough twice on 7 and got some really gnarly lies, when looking around me it didn't seem too bad.

Outside of that, I hit it in the trees twice, 7 as well and 13. Outside of that, I really didn't hit it in the rough. Yeah, I don't think I was in the rough to be, per se, that was of any note.

Oh, I hit it in the rough on the right on 3 of day three, didn't I? That was nasty, nasty lie in there. Certainly drove it

very straight for me. I'm very happy with that.

**Q. 16, 17, 18, which was the toughest two-putt?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Isn't it weird that my putting won the event today after how much I struggled on the greens for the first 14 holes?

I think 16 and 17 were -- 16 and 18 were triple breakers. That was the problem on 18. My putt was left to right, right to left, and left to right.

16 was the same. 16 wasn't as bad because it was all downhill. It was getting there. I didn't mind 16 even though it had a couple of breaks in it.

17, I don't know that I could have got the ball any closer. So 17 was the hardest putt because the further right I went, the higher up the hill I went, meant the faster it would come down. So 17 was definitely the hardest two-putt.

**Q. You played so great at the PGA last year with Shane Lowry. I think you were only three shots behind Phil. It's hard to believe that's only 13 months ago. So much has happened for you in golf and Ryder Cup and all the rest. Does it seem like it was forever ago? How does it seem to you?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: You remind me the Ryder Cup. It would have to be Steve Stricker chasing me down. Steve, give me a break, please. Yeah, Steve's a tough competitor. Certainly he seems to have one on me over the years. So it's nice to get one back on him this time.

Outside of that, yeah, golf, it's only 13 months since the PGA, wow. I had a lovely partner like Shane at the PGA at that time. He's a great partner to play with on Sunday. Gene was excellent to play with today.

You'd be surprised how much that makes a difference how well you play on a Sunday, if you get a nice group, somebody you're very comfortable with. He was very nice to play with him and Angel, his caddie.

Yeah, 13 months, and a lot has gone on in that time, no doubt about it. Do they say interesting times is a curse, when your life be interesting, something like that? Certainly, yeah, plenty of drama going on in the world of golf.

THE MODERATOR: Padraig, congratulations again.

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