

# U.S. Senior Open Championship

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Columbus, Ohio, USA

Scioto Country Club

## Padraig Harrington

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning, everyone. Welcome back to the 46th U.S. Senior Open. It's my pleasure to welcome in a three-time major champion, a two-time U.S. Senior Open champion, including last year at the Broadmoor, and a member of the World Golf Hall of Fame, Padraig Harrington.

Padraig, you've had a busy schedule this year. Apart from your victories in major championships in previous years and the U.S. senior getting you into Shinnecock, what has it been like kind of balancing your schedule playing most weeks, it seems, between the PGA TOUR Champions and the regular TOUR?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I'm playing eight in a row at the moment. This is number four. Some people have obviously said it to me, and I kind of go, when I'm 70 years of age, I won't regret playing an extra event.

Who wouldn't want to do what I do? Every tournament I turn up to, it's in the best condition that golf course can be for us. Everything is looked after. Everything is like as good as can be.

So each week I play golf -- and I have to try and remind myself of this. Each week I play golf is like for a normal person who's into their golf, they would save all their money to have that one week's holiday a year, and I get to do it 30 times a year. That's not lost on me. I love playing golf. I love being out here competing.

Yeah, so I don't have a problem playing lots of events. Like when I started as a pro, 28 tournaments was your standard. It's really got lost in this world, this idea of only playing 20 tournaments or something like that. It was always 28 as a pretty much standard back in the day.

**Q. Eight in a row is a lot for anyone. How do you stay fresh and really keep things going week to week, trying to play at the top of your game?**



PADRAIG HARRINGTON: If I was off, I'd be working anyway. I'd be practicing and doing things. I think the hardest thing with eight weeks in a row is you don't get as much time in the gym to do. So I did pretty hard -- so I had three weeks off before I started this, and I did a pretty hard three-week overreaching gym work, and I'm just trying to not lose that in the eight weeks, trying to maintain it by getting in once or twice a week and do the heavier stuff. Still do the stuff in the room and that.

Golfing-wise, there's always something to work on with the golf game. There is always something to keep you interested. If it does come down to it and I feel a little tired or I've done too much, I can always go and have a holiday at the event. That's sometimes lost on people. You can turn up at an event and just go, I'm going to play four tournament rounds this week and do the minimum, minimum outside of that and just have a nice week.

You don't have to take a week off from golf to relax and take it easy. So there's many different types of weeks. Some weeks you're out there and it could be a smaller event and you are working really hard. Other weeks it could be a smaller event and you genuinely go out there and have a good time.

Then we know with the bigger tournaments like this week or any of the majors, you are actively trying to prepare for Sunday rather than Thursday. That means you would be trying to take as much rest in as you can in the Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday.

That is one thing that's changed from years ago. I think years ago everybody panicked on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday. Players now know, certainly tee-to-green, that they'll be able to adapt and deal with whatever they get on the tournament days.

So players probably play a lot less practice holes now than they would have played 25 years ago.

**Q. You were at Shinnecock a couple weeks ago. You played with 17-year-old Miles Russell. What did you think of his game? Did you give him any advice when you were out there for the first two rounds with him?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I talked to a good few young guys out there actually, some of the other lads, and I gave



advice. Not so much to Miles. He was very assured of himself. He was a very nice, nice kid. He wasn't in any way -- he was in a nice place with his game. He wasn't cocky, but he was assured.

I didn't -- he shot a good score the first day in the wind, but who knows when it's windy like that. The second day he impressed me because the second day he played well, got a few bad breaks, and actually ended up right on the cut line, and he was under quite -- he should have been under a bit of stress.

Maybe 17 wasn't stressful, but he should have been. He played really nicely for his last three, four holes when it was on the line. That was quite impressive.

The game was obviously very good, but he handled that situation that could have easily turned into just missing the cut. You know, well done, you missed. Instead, no, he played really nicely coming home and hit some great shots.

**Q. You talked about working on your game. I really enjoy your teaching videos. I'm just curious, do those help you, return you to fundamentals, and do you learn anything from your own videos? How did that come about? Why did you want to do that?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Do they help me? There's no doubt that some of the lines I've got down in my videos are some of the things I'm thinking, so maybe. I still have -- I have actually several golf coaches. It's not just the one. So I still have somebody looking after me.

I do think -- I'm the youngest of five boys. I'm a little bit of a contrarian. I like nothing better than to tell you you're wrong (laughter).

So I get a sense of satisfaction out of telling somebody who's a bad chipper, no, you're actually meant to lift your head when you're chipping, not keep it down. Everybody goes, what? I get great joy out of telling a beginner, no, you're not meant to keep your head still. You're not meant to keep your feet still. You know, there's a little bit of the contrarian in me.

I do enjoy trying to make people better as well. I just love the idea of trying to change somebody's golfing world around. I find it interesting, it's an interesting one because I obviously jump in a lot.

Like you're getting -- if you make eye contact you're getting a lesson, but the problem is I do get some feedback at times where I've had people say -- like I've given them absolutely the right lesson, and they've come back and said, oh, you've ruined my game. I didn't ruin it. It wasn't

me.

So I have to be wary that some people just don't want to be coached. Unfortunately, I jump in there a lot. But I do enjoy it. I love the idea of giving the lessons. I do it on my own terms. I don't consider myself a YouTuber or influencer or anything like that. I'm not chasing that. If I was chasing that, I'd be off doing days with celebrities and stuff like that. I'd be doing all the stuff that would build.

I just like giving the lessons. If you like my lessons, great. If you don't like my lessons, go somewhere else. That's the way I work on it. It's not a financial thing. It's just something that's enjoyable, fun for me to do, and I love getting that message across.

Most weeks I'm playing a Pro-Am, I'm getting -- every week it's there in front of me. Everybody I play with will get a lesson, and that sort of stuff then feeds into what I teach.

**Q. I'll put you on the spot. Do you think there is one right way, or is there a right way for you? How do you --**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: No, there's not a right way to swing. The problem in the modern times, the coaching 40, 50, 60 years ago that you see -- you might see a black and white reel of the old guys -- was fabulous coaching. All they taught was great. It's only in the modern times that the coaching has got very mixed up.

The reason why I say mixed up is because a lot of the good stuff you see out there is for a junior golfer who's flexible and is going to become a player. It's not necessarily for a beginner or a 50-year-old.

So there's a lot of low hanging fruit, but Instagram and all that is chasing the last 5 percent, which you don't need the last 5 percent to become a good single-figure golfer.

You'll never see me talking about being on plane in my golf swing or anything in my lessons. I'm just saying release the hell out of the club and make sure you're not overturning, pretty much plenty of movement. That will get you to low single figures with a little bit of course management on top of it.

But if you're chasing being a pro or something like that, I could actually do massive amount on the psychology of the game, but nobody has any interest in that when I put it out in social media, so I don't do that. But that's how you would become a pro with a good coach.

So like if you sent me out to coach the players here, I'd pretty much leave every one of them absolutely alone with

their golf swing. I wouldn't say a word. Essentially to play professional golf you need to make it to a basic level of ball striking.

Once you make it to that basic level of ball striking, it's 100 percent, like 100 percent mental. Like once you're past that, and we see that all the time, especially in the modern game, all these kids hit the golf ball or swing the club unbelievably well.

So they should all be the best players, but they're outplayed by people who own their golf swing with a little funkier swing because of the mental side of the game.

So once you get past the minimum standard -- okay, 100 percent was an exaggeration, but once you get past the minimum standard of ball striking, it then becomes 100 percent mental what you get out of your game on any given day with luck involved, because that's part of it. But it's a mental game for us guys; it's a physical game for beginners.

So somewhere between those two, it evens out. Nobody is really into my mental game stuff unless it's -- unless it's a one-on-one. It doesn't get the viewership when you put it out on social media.

**Q. Tell us about your mental game -- just kidding. Padraig, what do you know about Scioto? Have you played yet this week? Do you know about the history of the golf course?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: The only real history I know is I know Jack obviously started playing golf here, and you can see that when you're here, and you can see how his game developed on this golf course.

It really is -- and you can see how his own course design philosophy seemed to have developed from here.

Absolutely beautiful golf course in fantastic condition. Really presented as good a golf course -- couldn't be any presented any better, this course. Really beautiful. Great setup. Doesn't really suit me at all. There's nowhere to hit driver off the tee. Like maybe 2 holes in those 11 holes I played, and they're thinking of moving some of those tees up as well.

Yeah, it doesn't mean I can't play well on the golf course, but I'm not running out there thinking, hey, this is the one for me sort of thing.

But I do love the golf course, I love the setup, and as I said -- sorry, I love the condition of it. I love the green complexes. I really think they've done a tremendous job on

the course.

**Q. Are you eight in a row, playing nine in a row next week?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: No, this is four; I've got four more to go.

**Q. So you're playing the next four after?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yes, I'm playing Scottish Open, Senior Open, and then Ernie Els at Vilamoura.

**Q. When you come out and play this golf course, obviously you know it's a Donald Ross course. Is there one hole out here that you can identify and say this is a Donald Ross course quintessential and this is how I'm going to attack it?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I don't know if there's -- if you change your strategy based on -- you have to see the hole to play it. So it wouldn't be based on the designer. Obviously the square-off greens and things like that are very Donald Ross, so you can see it there.

In terms of strategy, with the modern game it's changed. It's just every hole is on your own to figure out what you're going to do. I don't think you would necessarily say because -- and it's very warm here, so the ball goes a long way.

I think the golf course is played on the day with the modern golf ball going so far, it's probably changed a lot of the strategy of how Donald Ross would have liked the course to have played.

As I said, there's quite a few limitations out here. There always seems to be something in front of you that you kind of have to layup off. Most of the field will play from the same positions on pretty much every hole, so it will be a second-shot golf course, approach shots. And the greens are very good, so the standard of putting should be very high this week.

**Q. Next week you're playing at Firestone for another major. That's the last event for Firestone as of right now. The sponsor wants to stay, course wants to stay. How do players feel when one of their favorite golf courses kind of goes away a little bit, and do you think Firestone might be back because they have a desire?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Well, I'm not playing. I'm playing the Scottish Open next week. I think Firestone is a great golf course. I did play it last year, the one and only time I've played THE PLAYERS on the Senior and the

Champions Tour.

I think they've struggled to get the crowds. It's not the golf course. It's not the sponsor. It's a major championship. We need the crowds. We know on the Champions Tour, if we go to the right market, we get quite big crowds. If we go to the wrong market, we get terrible crowds.

So we know we need to be in -- players want to play in front of the crowds. It's going to where Hog was, Newport Beach. They already get big crowds, great event. It's a festival week.

For a majors we need to play in front of the crowds. All the tournaments we want to play in front of the crowds, and at Firestone we just weren't getting the big crowds traveling up there, which is unfortunate because, it is a great golf course.

But if you want to call it a major, it needs to have people turning up, and that I think is the only reason.

So the players are disappointed, yes, but it's circumstantial. The Champions Tour, as I said, if we're in that smaller secondary market, we really do produce a great event with great atmosphere and great crowds. If we try and go into a market that has been saturated by golf, it just doesn't work for the Champions Tour.

**Q. I heard you say something in the past, and I've really loved it. You talked about how you chase improvement and not perfection. I don't remember where I heard you say that, but I think it's a big part of --**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I think I should write that down.

**Q. Oh, you did not say that?**

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I probably did say it, but do as a say, not as I do comes to mind. Look, obviously, I can't say that I live up to that aspiration, unfortunately. If I hit the very best shot on the range -- so if you gave me a 5-iron and I hit the purest 5-iron you could hit, I'd try and hit the next shot better. That is the stupidity of me.

I would not -- in a game that's all about consistency, I wouldn't try and hit the next shot the same, I'd try and hit it better, which is kind of mad.

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