

PADRAIG HARRINGTON

Q. Padraig, thank you for joining us here at the Cologuard Classic by Exact Sciences. How does it feel to be here this week?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, it's always nice to play in the desert, a good time of the year to come. Golf's ideal, the conditions -- the golf course is in perfect condition as you always expect when you come to the desert. It looks like a very nice week indeed.

Q. Had you played here before this week?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Never played this course before. I think the last time, Tucson, the old match play when we used to be up here. Yeah, the course is exactly as I expected it, a very high standard. Not a long golf course, but in very good conditions around the greens, a lot of slope around the greens. Don't want to miss too many greens, it's awkward. As I said, with the slopes, you can get up and down, but you don't want to leave yourself doing that too many times.

I think because of the good greens, the scoring will generally be pretty good because of that.

Q. How would you compare it to Omni?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: You know, I'm not one for comparing. I think this is a really nice golf course. It's in great condition, it couldn't be better. It's a nice setup.

The rough is maybe a little heavier than we would normally have at Champions Tour events, which I'm happy about. It's not the biggest of golf courses, so it's not going to be too long. That will give everybody a chance. I'm hoping that the little bit of extra rough and maybe the difficulty around the greens will suit me.

Q. When you have a course this tight, how much does strategy come into play on really placing every shot?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, there is going to be strategy. There's not going to be a lot of wind, but the little bit of wind can change those holes.

Off the tee you've got to know your numbers, I think. Maybe being a little bit conservative at times into the greens. I wouldn't say -- while the course is tight, it's not -- there's not a huge amount of water or drama with that tightness. It's a bit of rough and desert, which is never great, but desert is better than out-of-bounds with water I would say.

I think precise iron play is going to be the key this week, not putting yourself under too much pressure by hitting lots of greens, giving yourself lots of chance at birdie. You don't want to be out of position. Yeah, strategy is very important.

Q. You mentioned being conservative in your approach to the green. Is the mountain slope a big part of that, because you can leave yourself some really awful putts?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: As pros, we ignore that stuff. No, we go purely by what we -- well, we play practice rounds to get a feel for what we see. I know in general, but it's a Nicklaus golf course. If you go out to any of those greens, there's some big slopes going in the opposite directions.

Yeah, maybe if it was a very straight putt you might take the mountain into consideration, but for us, especially out here, there is a lot of slope in the greens so in general we're just going to play what we see in front of us.

Q. You're still playing PGA TOUR events. What's the biggest difference between those events and what do you have to do differently for you to come out between tours?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Personally, I'd be under a lot more pressure and stress at a PGA TOUR event. You feel like you've got to be absolutely on your game from the word go.

Out here, you know you're here -- there's no cut so you know you're here for the three days, so you're a little bit more patient out here. Because of that, you probably play a little bit better.

Yeah, there's a difference in attitude for sure. I think style of golf course, yeah, the pins will be a bit tighter on the PGA TOUR and obviously the course would be longer. But the longer bit doesn't bother me at all, it's irrelevant actually the length of a golf course on the Tour. It's much more to do with probably the tighter pin positions and just being under a little bit more pressure by the fact that the standard is really good on the PGA TOUR.

Q. I want to ask you about the instruction videos you made. Do you remember when you first started doing those and do you remember the inspiration for wanting to do those?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, I started doing it during COVID. I've always liked coaching, I love -- I actually like playing pro-ams and giving a few tips out there. I think every golfer -- I think I should be able to get every golfer in the whole wide world to a single figure handicap. I think that's a very reasonable goal.

Q. You think so?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Oh, yeah. It's hard to be a scratch golfer, but to get to 9, it's not

that hard. When I say it's not that hard, there's some simple things you can do to get there and that's what my videos are mainly focused on. I'm really just trying to help the weekend warrior get to a level where if you're a single figure golfer, you can walk into any clubhouse with your chest expanded. It's a level of achievement. That's what I'm focused on.

I started doing it in COVID because I like doing it, it was something to do. I tried to post a video every day, then obviously we expanded to now doing it on YouTube on Paddy's Golf Tips. It's enjoyable. It's a great way to get access to the public directly.

When it comes to golf, people who come to golf, especially athletes who come to golf, they seem to have some crazy ideas about keeping your head still or keeping your head down or swinging slowly. God, they're like 100 percent, I think. Won't be 100 percent, but 99 percent of golfers would be better off doing the exact opposite of what they think would be better.

Just swing away, that's probably the best advice you could give. You'll just get used to it and time it after that rather than to try and get good too quick, too early. We could talk about this all day.

Q. Have you ever gotten feedback on a post that really kind of warmed your heart, like I got through to somebody?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, all the time, all the time I get some great feedback, or one on one and personal. I'm sorry to say it is social media so you try not to read comments. I know my comments would be pretty positive, but still I think that can be -- for the guys that get involved in social media, that can be the downside if you get too involved in what the feedback in the comments. So I have somebody else that goes through that and we kind of collate it.

I love when people -- it's happening more and more when people come up to me and say they like my videos, it's helping. One of the pros said it to me inside there, one of my fellow competitors said it's really helped him.

Q. I was going to ask, do your colleagues come up to you and --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, I was literally walking out the door, the pro said (inaudible) is really helping him. I just did a recent one with stepping in your swing, try and get the proper sequence in at the movements. Remember, I said movements. You don't stay still when you're swinging a golf club, you've got to move.

Yeah, it's nice when the pro, even though -- I'm not trying to make these lessons for my fellow pros, I'm trying to make them, as I said, for beginners and people who are kind of stuck in the game, who aren't improving and trying to get them across that threshold of, you know, being able to break 80, be a single figure golfer.

Q. You've seen the foot traffic kind of around here, everything kind of involved in the

pro-am the last couple days. Does it give you a visual of how, especially this 15, 16, 17, 18 amphitheater is going to look over the weekend with all the spectators and everyone around there?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, you know, the big thing about the Champions Tour is when we come to venues that aren't necessarily serviced by the PGA TOUR and you come here and you can see it's a bigger event. They're preparing for decent sized crowds, hopefully big crowds.

That's the key for the Champions Tour. We keep going to cities that don't regularly have a PGA TOUR event, we get a lot of spectators coming out. We're the only show in town when it comes to golf, so it's looking like this is going to be a very well received week and tournament in regards to fans coming out.

We're still players, we love playing in front of crowds and spectators. We don't want to be out there, you know, you don't want to be out there with nobody watching, you want to be right in the prime group hitting shots. It's the whole idea of the Champions Tour, it's giving the players an opportunity to relive the great shots they hit in the past. They hit a shot under pressure to relive that sort of excitement. As I said, hopefully for a moment feel like a player again.

Q. Forgive me if you've answered this question a million times over the last year, but what does it mean to be inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: You know, it is an interesting one because when you grow up in Ireland, we didn't have hall of fames. Wouldn't have known anything about them. Once you become -- get out on Tour, you hear more about it and you see it more as something you want to be because your peers are there. I want to be there, I want to be a Hall of Fame player.

Certainly as I got older as a Tour player that has been very much a goal of mine, very much on my radar. It's going to be really nice. It's a bit of -- you know, again, as you get older you appreciate the accolades a lot more. I think when you're a young guy and you're winning, you think you're going to keep winning all the time, you just keep going. As you get a little older, you realize to stop and enjoy the moment.

Q. Have you followed the day-to-day PGA TOUR-LIV golf, all this stuff back and forth?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Is there something going on? I had no idea.

Yeah, of course I follow it.

Q. OK. I didn't know if you detach a little bit or if still --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: There is definitely a detachment out here, for sure, amongst the players as in they're way from it. The fact I go back to the PGA TOUR and I'm right in amongst it. Pretty much a lot of my friends went to LIV, so I also have a good few guys out there who I would be friendly with, guys that are captain of the Ryder Cup, played on the Ryder Cup. So I can see both sides of it.

You know, in the end of the day, I played the majority of my career when there was two strong tours and there was a bit of rivalry and a bit of competition, so I'm not -- I wouldn't be averse to that being in the future where there's two tours and who doesn't love a little bit of competition? Whatever football team or whatever team you follow, you follow one team and you've always got a little bit of an edge against the other team.

I don't mind the rivalry.

I think the biggest thing going forward for the PGA TOUR, there has to be some way of capping -- you know, can't just steal all our players. I don't -- players will always make a choice individually what's right for them, but I think the Tour has to -- there's very few businesses in this world where there isn't some sort of a noncompete sort of clause. If somebody wants to leave, the Tour should get the money, not the player.

I don't know. That would be my thing. I don't mind the competition. I don't necessarily say -- I don't think -- it doesn't look like there will be any sort of golfing marriage in the near future, so why not have it a little bit like the old European Tour, PGA TOUR where there's a little bit of competition. Certainly is good for the fans when there's rivalries.

Q. But it trickles down to this tour, too. There's potentially guys that want to make it to this tour.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, that's true. Yeah, that is true, there's players that -- I'm not against, you know, some sort of a transfer back and forth.

I played Mexican Open there on the PGA TOUR a couple weeks ago and I'm sure they would have loved to have Abraham Ancer play. So I'm not against having a small amount of invites, and that cuts both ways. If a LIV event went to, you know, a certain market where they don't have home players, I'm sure they would like to invite those players from that country.

Again, when the European Tour is in Spain this year, we would love to have Jon Rahm play the Spanish Open. I'm not against a small amount of transfer of players playing events and, you know, maybe a couple of invites going each direction. Maybe an outside team playing every week in LIV, why not.

But again, not too sure how they're going to come together as one tour, so why not have an agreeable two tours where there's a bit of rivalry.

Q. What does it mean to you knowing that players are also going to be playing in honor of cancer survivors, those who have unfortunately died of colon cancer?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: No, it's a big deal for the players. We actually, maybe as we get older this is the way it goes, but we do appreciate that every week we're playing for charities. This week it's cancer and cancer survivors, cancer awareness. I lost my own father to cancer. I think every family, it's impossible not to be touched by it.

It's nice that we're doing some good. We make great money, we're out here, we're living the life. Nobody -- I don't know anybody who wouldn't choose to live the life we're living out here playing golf and getting paid to do it.

It's nice that we actually can sit down and also say we're doing a little bit of good with it raising some awareness this week. You know, hopefully we're all sort of representing one colon cancer survivor, battler at the moment this week. It's nice that we can help.

As players, we actually do appreciate it because obviously everybody else is doing the work to put us in this position and we kind of swung in and take the glory, but we do appreciate the fact that we are making a difference in the communities that we play in, that we're actually helping out with charities because, you know, we are doing so well, it's nice, you look at yourself in the mirror in the morning, it's nice to be able to give back as well.