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VOLVO MASTERS

20 YEARS

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An Interview With:

PADRAIG HARRINGTON

GORDON SIMPSON: Padraig, 36 holes down, 36 to go and it's still game on, isn't it, at this stage.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Yes, I think I'd have settled for being three shots behind Justin at this stage considering we're both trying to win the tournament rather than three shots ahead of him if we were both in the 30th spot.

So, yeah, it's very much game on for the tournament and very much game on for the Order of Merit. It's exactly the situation that I was hoping for at the start of the week and hopefully myself and Justin can carry it on tomorrow and then sort it out sometime late Sunday afternoon.

GORDON SIMPSON: You said how much you did not enjoy the situation with Retief a few years ago, and clearly this is more like last year than that one.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Well, I don't know if I didn't enjoy the situation with Retief. I just didn't perform very well and didn't, you know, just didn't come up to standard that week, and it was a shame. But I learned so much from that last year, I probably won the Order of Merit because of that time going head-to-head with Retief.

Who knows what's going to happen this year, but certainly that experience certainly stood me very well last year and hopefully it will stand me well over the weekend.

Q. Does being four behind Justin take anything -- he just birdied 17.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: There you go. It's not a huge difference. With 36 holes to go, obviously I've got to manage my own golf for the next two days and try and move forward.

Yeah, his scoring is very impressive. He's doing well, and if he shoots another 4-under for the next two days, I think he will be the Volvo Masters Champion.

Q. How tough was it out there today? I mean, he's the only player threatening to break 70.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: Well, I felt I should have done it. I thought it was better than yesterday, but then again, you would if you had played consistently and had a lot of chances on the back nine. Certainly looked like I was going to be 2- or 3-under par. Looked like getting to 2-under quite a few times.

It felt better, but as I say, anybody who shot a good score would tell you it was an easier day than yesterday and anybody who shot a bad score would tell you was harder.

I suppose. I don't know, maybe you can tell me, what was the wind like? It was the same direction. It was the same strength. Pin positions were, you know, most of them are three yards off the green. So greens are small, yeah, seemed pretty much the same.

Q. Some of the guys are saying it's a major championship setup here; does it feel at all like that or does it feel like you're playing in a major here?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: You certainly have to strategy-wise, you have to go along like it's a major. Yeah, it feels like a big event, yeah, no question about it. It's right up there. I've seen major golf courses that have been easier I would say.

Q. Irish rugby team isn't flying terribly high at the moment, team is in a bit of a mess, is it trying hard for Ireland at the moment?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I'm trying to think if there's something else. It seems to be holding a bit of course at the moment. Hopefully this week it will be on Sunday evening hopefully myself and the Union Irish lads will be right up there and the right results for Ireland, yeah. I can't say for what other teams are doing.

If the rugby was doing well and the football

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was doing well, I would be trying just as hard. I'm not trying to make up for anybody else.

Q. You're looking as though you're in your element out there. Is it stubbornness or sheer bloody-mindedness or what is it that makes you seem to do well when so many people around you are not?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I would prize myself on those characteristics and I would also pride myself on strategy, and this is very much about strategy out there. Much more so than probably -- it's probably the No. 1 quality you need out there, you know, is to pick the right shot hit each time. It's not even executing the right shot; it's picking the right shot and having a variety of shots to hit and, you know, being happy, as I've said, I've played over the years here, you've got to take a step back a lot off the tees in order to make your pars.

I'm only hitting 3-wood off 7 and 9, two of the longer par 4s, both into the wind. I'm hitting 5-wood off 18. You know, I'm leaving myself -- I think I've left myself 4-iron, 5-iron and 5-iron into those three holes. You know, that's the sort of thing that you have to do out here.

You've got to, you know, a lot is about picking good strategy and then I'm working from there, not missing like I did on 18. I got a little bit comfortable on 18 and thought would I draw the ball into the left-to-right wind to a left-hand pin and things like that, I can't afford to do too often. That was certainly a mental error there in the shot I picked to play, and you can't get complacent at all.

Q. If it comes down to a head-to-head with Justin on the last day --

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: That would be great.

Q. Is that your ideal scenario?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: That's what I would have asked for -- my ideal scenario is I'm 12 ahead but second to that is a head-to-head between myself and Justin, yes.

That's all you can ask for. I know the thing I was trying to get in my head before the start of this week was I was not trying to compete with Justin and solely beat Justin because it may have been no use. I need to be getting in contention in the tournament.

You know, the best way of me getting in contention was Justin playing well on the first day as well and he said, there's no question he helped me out yesterday in terms of his play. He made it

look like it was possible to shoot -- make birdies and shoot under par, and that certainly brought my game along.

You know, I knew that was best. I knew there was no point in having to battle at the end of the field. We need to be having a contest at the top.

Q. I'm from the German press, you played today with the youngster, the German youngster, Martin Kaymer, and with all your vast experience, if you would be his father, what could you tell him?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: He's very talented, that's for sure. He hits the ball great, and what is he, 22 years of age or something, is he that young? 23 years of age, I would have loved to be like him at 23 years of age. He'll gain his experience his own way and progress as a player.

You know, that's just the natural order of things. You don't seem to always have -- he certainly has the talent and certainly, you know, with experience, he'll become better and better. Looks like a real player to watch out for the future.

Q. Is it easier in some ways to be the person chasing the leader than the leader?

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: If I was leading by four shots I would be telling you how difficult it is. (Laughing).

Now that I'm four behind, I'm saying, oh, well, it's hard to make up four shots. Whatever position you're in is never going to be that easy. You know, four shots is substantial though, substantial. At least I hope that we're playing for first and second and if that's what the case -- I'll take my chances with 36 holes to go.

You know, the main thing is not that Justin is four ahead of me. That's obviously an issue, but the main thing is I'm still in the tournament. I'm tied second at the moment, and you know, venture on from here.

He does seem to be playing very well, though. That would be -- that would probably be more of an issue than him being four shots ahead; the fact he looks like he's playing very well, and he's probably hungry for a win. I think he's very hungry for a win in terms of, you know, he's had a great year, but probably would like to cap it off with a win.

Q. Well, how hungry are you then, then,

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for the win? You say he's hungry for the win.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I don't know, when was Justin's -- well, he's had a great year but he hasn't had a win. Players are very much motivated by, if he hasn't had a win, he wants it all the more.

So I think, you know, that's our hunger, it's always very good. I've had, you know, a number of wins but I really want to win the Order of Merit.

Q. Okay. So you've got to win this time.

PADRAIG HARRINGTON: I'd be battling, though -- I'd be battling no matter what the situation is, but I think Justin has probably got the bit between his teeth because he has had a very good year, and, you know, he would like to cap it off with a win I'm sure.

GORDON SIMPSON: Thanks very much, Padraig, good luck tomorrow.

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