



**PITCH AND PUTT  
IRELAND**

# **ALL-IRELAND MATCHPLAY FINALS PREVIEW**

## **2026**

**Q&A WITH  
7 TIME NATIONAL MATCHPLAY CHAMPION**

**RAY MURPHY  
(ST ANNE'S)**



**PITCH AND PUTT IRELAND**



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**Q. 1:**

*Ray, you head to Rocklodge this weekend as a seven-time National Matchplay Champion. What keeps the hunger there to compete for another All-Ireland title?*

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**A:** *The hunger has always been there to compete and try to continue play against the top players in the country.*



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**Q. 2:**

*You are regarded as one of the most decorated players in the history of the game. When you look back on your matchplay success over the years, what stands out most to you?*

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**A:** *With all my matchplay achievements, the one thing that stands out is the day I won my first championship back in 98 in Glenville. That gave me the belief that yes I can compete at top level and go on to have more success.*



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### **Q. 3:**

*Rocklodge is a course you know extremely well. How important can course knowledge be in a championship like this?*

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**A:** *Yes, Rocklodge is unique in its own way. It helps to have a good knowledge of the course heading into a big championship. If you pitch well in Rocklodge you'll score, but if you're slightly out you will get punished severely. Could be a huge advantage for local players.*



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**Q. 4:**

*Matchplay is often described as a completely different test to strokeplay. What do you enjoy most about the format?*

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**A:** *I agree matchplay can be very different to strokeplay. I do enjoy the one to one battle where it can be a low or high scoring game but all you need to do is beat your opponent rather than a full field.*



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### **Q. 5:**

*With so many major titles and big matches behind you, do you still get the same buzz heading into an All-Ireland weekend?*

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**A:** *Yes, all Ireland weekend is a different buzz to your scratch cup scene. There's no better feeling in the game than if you get a good run in the matchplay and make the Monday finals day. Tiring, but can be rewarding Monday afternoon.*



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### **Q. 6:**

*There is always strong competition in the Senior Gents category. Who do you expect to be among the main challengers this weekend?*

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**A:** *I think you'll find the main challengers for the title will come from the usual suspects. Without naming anyone, I don't see a surprise winner even though there is always one or two upsets along the way. But think the winner will come from someone from the top 12 in the rankings.*



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**Q. 7:**

*Over the years, what do you feel has been the key to your consistency and longevity at the top level of pitch and putt?*

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**A:** *When my GAA playing days came to an end, pitch and putt has been my life outside of family commitments. The interest and longevity has stayed with me all these years, be it playing, doing course maintenance or been a club or county board officer.*



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**Q. 8:**

*Finally, what would it mean to add another National Matchplay title to your incredible record this weekend at Rocklodge?*

**A:**

*To win another national matchplay would be unreal and to do it in Rocklodge would be extra special. It's a course I rate very highly and a favourite of mine, and if successful, it would top off a personal record for myself having won the National Strokeplay there in 2013.*



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