

Travelers Championship

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TPC River Highlands

Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning. We are pleased to be joined by Rory McIlroy here at the interview room at the Travelers Championship. Rory, what's it like to be back in Connecticut?

RORY McILROY: It's good. I missed this event last year, licking my wounds from Pinehurst, but I made a commitment to Travelers to be back this year. I'm excited to be back.

I think the weeks after major championships in these events sometimes when you're in contention and you're trying to win them, it can feel quite difficult to go play the next week. After a week like I had at Oakmont last week, where you're not quite in the mix but you might feel you find something in your game, you're excited to come back and play again.

Yeah, looking forward to the week. This is the perfect sort of chaser for what Oakmont was last week, and nice to get out on a golf course where you feel you can make quite a few birdies.

Q. This is the last Signature Event of the season before the playoffs. I'm just curious how you feel like the limited fields are going and what your opinion is after playing a week where it's 156 guys and a cut and the old school 72-hole format versus what we have this week.

RORY McILROY: I think the Signature Events have gone great. If you look at the list of winners -- myself, Ludvig, JT, Scottie, Russell Henley at Bay Hill -- the list of winners, I think they work. I think they do -- you know, they get all the top players together. I think they've produced exciting finishes with the best players in the world battling one another, played on some of the most iconic venues that we have.

Yeah, I think they've worked. I think that the hard thing is it comes in such a condensed schedule. This is the last Signature Event of the year, and it feels like we've only got started. We're only into June, and we're not even halfway

through the year.

But in terms of the product of the Signature Events and what they were designed to achieve, I think they've done that.

Q. I was just wondering what your thoughts are on Brian Rolapp stepping in as the new CEO and if you've had any time to talk to him yet.

RORY McILROY: I haven't met Brian yet, but obviously I followed quite a bit of the news and the coverage yesterday. He certainly said all the right things and has an amazing background, two decades in the NFL, helping them expand internationally and basically become the behemoth that they have become.

So for him to bring that experience to the PGA TOUR I think will be amazing, and I think it's great that Jay is there to help with the smooth transition also. Yeah, I think it's a really positive thing for the TOUR.

Q. In terms of recovery after the U.S. Open, recovery in any week, are there a couple things that you make sure to do every week for recovery, whether it's physical or mental? Is that maybe more important after the U.S. Open, or is it just as important any week?

RORY McILROY: I think it's important any week. There's certain things -- I think everyone's got their own way of recovering from grueling weeks, but I think they're just the little habits that you pick up along the way, whether it's physical or whether it's mental or getting away from it and giving yourself a little bit of time to recharge.

Yeah, I think it's important to take care of yourself physically and mentally, especially when you play these big events and there's a lot of pressure and expectation. It is important to get away from all that as well.

Q. Is a lot of it like Sunday night, or is it kind of Monday morning as you're traveling?

RORY McILROY: I think the Mondays are -- I think most people, I certainly like to unwind and have a glass of wine



on a Sunday night, so I wouldn't say that's the best recovery modality. Certainly Mondays are where I try to get back into -- I give myself that day. I think Mondays in between tournaments are quite important as a reset. So that's what I try to do.

Q. On the birdie record, PGA TOUR sanctioned is nine. It was set in 1994. It hasn't been surpassed since. A lot of records in golf and things keep going lower and lower, but I'm curious your take on why it's kind of set at nine.

RORY McILROY: Nine in a row?

Q. Nine in a row.

RORY McILROY: I mean, I make two birdies in a row, and I'm thinking, ooh. So I think it's more of a mental thing where you start to make a few birdies in a row and you start to think about it. I think that's the worst thing you can do. You just got to try to get out of your own way when you're on a run like that.

I think it will be a long time when you see someone with 10 birdies in a row out here, especially with how difficult the setups are getting and how tough the courses are.

Q. Do you have any idea of what your longest run might be, either on TOUR or not on TOUR?

RORY McILROY: No. Look, I know I've played stretches of holes, like 9-under through 10 or whatever, but I don't know.

Q. You sort of hinted at this a little bit before, but the PGA TOUR schedule going Memorial, Canadian Open, U.S. Open, challenging courses can grind people up, and then you come here and scores are much, much lower. Is it almost good in some ways, inside the locker rooms when guys are talking about it, where you have an event that you don't have to grind for as many pars as you would at some of the other events? That the timing of this event where the scores go really low is actually welcome?

RORY McILROY: I think it is welcome, especially after -- look, the guys that played Memorial, that was a grind. Look, there's a lot of guys in the field this week where this is their fourth tournament in a row, so yeah, they've been put through the wringer the last few weeks, and this is a welcome setup where they feel like they can relax a little bit and not have to grind so much for your score.

Q. Do you have to mentally make any adjustments or changes coming from Oakmont, traditional U.S. Open

golf courses and things like that year after year, and coming here where you're trying to grind out pars and stuff like that, whereas you make four or five pars out here, you might feel you're losing to the field?

RORY McILROY: A little bit. I sometimes struggle with that when I go back to Europe as well because the setups traditionally in Europe aren't quite as hard as the setups over here.

The one thing on the PGA TOUR that I'm always -- I think we're all aware of is not short-siding yourself. If you short-sided yourself last week at Oakmont, it's like automatic bogey, if not more. Sometimes when I go back to Europe or come to a tournament like this, you have to remind yourself, no, you can go at the pin. You can actually fire at the pins here. That takes a little bit of a mental adjustment at times.

Q. Assuming you haven't seen the course yet, have you heard about the course changes from Andy or anything along those lines? Are you looking forward to seeing them? They shrunk a couple fairways from what happened two years ago.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I'm scheduled to play the front nine this afternoon, but I don't know much about them. Looking forward to getting on the course and seeing it again.

Q. You mentioned clicking something in your game. Do you know immediately, whether it's one shot on the range or in the middle of a round, that it's clicking and working like you said?

RORY McILROY: I don't think it's one shot. It's the repeatability of shots. If I can see something or have a feeling that is very repeatable, whether it's -- on the range is one thing, but on the golf course is the other. I think the proof is in the pudding there.

Definitely last week, I found a feeling, especially off the tee, that was repeatable, that was working well, and I led strokes gained off the tee last week, which was a big thing for me.

Q. Which round in particular?

RORY McILROY: From the fairway, I thought I drove the ball well all week last week.

Q. What's it like seeing amateurs try to work their way around a course like this on Pro-Am day? Where do you see them having the most trouble? Do you take a moment here and there to try to fix anything about



their swing or help them read a green, et cetera?

RORY McILROY: I'll certainly help them to read a green, but the last thing they need is more swing thoughts in their head when they're playing in these Pro-Ams.

I think sometimes it's just more they try to take shots on or they try to hit a shot that they probably could pull off once or twice out of 10 instead of playing a little bit more percentage. That's boring, but that's certainly the most effective way to lower your score.

Q. You're playing in a bunch of National Opens moving forward. You talked about trying to find a new Mt. Everest, a new motivation. Is playing around the world part that have? You seem to be going on a world tour this year.

RORY McILROY: I've always wanted to go to India, and the European Tour and DP World created a new event there. I was asked at the start of the year would I be interested in going, and I said yeah, that sounds amazing.

The Hero Indian Open is always when we're -- it's like March-April time. I'd love to play DLF and figure out my way around that place, but this one in Delhi in October made more sense.

I've always loved the Australian Open. I've won there before. I played there as an amateur in the Australian Open, qualified for it, went through a qualifier in 2005, got through like a nine-man playoff to get in. So I've always had a huge affinity for that part of the world. So to go back -- especially Royal Melbourne this year, Kingston Heath next year, two of the best golf courses in the world on the Sandbelt, that's awesome too.

Yeah, it's that part of the year where we have the ability to travel and to do these things, and if it makes sense for the schedule -- especially, look, I'm excited to -- there's never been a green jacket in India before. So to bring the green jacket to India is something that's going to be really cool.

To go back to the Australian Open, I won that in 2013. Adam and I had a great battle down the stretch on the last day, he was the Masters champion at that point.

I don't know, I like to travel. I like to play in different parts of the world. I've never been to India. I haven't been to Australia in 10 years. So it's nice to go back to these places.

Q. Are you going to bring the green jacket to Old Trafford?

RORY McILROY: Probably not. I probably -- I don't know if I'll have the opportunity. If I do, I would like -- if I do have the opportunity, I would like to. Yeah, we'll see.

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