

# U.S. Open Championship 2023

Friday, June 16, 2023

Los Angeles, California, USA

The Los Angeles Country Club

## Rory McIlroy

Flash Interview



**Q. 3-under 67, what have you seen from the course thus far this week?**

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, obviously at least for me, there's quite a scoring discrepancy from the front nine to the back nine. The front nine gives you some scoring opportunities and some wedges in your hand, a couple of par-5s. 6th hole.

Yeah, the back nine is just a lot tougher. You've got a lot of -- those last three holes, 16, 17, 18, are playing tough even if it is pretty benign conditions out there.

It feels like a sort of golf course where you try to make your score on the front and then try to hang on on the back.

**Q. You're in contention on the weekend at a major championship again. Is there anything you think you've learned from the last few close calls that you're going to use this weekend?**

RORY MCILROY: No, not really. I think every major championship and every venue is different. You just have to play what the course gives you. I feel like I'm hitting the ball well. I've hit it well off the tee.

I felt like coming into this week that was going to be a key for me if I could put the ball in play. You can play from there and create some scoring opportunities.

That's really my game plan over the next couple days. Put the ball in play off the tee, and I think I'll be just fine from there.

**Q. It's kind of a funny statistic, but I don't think you've yet won a tournament where the winning score was single digits under par. Do you feel like this setup plays into your hands where you have to go out there and get it?**

RORY MCILROY: I would have won -- so if I had shot single digits under at Congressional I would have won. If I would have shot single digits under at Kiawah, I would have won. So I think it's a flawed statistic.

**Q. In the past you've talked about how to handle the golf course, and I'm curious about whether your decision to press or be patient, has there been an evolution over the course of your career to where you view that decision differently now than you did at the beginning?**

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I do. I think I've went through sort of ebbs and flows with that throughout my career. For whatever reason, I went on to YouTube a few weeks ago and was just looking back at like Hoylake in 2014 and specifically that, and I actually couldn't believe how many irons and 3-woods and stuff I was hitting off the tee.

It set something off in my mind about, you know how to do this. You know how to play smart. You don't have to hit driver all the time. Yes, it's a big weapon, it's a big advantage. But I keep saying I've got more weapons in my arsenal I feel now than I did back then, so I may as well use them and play to them.

I've went through periods over the last few years where I haven't been patient enough and I've taken on too much. This week and even over the past -- even Memorial was tough at the weekend and trying to stay patient there.

Canada was a little different last week.

But I think we've had some tests recently where you have to display patience, and hopefully those few experiences recently will help me this weekend.

**Q. Philosophically there's a bit of a debate going on about what a U.S. Open should be. Some people are mad the scores are too low; some people feel it's a great course with great shot values. Curious after seeing this for two days, what should the U.S. Open test in 2023?**

RORY MCILROY: I'm surprised. I didn't see the scores being as low as they are. I think the overcast conditions yesterday combined with that little bit of rain in the morning, I think the course just never got firm at all.



The conditions now, it's a little brighter, sunnier, a little bit of breeze. It's got the potential to get a little firmer and faster over the next couple days, which will make the scores go up a little bit.

We'll see what it's like at the end of the week. It's still early in the week.

And yes, the course has played maybe a little easier than everyone thought it would, but wouldn't be surprised on Saturday/Sunday to see it bite back, which going back to your question I feel is what a U.S. Open is all about.

It should be tough. It should be just as much of a mental grind out there as a physical one.

**Q. Obviously you've done everything in the last nine years but win a major. Can you characterize your desire to check that box off again, so to speak? Even though you're only 36 holes in, at what point do you start thinking about winning this thing?**

RORY MCILROY: I mean, I started thinking about winning this thing when I came here on Monday. I've already done that. No one wants to win another major -- no one wants me to win another major more than I do. The desire is obviously there.

I've been trying and I've come close over the past nine years or whatever it is, and I keep coming back. I feel like I've showed a lot of resilience in my career, a lot of ups and downs, and I keep coming back. And whether that means that I get rewarded or I get punched in the gut or whatever it is, I'll always keep coming back.

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