

TOUR Championship

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Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP

Q. Congratulations on the birth of your new baby, Poppy.

RORY MCILROY: Thank you.

Q. How would you describe the emotions of being a part of that moment with your wife?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, it's amazing. I don't think -- you see other people having kids and babies, and you'll say congratulations and you're happy for them, but you have no real -- you don't really know how it feels.

Now that I do, anyone that I know that has a child, there's even more -- there's so much admiration for the mother, what they go through, and it's just amazing that this -- you feel like you get to know your baby while she's still in her mother's belly, but to go from not having met this person to having unconditional love for them from one minute to the next is just -- there's nothing like it in the world.

And so many people have went through it and so many people have experienced it. It's probably the best part of being a human being, and I'm glad that I got to experience it.

Q. Where did you guys decide on the name Poppy?

RORY MCILROY: I don't know. We really liked it. I have a cousin of mine, her daughter is named Poppy. We know a few other Poppies. And we just really love the name. We were sort of trying to go through a lot of the flower names, Rose, Iris, all those things. My mom is a Rosie, so we were sort of like, That mightn't work. We know Alex Noren has an iris. Shane Lowry has an iris. We wanted to go with something that was pretty unique, maybe more common back where I'm from, but we landed on Poppy and we loved it.

Q. What have the first couple days been like?

RORY MCILROY: I mean, emotionally drained, right. We got her home yesterday and trying to get her settled into

the -- it's nice in the hospital. You've got so much help and all the nurses are around and they did a phenomenal job. You don't appreciate that side of things, as well.

And then you're handed your child and they're like, See you later, and they don't come with an instruction manual.

Look, every parent has to sort of go through it, and we're going through it. Thankfully Erica has her mom and sister with her at the minute, so she's got plenty of help and I feel a little better leaving and coming here to play this week.

Q. We talked at Memorial and you said you're focused on what happens when it happens. So now that's happened and you can focus on golf now. Are you ready to focus on this week?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I am. I think it's been hard the last couple weeks because you're sort of in limbo when she's going to arrive, and then in the back of your mind you're hoping it's going to go well. You hope that your daughter is safe. You hope that your wife is safe.

There's a lot of different things and there's a lot of things that sort of run through your head, and the fact that all that went well and everyone is good and recovering at home, I feel more comfortable now that I can come out here and play golf and maybe get my mind off it for four or five hours a day, and that's a nice thing.

And then obviously I can get a couple of good nights' sleep before I go home.

Q. Was it a little emotional leaving today?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I didn't want to leave. I had -- I was supposed to fly at 8:00 so I was going to leave the house -- airport is close to our house and I was just going to jump on the plane and come up, so I was going to leave at 7:30. I ended up not leaving until 8:00. It was just hard to leave, really hard to leave.

But at the end of the day life doesn't stop. Life moves on. And as I said, I know that Erica is surrounded by her family, and my mom and dad are just around the corner, so she's got all the help she needs, so I felt a little more comfortable being able to go.



Q. You the chance to win your third FedExCup this week, but it would also be your first win as a father. Have you thought about what it would feel like for everything to happen in one week?

RORY MCILROY: Not having -- it's been hard to think about golf the last few days just because I've been so focused on making sure that everything is okay at home. But yeah, I mean, maybe this is what I needed, just for everything to happen and go well.

I haven't played my best since coming back out since sort of post-COVID. But yeah, maybe things just will fall into place. It's already been the best week of my life, and this would obviously just be the icing on the cake.

Q. People like Jack and Tiger, they've had incredible careers, but it seems like when they became dads it just became even better because they had something more to play for. Do you think Poppy is going to be like that for you?

RORY MCILROY: I think so. I mean, I think if you look at fathers in all different sports, golf, tennis, it's not a new lease of life, but it's a different perspective. The trials and tribulations of what goes on out on the golf course don't really seem to matter that much, so you can sort of let it just slide off you a little bit more and not be as reactive to your mistakes and know that this is -- it's important and it's your career, but at the end of the day you get to go home to your family, which is the most important thing.

Q. Just being here right now with you and talking to you, you're so content. Do you just feel content and happy right now?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah. I mean, like if I can't be content and happy right now, I don't think I'll ever be. Yeah, we've obviously known for a while. We've known all this year that Erica was pregnant. We were going to have our first child. Yeah, it's awesome. It's the best part of life.

You know, I sometimes think -- everything that's happened to me on the golf course and off the golf course has already been beyond my wildest dreams, and sometimes I have to sort of pinch myself and sort of ask why me, why am I so lucky?

But I'm just so grateful that everything that has happened to me has happened to me. I don't take this for granted, playing golf and being who I am, but I also obviously don't take all of my other -- my off-course life for granted, either. Especially that's been never more apparent than over the last few days.

Q. We're doing kind of a gratitude player diary type thing. You guys are just thankful to be here essentially. Given everything that's happened in the world, it's just a miracle that we're here, honestly. In your own words, if you can just look to the camera and just talk about the fact that we've made it and we're here given everything --

RORY MCILROY: At the end of the season? Yeah. It's been a trying year for everyone. I think everyone is going to be happy to see the end of 2020. But the fact that everyone rallied together, March, when the sort of sports world shut down seems like a long time ago now, and we know more about the virus, we know more about how to protect ourselves, and I think the PGA TOUR have done an unbelievable job to get us back out on the course, to get us this far, to the playoff finale at the TOUR Championship, and keep everyone safe at the same time.

That's been the most important thing. The fact that of all the tests that have been administered on the PGA TOUR, there's only been a handful of positives, I think that, if nothing else, is the biggest positive to take from all of this.

Really good guidelines were set in place at the start, and I think the players and everyone involved with the TOUR has really stepped up to make sure that those have been implemented, and you're seeing the results of that by the 30 players here in Atlanta this week.

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