

WM Phoenix Open

Thursday, February 9, 2023

Scottsdale, Arizona, USA

TPC Scottsdale

Rory McIlroy

Quick Quotes



Q. Case of just really tricky winds or the group never really got anything going or a little bit of both?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, probably a little bit of both. I thought I did well to birdie 15 and 17 to get to under par for the day, sort of a sloppy bogey on 18 to go back to even par.

But the back-to-back bogeys on 18 and 1 sort of halted the momentum that I had, and then it was just sort of a struggle after that. The wind was tricky, a ton of crosswinds, and then there would be times where it would feel into and then it would go slightly down.

When you've got that 90-degree wind the whole time, if it changes just slightly one way or another, it's a completely different shot, completely different club, and I got caught out by that a couple of times coming in, which wasn't ideal. I actually felt the best swing I made of the day was the par-3, 7th, and hit it 20 yards over the green.

Tricky day. Hopefully the wind keeps up this afternoon for the guys out there, and we'll get back at it tomorrow.

Q. Should designated events be on difficult courses, or does it really not matter?

RORY McILROY: I mean, I think every golf course that a tournament professional should play should be a challenge. This obviously was challenging today because of the conditions. When you get your normal conditions at this golf course and it's flat calm, obviously you can shoot some scores. I certainly wouldn't want designated events to feel like a U.S. Open every week.

Q. Did the stuff that you worked on last week show up in your game today?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I felt like I hit it okay. It was hard, I've been struggling with the left miss a little bit, so last week I was doing a lot of sort of trying to clear my body and almost trying to just hit like little fades, and there was a ton of left to right winds out there today, so it really felt like

my ball just going on those left to right winds pretty hard and just never really got a handle on it.

Again, I felt like I played okay and swung it okay, just one of those days.

Q. The conditions out here are one thing, but the fans and the atmosphere is another. For people out here, is this the best fan experience on TOUR or is it an anomaly for you guys?

RORY McILROY: I'm not in the crowd and I'm not whatever, but I think if I wasn't a player and I wanted to come to one PGA TOUR event, this would probably be the one that I'd want to come to. I was joking to Harry out there today, it's like almost you get two free rounds at this because you can go out and just completely wing it, either shoot 63 or 80, and you know you're going to have a good weekend regardless, either have a chance to win the tournament or you go and enjoy everything that this tournament has to offer if you don't make the cut.

Q. How do you as a player plot that out?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, I think we're so used to being in our own little routines on the golf course that like once you're over your golf ball and you're into your shot, I don't think it's much of a distraction, but obviously walking between shots and stuff, it's pretty noisy. But it can go one of two days. You can embrace it and try and enjoy it or try to shut yourself away and sort of look down on the ground and not make eye contact with anyone.

I feel like I'm the first -- I've tried to embrace it today, and obviously what we're going to get tomorrow afternoon is going to be way rowdier than what we got this afternoon.

Q. When you were up against the boundary by those trees, what was the club you hit and what was the window you saw?

RORY McILROY: Pitching wedge. Actually the way I was walking up to my ball, it looked like I didn't have a backswing, but I didn't realize the angle, like how far right the green actually was. So I got over it, I was like, okay, I

needed to take it a little bit more on the inside than I usually would and sort of just toe it in a little bit, but I sort of got lucky because the wind was hard off the left and I needed to hit that hard draw against the wind, and it was the only way to stop it on -- that green I feel like is the firmest green on the course, so it was the only way to stop it. I got lucky with the tee shot that I had a swing, but I hit a great shot and was delighted to walk away with a par.

Q. Obviously historically this hasn't been an event you've chosen to play. Are there benefits to being forced into playing an event you haven't traditionally chosen to play?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I get a chance to win \$3.6 million. Yeah, look, I wouldn't say that this is a golf course that sets up terribly well for me. I struggle off the tee here. I feel like all the fairway bunkers are right in my landing zones. But it's a challenge, and again, like I'm trying to embrace that challenge. Yeah, look, not an event I historically play, but I feel like I'm a good enough player to figure it out and contend and win on any golf course.

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