

# Arnold Palmer Invitational

Friday, March 3, 2023

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

## Rory McIlroy

### Quick Quotes



**Q. Pretty good, considering the wind change and all that, right?**

RORY MCILROY: Yeah. Better. Much better. It was just sort of a day to hang in there and grind and get up-and-down and try to take advantage of some of the chances that you give yourself.

So like, around here, par-5s, couple of the shorter par-4s, some of the downwind holes. But, yeah, overall happy to be in. Obviously the leader right now is at 9-under. But, yeah, feel like I did well to shoot something in the 60s this morning and at least give myself a chance going into the weekend.

**Q. When you know the conditions are going to be what they are today and you know you got to get something red rolling today, what's the mindset coming in when you know you don't want to get too aggressive?**

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I had a good practice session last night. Sort of straightened a couple of things out. Because I felt like the rest of my game was pretty good. It's my iron play that wasn't great. So I sort of tidied that up last night on the range. It felt a little bit better today.

But, yeah, I knew that today was going to be tough. I didn't feel like I needed to go super deep to get myself back in it. So it was nice to not really feel that pressure.

**Q. Is this the sort of place where you feel like you could still claw it back over the weekend, given how tough it's going to be?**

RORY MCILROY: Definitely, yeah. I mean, they watered the greens a lot. They put a lot of tees up. So, yeah, I felt they set the golf course up really well for the conditions today.

I don't think the wind's supposed to blow this much over the weekend, so, but the course is going to get dried out and it's going to be another fun weekend at Bay Hill.

**Q. Seven back. What's too far back and what's just enough?**

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, so I'm six back now. Kitayama just bogeyed 16. I looked out there. But that's not too far back. On this golf course, I'm sort of -- I'm not saying -- Kurt's a great player, but you look at some of the people that are on 6 behind him, like Xander, and that's sort of -- it's not the lead, the lead's 8-under, but I feel like if I can catch Xander, then I'm going to get pretty close to winning the golf tournament.

**Q. For people that don't know much about Kurt, what do you know and what can you say about him?**

RORY MCILROY: I played with him a little bit. So played with him final round at CJ Cup in October. Great player. Sort of has his own move. Super strong. Hits the ball a mile. He's obviously traveled all over the world to play. He's played in Europe and Asia, over here.

I feel like he's getting rewarded for sort of his perseverance and his persistence and taking his opportunities wherever they have presented themselves sort of anywhere in the world to go play.

**Q. Xander was raving about his quads.**

RORY MCILROY: He's got some big legs, yeah, he does.

**Q. You talked a couple times about how all your behind-the-scenes work has inspired you. You played some really good golf through it. Is there any danger that it's going to wear you out?**

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, like I needed a hard reset at the end of last year. I was exhausted. I think things should quiet down. Obviously, with the announcement a couple of days ago with everything that we've been trying to work on. Trying to get the balance right between really tough competition, but trying to make it fair on all the membership as well.

There's been a ton of phone calls, a ton of meetings, but



now that it's been decided and announced, like hopefully it will quiet down on that front a bit for me.

**Q. Jon Rahm has obviously been on an unbelievable run. Shoots a 76 today. A couple bad swings and a bad break. When you see a 76 next to his name, because of the run he's been on, is it a little about bit eye opening? Maybe not for you guys, but --**

RORY MCILROY: No, it's so easy to do here. As you said, a couple of bad swings can cost you a bunch of shots. I think he made 7 on 6 today. I made 7 on 6.

Like, I think that's it not necessarily a bad swing, it's just a slight mishit out of the toe or something. But there's a couple of holes here that are just very penal if you miss it in the wrong spots. That sort of looked like what Jon's done today. Which he basically hasn't done for the last 12 months.

**Q. There's been so much movement, progress on this TOUR since, I guess, Travelers almost, going forward and where we are now. What needs to happen for Europe?**

RORY MCILROY: I think Europe needs to get into the mix. I mean, look, people are -- I mean, look, I think everyone knows this is the place that you want to play golf, right. It is what it is, right. It is. I think this -- people complain about these 10 cards going to the European Tour players that get on this TOUR. But, like if I'm a European Tour player, like that's brilliant.

Instead of trying to think about what's good for the TOUR, think about what's good for the players that are on that Tour. I think that's where people need to sort of reframe their mind a little bit.

So to have the opportunity to be in the top 10 in Europe and then get over where all the opportunity is, which is here -- I'm not saying there's no opportunity over there, there is. But the one thing I would like to see going forward with this sort of designated events' schedule is trying to get some of those tournaments in the mix overseas.

**Q. Irish Open?**

RORY MCILROY: Irish Open. Spanish Open. Scottish Open is obviously a co-sanctioned event now, which is a big step forward. Wentworth. There's a few obvious ones that stick out that could, you could try to incorporate into more of a World Tour schedule, more so than it just being purely DP world, purely PGA TOUR and trying to sort of combine the two a little bit.

**Q. Have you ever run into a player -- and I guess I would have to rule out you, I think '10 you stayed back in Europe?**

RORY MCILROY: '11.

**Q. One year. We don't need to talk about that.**

RORY MCILROY: No, there's no -- no.

**Q. Have you ever run across a player who didn't have an aspiration of being here? European player, obviously.**

RORY MCILROY: Yeah. Honestly, I feel like some -- I have to be careful about what I say here. There's a lot of big fish in a small pond in Europe. Then, when they get over here, they get over here, they find it difficult and they don't like it. And then they go back to what's comfortable.

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