

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Saturday, March 9, 2024

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Rory McIlroy

Quick Quotes



Q. Can you just talk about the difference between the front nine and obviously the back nine.

RORY McILROY: Eight shots (smiling.) Yeah, I just didn't have any momentum -- I played the front nine pretty well. I hit two good shots into 1. Hit a great shot into 2. Hit a good drive, hit two good shots into 4. I was giving myself loads of looks.

Then I hit a decent shot into 7 that I then 3-putted. Then, instead of, I was staying patient, then, instead of six pars in a row and then trying to break that with a birdie, I end up making a bogey, was sort of pretty frustrated going into the back nine.

Then the 3 on 10, the tee shot onto the green there, that sort of got me going a little bit.

Then I made a great par save on 11 after driving it in the water. And those holes in particular, 10 and 11, sort of got me going. There is some chances coming in. 12's a good birdie chance, par-5. 16 as well. But obviously played those last few holes really nicely, and, again, second day in a row where I've actually putted really, really nicely, which is good to see.

Q. Have you ever tried to drive 10 before?

RORY McILROY: No, but I wasn't as long as I am now. I'm definitely a good few yards longer over the last couple of years than I have been in the past. I thought if I got it in one of the two front traps that would be a good leave to hit something up the green, but, yeah, I wasn't trying to hit it on the green, but it was nice to walk up and see it on there.

Q. You were visibly frustrated though on 8. I would imagine frustration enough on this golf course can pose you a problem if it goes too far. What do you do to keep it away?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, because I felt like I ended up -- I was 1-over through 7, and hit a bad tee shot on 8. I felt like I should have been 2- or 3-under through 7. So, I felt

like I was pretty wasteful those first few holes.

Then I hit it in the one place on 8 that you can't hit it. It was in that right rough and you're blocked out by the trees.

So, yeah, a couple little bursts of frustration on the 8th the last two days. Both times it sort of got me going.

Q. Did you use that to --

RORY McILROY: I think so, like a bit of a reset, a bit of -- it would have been nice to see a par on 8 today, but, you know, I played the last 10 holes in 6-under after that, so it was, yeah, sometimes you need to let it out, and not let it sort of just build up inside you, I guess.

Q. What are your thoughts on chasing tomorrow?

RORY McILROY: Depends what the conditions are like. You start chasing on this golf course, it can bite you pretty quickly. You start taking some more aggressive lines, start going at some pins with these firm greens and short siding yourself. You got to pick your spots and still be patient. I think the wind's going to be out of a different direction again tomorrow, so the wind or the golf course is going to play quite different to what it was today. We'll see what happens.

Q. Why do you always speak your mind, and there are a couple guys not happy with the smaller fields comments you made yesterday.

RORY McILROY: Why wouldn't I speak my mind, I guess. You asked me my opinion and I give it to you. I'm not going to stand up here and lie to you.

Q. Speaking of your opinion, when you say more cut throat, about what's the number of guys keeping their card each year moving forward, if you had your way? Like FedExCup, are we talking like a hundred or less or what?

RORY McILROY: I guess I haven't thought about it that hard. I guess my thing is, I'm all for more cut throat and more competitive and trying to give pathways to the



younger generation. So, through Korn Ferry Tour, through PGA TOUR U, through -- like, I would rather have more of a, like, yeah, instead of -- I just feel like there's a lot of categories on TOUR that people are sort of still benefiting off what they did like five or ten years ago. I feel like the most competitive professional golf tour in the world, you should have to come out and prove yourself year after year after year.

Q. The second part to that, when you think of the world tour, are you thinking of creating new events, like to be complementary to a tour, or are you talking about borrowing the best events from?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so, I would say take the best events from all over the world and try to create something through that, because those events still have history and legacy and tradition and all the things that are still very important in golf. I think there's been some experiments with creating new tournaments out of nothing, and I don't know if they have really captured the imagination of the general public.

That's what you want, you want to -- like, why is the Masters the Masters, why is this tournament this tournament, why are the more historical tournaments the ones that are revered so much in our game, it's because they have history, and people remember Ben Hogan winning or Jack Nicklaus or these guys. It's all about trying to bridge the, I guess, trying to bridge the present back to the past and the people that came before us. I think that's important.

Q. When you look at that last nine holes, is it more than a good nine holes, is it something you've kind of been waiting to see?

RORY McILROY: A little bit. It doesn't feel too dissimilar to the Dubai Desert Classic at the start of the year. I feel like I won that -- I won that golf tournament in 27 holes. I shot 9-under on Saturday and 3-under on the front nine on Sunday, and sort of cruised, I didn't really do much else. When the golf course is playing as tough as this, that's all, you sort of only need like two really good nine-hole stretches, and then you can sort of play conservative and make a lot of pars the rest of the way.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports