

FedEx St. Jude Championship

Wednesday, August 9, 2023

Memphis, Tennessee, USA

TPC Southwind

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good morning. We would like to welcome Rory McIlroy to the FedEx St. Jude Championship. Rory, welcome back on this rainy morning. Some comments about capping off a wonderful regular season and the start of Playoffs.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's been a really solid season. A lot of good golf played, a couple wins in there.

Probably my best regular season in terms of -- I actually don't remember where I finished last year in the regular season, but yeah, it's been a solid few months of golf. There was a bit of a struggle there sort of around springtime, but yeah, I've played really good and feel good coming into this week and having an opportunity to try to win the FedExCup for a fourth time, which is really cool.

Just excited to get going.

Q. Saw you playing around with a new putter out there. Just wondering why the switch now and what that testing process looks like for you on the back end when you're deciding to put a new one in play.

RORY McILROY: Honestly, I just wanted a different look, just wanted to freshen it up. I've got my Spider with me this week if that putter isn't doing what I want it to do over the first couple days. I may go back. I just wanted to freshen it up.

Honestly, it was zero testing process. It was go into the garage and see what I had and just pull a couple out and go have a few putts. That was it.

Q. Just wanted to get your thoughts on Tiger being named to the policy board and what type of conversations you've had with him since then.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, look, it's a great addition. The player over the last 20 years that's left the biggest legacy on the game, for him to be involved in the discussions



around the future of professional golf and what that may look like I think is very important.

Tiger has stepped up for all of us on TOUR, and I think he realizes that the players that are on the policy board were trying to play regular golf, and at the same time try to navigate all these different things, as well.

He's maybe got a little more time on his hands than we do.

For him to step up and sort of take a little bit of the load off us is very much appreciated.

Q. Since Tiger has been kind of influential behind the scenes for 25 years, how is it different with him actually being on the board? What kind of message or whatever you want to call it is it to the players?

RORY McILROY: He has a vote. Everything that goes through the TOUR has to be voted on and ratified, and he actually has a vote on what happens.

Q. As it relates to the golf, and I hope this comes out the right way, but having won this thing three times and being the only one to do it, how much of it do you strike up to great golf, and how much is great timing?

RORY McILROY: I'd say a little bit of both.

You have to put yourself up there. I think I've won the FedExCup three times. I've finished second once and I've finished third another time.

I think it's too much of a -- to just consider it good timing seems unfair on my part. I think I'd like to think that I play good enough golf over the years to give myself a chance a bunch of times.

It's a combination of both. I've gotten hot at the right time. It's also course fit. East Lake is a course I've enjoyed over the years, and it's always nice knowing when you go back there, you're always going to have a good shot to win.

Q. (Indiscernible).

RORY McILROY: No, because you've got -- I can't



remember when, maybe five or six years ago it went from four tournaments to three tournaments. It's 16 rounds of really high-level golf, and a lot can happen. Obviously the points are so much more in the Playoffs, that there's so much more movement and so much more volatility.

That doesn't surprise me at all. I've always said this: I think starting at 10-under par at the TOUR Championship, if you are that No. 1 seed, it's tough starting -- it's tough to get into the right mindset on Thursday morning. We all usually start level, and you're starting with a two-shot lead.

It's just a bit of a different mindset that you need.

Q. To go to Monday's announcement of the schedule, I know it's really early in the process, but have you looked at what your schedule might look like next year based on the changes, and what are your thoughts on the flow of what they came up with for next year?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so there's a lot that I like with this schedule next year. I love Quail Hollow going straight into PGA. I love Memorial going straight into U.S. Open. I think for me anyway, the run-up to Augusta is a little -- I don't know what I'm going to play there, if at all. Maybe play San Antonio the week before.

But I'd say my schedule will look pretty much the same as it did this year. I'll most likely -- I'm not a huge Hawai'i guy, so I'll probably not go to Hawai'i, but I'll play Pebble Beach and sort of play a similar schedule from there on that I've played.

Q. You've won these Playoffs three times before; how do you sum up the level of consistency that it takes over these three weeks and the challenge of that to get that done?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so for me, I sort of treat it like a 12-round tournament. You've got 12 rounds to play, and you're trying to go out there and get the best out of yourself for those 12 days.

I think with the knowledge of even if you have a bad week -- so I missed the cut here last year and then was able to bounce back with a good finish at the BMW and then go on and win the TOUR Championship. If you're up there in the standings, at least you know you've got a little bit of wiggle room.

But yeah, every week you want to go out there and play well.

I think at the end of the day, going into the TOUR Championship, if you're sorta within four of the lead starting

on Thursday, I think you're in a really good spot.

Q. You've always said you've enjoyed this golf course, and it's become a tougher test through the years. Obviously the rain, we've had a lot of it here in Memphis. How do you see this playing out over four days with not only the test this course normally is, but it's getting soft, and Scottie said the rough is really high. How tough will the next four days be do you think?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think when it's wet like this, we're probably going to play preferred lies the first couple days just with the amount of mud balls that we're getting out there, and then I almost feel like the wetness of the rough makes it a little bit easier because you're not in two minds whether it's going to come out soft or whether it's going to jump. It usually just comes out soft.

It takes a little bit of the guesswork out.

I think with the softer conditions, I feel like it's going to play a little easier, especially the first couple days if it retains all that rain that we've had over the last few days.

Q. It appears these next two months for you are as busy as any time all year probably. Can you run through what you've got and maybe just sort of trying to pace yourself and looking ahead at all that's coming up?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so I've got the next three weeks, then I have a week off, then I'll play the Irish Open. I'll play Wentworth.

I've got a buddy's bachelor party in Mykonos after Wentworth for a few days, and then I have a few days to dry out before the Ryder Cup.

I've got a big, whatever that is, six-out-of-eight run culminating with the Ryder Cup where I'm hoping to play a lot of golf.

I think those two off weeks are going to be important to just conserve energy and to really manage my time well and make sure I'm doing the right things so that I'm ready to go when I need to.

Q. Would it then just be the one more tournament after the Ryder Cup in Dubai, and that would be it?

RORY McILROY: That's it, yeah, so six weeks off after the Ryder Cup, Dubai, and I probably won't play again until Dubai at the end of January.



