

Hero Dubai Desert Classic

Monday, 30 January, 2023

Dubai, UAE

Majlis Course at Emirates Golf Club



Rory McIlroy

Quick Quotes

Q. 2023 Hero Desert Dubai Classic champion, at the start of the week you said you had some unfinished business and you've sealed the deal. You're now a Rolex Series Champion. Just sum it up for us, what does this victory mean?

RORY McILROY: It means a lot. It's actually funny, Harry said to me, finally we get a gold bib. Obviously I haven't won one of these big ones before. Look it was a battle all day. Honestly it's been a battle all week.

I really feel like I haven't had my best all week but I just managed my game so well and played really smart. Even that second shot at the last there, you know, I was in two minds. I probably could have got to the green but seeing what happened yesterday and what happened last year, giving myself a wedge to try to get up-and-down to try to get the win. Just ecstatic that I gave myself an opportunity the first week back out and yeah again as I said I managed my game well. I definitely feel like there's tons of room for improvement but it's a great start to the year.

Q. It's no secret that there's been a lot of noise surrounding this week. Given who was in the chasing pack, did that spur you on?

RORY McILROY: I think mentally today was probably one of the toughest rounds I've ever had to play because it would be really easy to let your emotions get in the way and I just had to really concentrate on focusing on myself. Forget who was up there on the leaderboard, and I did that really, really well.

I feel like I showed a lot of mental strength out there today, and again, something to really build on for the rest of the year.

Q. And now you've won the season-opening event. How does this shape the rest of your season for you?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, look, there's been a ton of positives this week but also been some things that I need to learn from and I need to try to improve on. Look, I'm

going to enjoy this. This is probably sweeter than it should be or needs to be but I feel like I've still got some stuff to work on. You know, as I said, it's a great start to the year and a really good foundation to work from.

Q. Also want to touch upon what happened on 18, given last year, what happened, and also yesterday, talk us through your decision-making.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, honestly I feel like I got lucky that my ball didn't go in the water off the tee shot. It's such an awkward tee shot for me. Driver is too much and 3-wood is not quite enough. So tried to hit a sort of easy driver and it came out really, really hot, and you know, I was lucky for it not to go in the water but I really only had one choice. I needed to lay up and try to get up-and-down that way.

I said yesterday with the two balls in the water on Sunday last year and then yesterday, fool me once, shame on me and fool me twice -- I wasn't going to get fooled a third time.

It was nice to be able to play the percentages and make it pay off.

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