

# Hero Dubai Desert Classic

Saturday, 20 January, 2024

Dubai, UAE

Majlis Course at Emirates Golf Club

## Rory McIlroy

### Press Conference



A Rolex Series Event



**Q. Fantastic round of golf, only one place I've got to start, just talk us through the eagle putt at the last?**

RORY McILROY: I was walking up with the putter in my hand, and as I got closer to the ball, I saw that there was a lot of fringe to go through. And I said to Harry, like I sort of want to chip it but the lie wasn't great. I could just see the club bouncing.

I was like, I'll just sort of, I guess, ride my luck with the putter, and it came out perfectly. And as soon as it got on the green, it actually wasn't as fast as I thought it was going to be once it got on the green. And it was tracking perfectly. Obviously a huge bonus for something like that to go in.

But you know, for the rest of the day, I played some very, very good golf. Definitely better than I played the last couple of days and nice to get myself right back in the tournament.

**Q. You started the day ten shots behind and in-form Cam behind you, and you knew you needed something special to give yourself a chance for tomorrow. How do you approach it mentally, tactically?**

RORY McILROY: I just thought if I could play the front nine better. I've played the front nine a little scrappily the last couple days. I thought if I could get off to a good start, I was a couple under through three, and I thought if I could pick one or two more up from that tough stretch from 5 through 9, and I ended up picking 3-up, birdieing 7, 8 and 9, which was fantastic. And then just kept it going into the back nine.

I think for me, the key to this golf course is always the front nine because it is the tougher nine, and if you can play that nine well, you give yourself a ton of momentum going into the more scorable back nine.

**Q. Whenever I see you here, I think back to that first win on tour, 2009. I think of all the achievements you've had since then, Ryder Cups, five Race to**

**Dubais, the major championships, so many achievements. What are you most proud of in your career since that point?**

RORY McILROY: I think the fact that I turn up every day still trying to get better. I think the consistency that I've shown throughout my career, I've never lost the hunger to go out and play better. But I've also never lost the joy of the game, which I think is really, really important. It's never felt like a job to me, and the day it does feel like a job is the day I need to give up.

**Q. We don't know what the lead will be overnight, but how many shots can you be behind and feel you have a realistic chance to win?**

RORY McILROY: I mean, I think anything within five probably. I don't think I'm going to be five behind unless someone does something very special on the back nine. But yeah, anything within three, four, five shots, I'll still have a chance.

**Q. What would a fourth win mean here to you?**

RORY McILROY: It would be amazing. First player to get my name on it four times, yeah, it would be awesome. I've had so much success in Dubai, whether it be at this tournament or over at Jumeirah Golf Estates and Race to Dubais. It's been a really, really good place to me. I love coming back here. I really enjoy my time here. Yeah, it would be amazing if I was able to get another win.

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