

# Hero Dubai Desert Classic

Sunday, 21 January, 2024

Dubai, UAE

Majlis Course at Emirates Golf Club

## Rory McIlroy

### Press Conference



**Q. You've successfully defended the Hero Dubai Desert Classic and become the first man in its 35-year history to win four times. How special is this moment?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's really cool. You know, I didn't really think about that during the course of the round. You know, it was a really tricky day. It was hard to get it close and make a ton of birdies.

You know, at the pivotal point for me came on the 8th and 9th hole. Making two threes there, that sort of set me up to try to control it on the way in.

I made that one blunder on 13, and made bogey there but felt like I steadied the ship well over the last few holes, and yeah, it was one of those days where there wasn't a ton of fireworks just because the course was so difficult but I held on as best as I could and thankfully no one around the top of the leaderboard made much of a run.

**Q. Going into the weekend on 3-under par, ten behind the leaders, shot 11-under over the weekend to win this thing. Where does that rank in your greatest-ever comebacks?**

RORY McILROY: I thought the way the golf course was trending, I thought two 67s would really have a chance. You know, obviously the 63 yesterday put me in a great position.

But yeah, I thought on Friday night, I thought 10-under for the weekend, I would have a really good chance to win. I shot 11, and ended up winning by one. Played the game long enough to sort of know how these things are going to go. Thankfully I played the golf I needed to and just incredible to get my fourth win here at the Emirates.

**Q. Two behind at the start of the day, four ahead at one point, with six holes to play, and Adrian makes a couple of birdies, you make a bogey, it's very tight. What's going through mind at that stage?**

RORY McILROY: I thought just steady the ship. I knew --

I didn't birdie 10, and I didn't even par 13. Those are the two birdie holes on the start of the nine.

So I just thought I would steady the ship. If I could make -- I felt like if I could make par on 14, 15 and 16, I wasn't going to lose much ground then, and then obviously I had two chances on the last two holes. Ended up, didn't need to birdie one of them. But my game plan was for those last five, get through those first three in even pars and then take my chances at the last hole.

**Q. Second and first in your first two starts of this year. What platform does that give you to build towards the major season, always your focus?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's a great start to the season. I started well last year with the win here. That was a little more in dramatic on the last green compared to that there.

It's a great platform to build from. I know I'm playing good golf. There's still a couple of misses off the tee left. One got me on 18 last week. I missed a tee shot left on 13 today which sort of cost me a shot, and then one on 16, as well, which nearly cost me a shot and made a good par there. A couple little things still to work on but these weeks are great. You learn a ton from them, and obviously great to get the competition and come out on top as well.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports

