

DP World Tour Championship

Tuesday, 15 November, 2022

Dubai, UAE

Jumeirah Golf Estates

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



BRIONY CARLYON: Welcome to the DP World Tour Championship. Rory, your thoughts on here going for your fourth Race to Dubai trophy this week and how excited you are at that opportunity.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, really excited. As you said, I've had some success around here and I've had some great memories in Dubai in general. I've won four times across this tournament and the Desert Classic.

It's a nice feeling to come back here and have a chance to win the season title. It's been a few years but sort of with my consistent play this year and obviously in the majors and some of the bigger events, I find myself in a nice position. So yeah, nice to come in with not just one by two things at stake. I'm excited to get going.

Q. Given the nature of the year that you've had, whatever happens this week I think would still go down as a very good year but how much of an meaning would it provide for you to get the job done?

RORY McILROY: Yes, it would be. It would be, I just think it would be a really nice way to finish off the year. This is my last event of the season. I know some of the other guys will play in the Bahamas in a couple weeks in Tiger's event. I think the way I've played throughout the year, I've been so consistent, especially the last six or seven months post-Augusta.

I'm coming off the back of a really good performance and I'll try to replicate that again. I feel like my game is in good shape. So yeah, I would be slightly disappointed if I walked away from here knowing I didn't play as well as if I can, and I know if I do play like that, I'll give myself a good chance.

Q. It's been a year like no other for the game of golf in again, if you could give a end of the year assessment of where we are at the game, and Greg Norman and saying yourself and Tiger and every PGA TOUR player should be thankful for what LIV has done. I wonder if you can give us an assessment?

RORY McILROY: The game of golf is, I would say in a less certain place than it was 12 months ago. No one really knows what's going to happen going forward.

In terms of I guess anything that Greg says, but that comment, it depends what you're looking for out of golf. Am I thankful that it's provided more opportunities for the top players to earn more? Yes. But ultimately will that make me happier at the end of my career? No.

There's a lot of things that people play golf for and do their jobs for, and it's not just about money. It's about other things. It's about fulfillment. It's about trying to get the best out of yourself. It's about the satisfaction of turning up and sort of trying to play to your potential. You know, those are the things that certainly made me the happiest about playing golf. So to some people, they might play for other reasons. But for me, I'm happiest when I'm playing my best and doesn't matter how much I'm going to make. But at the same time, it's the sporting achievements that are the things that get me going.

Q. How important is it that golf doesn't have another year like this one; that something is worked out next year?

RORY McILROY: So I don't think it will have another year like this one because all of the noise has been about who jumping ship, who is going where, who is staying, who is going. Very little of the storyline has actually been about the golf. So I think next year, if we can get the storylines to being about the golf and being about the competition that's happening and what's happening on the course, that's a good thing.

Q. With respect to Greg, do you think Tiger, do you think anybody should be saying that Tiger should be thankful for golf considering what that man has done for prize purses, exposure?

RORY McILROY: No.

Q. Can you expand on that?

RORY McILROY: I'm very thankful for everyone in golf, and I've said this a million times: Tiger is the reason that



we are playing for as much as we are playing for. Tiger is the reason that stature of our game is where it is. The generation of Tiger and the generation coming after Tiger have all benefited from him and his achievements and what he's done for the game of golf.

I don't think Tiger should be thankful to anyone for anything. I think everyone else in the game should be thankful.

Q. Just a couple of questions. The first one I wanted to ask you about Ryan Fox. He's the guy that's closest to you. What did you think of his season and what do you think of him?

RORY McILROY: I mean, he's had an amazing season. I saw, I think yesterday, went from 217th in the world up to 23rd in the world. That's an amazing climb. You have to play great golf and you have to play consistently great golf over a decent period of time to get that high. And he's done that playing golf tournaments that don't necessarily provide as high of World Ranking points as some others, so I think he's done a phenomenal job this year. Obviously he's played well last week. Won the Dunhill.

Yeah, he's had an amazing season. It's great to see. I don't know him well but he seems like a lovely guy, and I'm looking forward to playing with him on Thursday.

Q. Can I ask you about this golf course where you are 33-under par for the 11 years that you've played here, almost 3-under par every round. What is your mindset when you come to a golf course where you have done so well?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so I think for me, a golf course like this is it plays right into my strengths, four par 5s. So par 72s are usually golf courses that I excel on because of the four par 5s and because I'm able to play the par 5s quite well because of my length.

A lot of the other holes, you can be quite conservative off the tee. So you -- I think it's very hard to separate yourself on this golf course on the par 4s the par 3s, but then the par 5s are where -- so I think just the going seems to play to my strength, and there may be some others, and that's obviously part of the reason why I've done well here.

Q. Where does this season rank for you in terms of consistency? Obviously you haven't won one of the four that you would have hoped for but everything else has been pretty much on the money. Where would this stand for you?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, in terms of the consistency

especially in the majors, it's probably yeah, I didn't win one of the Big Four but second at Augusta, third at The Open, fifth at the U.S. Open and eighth at the PGA, it's been very consistent. I've said this year felt very similar to 2019, very similar numbers in terms of strokes gained. If anything, I was a little better this year stats-wise. Better around the greens. Definitely putted better. It's the first time I ever finished in the top 20 in putting on the PGA TOUR this year.

So it's really nice at this stage of my career, 15 ways in, I'm still finding ways to improve. That's a really positive thing going forward. So it's been a great year and I'm excited to see where I go from here because as I said, those improvements 15 years into a career is something that excites me.

Q. You've said it yourself that at some point, people need to get around the people. Do you think that's actually possible with what's been said by the protagonists involved and the head of the PGA and Greg Norman? Is it possible to see those two guys sitting down?

RORY McILROY: So I think there's a few things that need to happen. So there's obviously two lawsuits going on at the minute, there's PGA TOUR versus LIV and there's this one that's coming up with the DP World Tour in February. Nothing will happen if those two things are still going on, especially -- yeah, you're limited in what you can do.

And then I think from whatever happens with those two things, there's a few things that I would like to see on the LIV side that needs to happen. I think Greg needs to go. I think he just needs to exit stage left. He's made his mark but I think now is the right time to sort of say, look, you've got this thing off the ground but no one is going to talk unless there's an adult in the room that can actually try to mend fences.

And if those two things happen, then things can happen. But right now, it's a stale mate because there can't be any other way. Hopefully something can happen, who knows.

But right now, I think the separate entities, the PGA TOUR, European Tour and LIV are both going to be one is a very different product to the other, and they are just going to keep going whether something happens and whether that's in the hand of a court or a judge or something else happens along the way, no one really knows. But right now it seems like it's a bit of a stalemate.

Q. You told me in the past you have read books for golf and consciousness and all this. Do you think forgiveness would be the right word to use to assist

this world of golf?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think in time that, can happen. It's obviously been a very contentious year in golf. And I've said this: The best thing in golf is to have all the best players playing together, and what's happening right now, that's not happening.

So I fear for the game when that's going on. That's why, again, with everything -- it's contentious because there's lawsuits going on and people suing people; it's very, very messy.

So again, if all that stuff can be sorted out one way or the other, then you can get to the stage where there's forgiveness and people can have dialogue and come to some sort of common ground or compromise. But while all this is happening, it's very hard to do that.

Q. I know you were involved in many of the talks involving the World Ranking, but what do you think of the product now, given the projections that this week, the DP World Tour Championship, which is the Flagship Event of The European Tour is getting around 20 or 21 points and the RSM classic is getting around 39 points?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so when you look at two different fields, you've got a 50-man field here versus a 144-man field there. So just in terms of how the strengths of field is calculated, they have 90 more players to contribute to their strength of field.

So the reason that this has got 21 points and the RSM has got 39 is the person that wins the RSM has to beat 139 other guys. You only have to beat 49 other guys here. It's a much fairer system. I think it rewards people that -- it's pure numbers. Strength of field has not hurt people feelings.

Has it upset people? Yes, because people have been used to getting a certain amount of World Ranking points in one event and now it's dropped. But I would say those events were getting more than they should be.

I think it's the fairest system that you can come up with right now. And a lot of work went into that, five years of algorithms and analysis and work went on into the system, so it's not as if it changed overnight. A lot has went into it. It's the best one that we can come up with right now, and I think it will take a while. It will take another 18 months for it to play out because everyone gets two years into the rolling system.

It's a little bit -- as it's being rolled out, there's a little bit of

discrepancy, but once we get two years into it and have the minimum divisor and all the events. I think you'll see a fairer reflection of where everyone is ranked in the world that is eligible.

BRIONY CARLYON: Thank you for your time this week, Rory, all the best.

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