

# DP World Tour Championship

Sunday, 17 November, 2024

Dubai, UAE

Jumeirah Golf Estates, Earth Course

## Rory McIlroy

### Press Conference

SCOTT CROCKETT: Thank you very much for joining us. Rory, welcome, and of course many, many congratulations for what you have achieved today here. Your third DP World Tour title, and, of course, your sixth Race to Dubai title.

We saw you a little bit emotional on SKY and the enormity of what you achieved set in. Start by giving us that's thoughts.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, personally for me, it's a huge achievement. I think all week, as well, it's sort of been building and building, because after the first round, I played well, and Thriston was a little bit behind.

So you know, it felt like a little bit of a foregone conclusion but it never really hits you until it actually happens.

I just think about what Seve meant to the game, to this tour, to the European Ryder Cup Team. We sit in the locker room at the Ryder Cup, and the place is just filled with Seve quotes, every wall you look at. We had a changing room last year in Italy with the last shirt he ever wore when he played the Ryder Cup at Oak Hill in '95.

I think it was that, and then combined with the fact that I've had so many close calls this year. Certainly didn't make it easy for myself, either out there on the back nine.

I think just the combination of the Seve thing plus finally getting over the line in what's felt like a long time, I think the emotion of it all just sort of hit me. Yeah, that's why I had to compose myself.

Yeah, this is a big day for me, to end 2024 like this, it means a lot, it really does. I can enjoy the little bit of off time that you have now and really looking forward to 2025.

SCOTT CROCKETT: It has been a challenging year, and you touched on that in your review interview, and although I think it was still mathematically possible, we all knew The Race to Dubai was pretty much in the bag but the tournament wasn't. Was it the way it transpired today, what you've gone through this year, make it that little bit



extra special today.

RORY McILROY: It does. I'm going to look back on 2024 and I'm going to have four wins, three individual ones, two in Dubai, Quail Hollow and the win with Shane at the Zurich Classic.

But I know that my 2024 is going to be defined, at least by others, by the tournaments that I didn't win as much as the tournaments that I did.

This was an incredibly meaningful day for me to get over the line to win my last event of the season. It's been a long year. This is my 27th event of the year, and you know, to dig deep when I have had to, especially the last three holes, the swings on 16, the swing on 17 and the two swings on the last, if I look back on this week, that's what I'm going to remember and that's what I'm going to take with me going forward.

**Q. You spoke about it towards the end but the last three holes, given what had happened after the fifth hole when you made the last birdie, how important was it, what you thought about before going to 16 green?**

RORY McILROY: When I hit the second shot, when I was talking to the green, I was like, I'm pretty sure I can't miss this one. Yeah, I had that run of birdies from 2 through 5, four in a row, to I guess giving myself a little bit of a cushion. I let Rasmus back in with bogeys on 9 and 13, and not birdieing 7 or 14, the par 5.

So I sort of felt it slipping away. I think either of us couldn't really get any momentum on back nine, and then actually I said it in my interview with Tim after on the green, I thought the par save on 15 was a big one for me. It was a really tricky putt. The majority of the putt was through the fringe and I misjudged one of those already on the first hole today.

So I thought to get that down in two, and for Rasmus not to make birdie there either for being in a pretty good position, I was sort of counting myself lucky walking to the 16th tee.

Then as I said, from there, two great swings on 16. For me, shot of the week on 17, is the 6-iron I hit in there. That was probably the most nervous I was over a shot.



This week, 17, I've always been a little uncomfortable but to stand up and hit a 6-iron straight at the pin knowing that I had to, that was great. Then the two swings on the last.

Yeah, I still feel like there's a little bit of work to do on my swing over the off-season here to get it exactly where I want it to be but all the signs are pointing in the right direction.

**Q. I need to ask you about Rasmus, getting the card on the PGA TOUR, and Tom getting a card?**

RORY McILROY: I was looking at the leaderboard and I saw Tom got in the top 10 and I thought okay, good, and when I was walking off the last, I didn't see his name and I see him before I signed my card and he was congratulating me, and I didn't want to ask -- I said, "Yay or nay?"

And he said, "Yes."

I'm happy for him. That was a massive goal for him was to get one of those ten cards and go play in America. Super happy for him.

Rasmus has had a fantastic year and to get a card to get into some of those signature events, as well, is very important.

I think Europe has a lot of good young players and that obviously bodes well for the future for European golf for Ryder Cups. It's an exciting question.

**Q. I hope this isn't a daft question but it might be. Did it feel like major pressure out there today?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, a little bit. I think there was probably a lot of self-inflicted pressure. I really wanted to get it done. I love to end the year on a positive note. I was maybe feeling a little more pressure than I should have. But it was nice to be able to handle it in a decent way.

I probably didn't handle it exactly the way I wanted to, especially around the middle of the round, but as I said, the way I finished the round, I'm very pleased with that.

**Q. And just on Tom, could you just give us a bit more appreciation of how rapidly he's got to where he's got to?**

RORY McILROY: He's done amazingly well, and I think his game is going to be suited for America. He hits the ball high. Hits it long. He won in Germany last year, The European Open. He's had chances this year; the playoff against Marcel in Italy, and he's been very, very consistent.

For a guy that's only 21 to show that level of consistency, that bodes well for the future.

Obviously very, very happy for him and excited he achieved one of his big goals this year and getting one of those cards.

**Q. Just wondered how you react to the way the world looks at the tournaments when you don't win. Do you see that as motivation, or an I'll show you kind of thing?**

RORY McILROY: I think what I've learned is it doesn't -- it doesn't have to be important for everyone else. You know, so like I think what I did today is very meaningful for me personally. I would think from an outside perspective, it mightn't be that meaningful if people are just looking from the outside in in terms of other things that I've achieved in the game and things that I didn't achieve this year.

But just because it maybe isn't as important to them doesn't mean that it shouldn't be as important to me. I think that's -- you know, I've made a commitment I think over the last three years to prioritize trying to win The Race to Dubai and trying to play as much as I can on the DP World Tour.

Look, yeah, I know the way -- I know how people are going to view my year and I view my year similarly but at the same time, I still have to remember I won four times and I won a second Race to Dubai. I accumulated a lot of big finishes and big performances, and the two guys that had better years than me have had career years. Xander won two majors, and Scottie has won a PLAYERS and a Masters and an Olympic Gold Medal. They are the only two guys this year that I think that have had better years than me.

**Q. Is it more motivation than anything?**

RORY McILROY: It's a motivation. But I think I need to find that motivation from within. I've never been one to look externally for motivation. Sometimes, but for the most part, I think you need to find it within yourself, that motivation to go on and achieve what you want to.

**Q. You were obviously emotionally to match Seve, and there's only one more --**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, absolutely, I've come this far, I might as well try and get to eight or nine. Getting to six and three in a row, and prioritising The Race to Dubai and DP World Tour and trying to achieve something that no one else in the game has achieved if I am to surpass Monty.

But I've got a good ten years left, I think. Look, again, the other thing is, who knows what the world of golf looks like in a few years' time. But as long as The Race to Dubai is happening and there's an Order of Merit and we're on this tour, I'm going to want it, yeah.

**Q. On the near misses, because you've had some this year and one very high-profile one, did it fester more than normally?**

RORY McILROY: Absolutely, yeah. I think I would have been miserable for a few weeks if I had not won today. It would have just added to the list of ones that I felt I let get away, and for one to not get away and to get over the line and be the final event of the year, it feels nice.

**Q. You were saying outside that you've been through a lot this year. Has this been the most emotionally draining season would you say you've had?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, it's been quite the year.

But you know, I'm super happy with where I am in my career and in my life, and I feel like everything's worked out the way it was supposed to.

**Q. Can you just address that enduring ambition and drive that you have, given all that you've achieved in the game, many people would say, that's enough. It clearly is something that we always feel like we take for granted because you put yourself up there every single time, but where does that drive come from? What is it?**

RORY McILROY: I just want to be the best golfer that I can be. That's what I've always wanted, and I've never knew where that would get me. But it's got me pretty far. So it seems like a recipe that I should keep going with.

But yeah, I think I do a good job of setting myself goals throughout the year and trying to, I'm much better at setting like little short-term goals and trying to work my way through those, and then hopefully by the end of the year it sort of adds up to something bigger than that.

Yeah, as long as I'm feeling healthy and feeling like I have the game to compete at the highest level, I'm going to try to get the best out of myself up until the point I feel like I'm no longer good enough to compete at the highest level.

But I feel like that's a very long way away.

**Q. Given your history in the UAE and Dubai and the**

**wins that you've ever had over here, have you ever been offered honorary citizenship in the UAE, and would you take it?**

RORY McILROY: I have never been offered but if I were to be offered, I probably would take it, yeah.

You know, look, I lived here for four years. I was a resident. I love this part of the world. I always have. As I said, I was lucky enough to receive an invite to the Dubai Desert Classic 2006 as an amateur, and I've been coming back to this region every year since.

It's been 18 pretty cool years. There's been a lot of fond memories along the way, and as long as this region continues to be an important part of the world of golf, I'll keep coming back. I love coming back here, and I have a lot of friends, and I try to make it a point to come back as much as I can.

SCOTT CROCKETT: Many, many congratulations on what you've achieved, today, and thank you for all that you do for this tour. And hope you have a nice Christmas and New Year period, and look forward to seeing you back in this region in January trying to win your 8th title in Dubai, whether you're a resident or not by then, I don't know, or a citizen.

RORY McILROY: Thank you, Scott.

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