

DP World Tour Championship

Tuesday, 11 November, 2025

Dubai, UAE

Jumeirah Golf Estates, Earth Course

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference

SCOTT CROCKETT: Rory, great to have you back here as the defending Race to Dubai Champion.

First can we start with the Rory McIlroy Award, which was announced a couple hours ago, the Rory McIlroy Award for performance in the majors for next year. That's special, isn't it?

RORY McILROY: It is. It's a huge honour. I spent the last 18 years of my career chasing -- in 2008, it was the Sir Henry Cotton Award I was trying to get to. Then trying to win Harry Vardon trophies and Seve Ballesteros awards. And now there's obviously going to be an award under my name which is very, very cool, to recognise the best DP World Tour player, their performance in the four major championships over the course of the year.

Yeah, as I said, it's an amazing honour, and I'm looking forward to next year when the majors are over and being able to hand it to whoever the deserving winner is.

SCOTT CROCKETT: I know you're a study of golf history, and you realise your place in the game, but for you to be the fifth person we name an award after, that in itself must be quite special.

RORY McILROY: It is. It's amazing. When Guy approached us about it after the Masters, my first inclination was it's a bit soon, a bit early. And the more I thought about it, I'm not going to be around forever playing.

So it will still be amazing to have any name, after my playing days, my name associated with this tour, and hopefully have an award named after me, that means something to future generations that they want to strive towards to achieve.

As I said, an amazing honour to have my name up there along with Harry Vardon and Sir Henry Cotton and Seve Ballesteros and John Jacobs, that's very special.

SCOTT CROCKETT: This week, you're in pole position for Race to Dubai. Give us your thoughts.



RORY McILROY: Obviously a great day on Sunday. It looked like I was probably going to have a similar cushion over Marco to what I had last week. I was able to turn it on on the back nine and make a few birdies and give myself a chance to win the tournament, but also a little bit more of a lead going in here.

So I thought last week was overall pretty good. I certainly played really well on the weekend. Found myself in a familiar position going into this week, going out last on Thursday, and you know, be good to tee it up again alongside Marco again. I'm excited for a great week.

I feel like my game rounded into some really good form at the weekend, and hopefully I can continue that from Thursday on.

Q. How cool would it be, you have the Rory McIlroy Award and then the name Rory McIlroy on it?

RORY McILROY: It would be cool but I am ineligible for it.

SCOTT CROCKETT: You're supposed to read the release.

RORY McILROY: I thought it would be better if I wasn't.

Q. Was that, then, your choice that you didn't want to,?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think it was a decision made by all of us. We thought it was best if I would be ineligible for it.

Q. And about this golf course, I know last week's tournament itself has been really frustrating for you, ten Top 3s in 14 starts, but what about this week and this golf course, do you see any changes? And I know you love this golf course.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, this golf course has been good to me over the years. I would say the only change that I noticed this year compared to last year is the rough isn't quite as long or quite as thick as it was last year.

I think historically, if you look at the scoring at this tournament, last year is one of the toughest scoring weeks.



I think it won with 14- or 15-under par where traditionally you sort of had to get to 23 or 22 to have a chance.

I would say the scoring might be a little bit better this week because the rough isn't up, but overall, the course is in great condition. It's set up to be another great week.

Q. What was it like, the start of this run, The Race to Dubai titles that you decided or realised they were special?

RORY McILROY: I wanted to prioritise it again. You look at my third Race to Dubai title in 2015, and there's a big gap, but in that gap, I won three FedExCup titles. So it was almost as if I prioritized a little bit the other side of the pond.

I think after COVID, I said, okay, what are some things that I want to do for the ten or 15 years of my career, and one of those was trying to prioritise this tour a little bit again and trying to win The Race to Dubai a few more times.

So it's just something that I've -- I guess I've -- but it's also coincided with better play in the majors. Because as a dual member of both, to have a chance to win, you really need to play well in those bigger events.

So majors, the Rolex Series Events, the co-sanctioned Scottish Open, those are the events you have to play well in to have a chance. Just sort of prioritising those and prior to -- yeah, making more -- I'm not saying I didn't make an effort but just prioritise it a little bit more.

Q. Three in a row is impressive, and four would be even more impressive, but how impressive was what Monty did, seven in a row?

RORY McILROY: I think it's amazing to have that sustained excellence for that long. There's a lot of people that can have a good year or a two-year run. But to sustain that for seven years straight, it probably doesn't get talked about enough, especially in that golden age of European golf where he's going up against Faldo and Lyle and Langer and Woosie. Not saying that this isn't a pretty good generation, too, but he had to fend off some really tough competition.

Q. It's been a great year, Masters, the Ryder Cup, hopefully the India visit was one of the highlights of the year. Any lasting memories?

RORY McILROY: I enjoyed it, I had a great time in India. I don't know if I have one lasting memory. I guess I'll remember not hitting driver for four days. But the hospitality, the welcome, the generosity of the people

there, it was absolutely amazing.

Yeah, I enjoy the travel. I enjoy playing in different parts of the world. I enjoy seeing different parts of the world. I haven't played in the Melbourne Sandbelt since 2007, so it will be really good to go back there and play the Australian Open in Melbourne.

But it's been something that I think as you get older and maybe you hopefully become more well-rounded as a person, you start to appreciate these things a little bit more. It's amazing to bring Poppy to some of these countries and show her different cultures and show her that not everyone in the world is the same and people live differently, and teaching her those things and teaching her how to be welcoming of different cultures and understanding of different cultures has been really important as well.

It's been great. She's only five years old but she's a very well-travelled little girl.

Q. Any one thing that stands out from your trip to India?

RORY McILROY: I would say the Diwali party on the Friday night and being able to spend some time with Sachin Tendulkar, that was a pretty big highlight.

Q. Can I ask you about your commitment to the DP World Tour? Because, you know, it struck me last week about how you're going to structure your schedule going forward, one area that is not going to be compromised is the DP World Tour. What is it about this schedule that is so important to you?

RORY McILROY: I mean, I think there's a wonderful heritage to this tour. I think with the fractured nature of the men's professional game at the minute, this tour needs all of its stars to step up and play in the big events.

I understand that I am one of those people and I want to do my utmost to help in whatever way that I can.

I feel quite a responsibility to do that. And to try to make this tour as strong as it can possibly be. I think that's one part of it.

And the other part is I enjoy it. I enjoy it. I enjoy the places that we play. I enjoy the people that play on the Tour. I enjoy the people that work at the Tour. We've shared a lot of great moments from Ryder Cups together and great times and it just feels a lot more like home.

Q. You mentioned Sach. And you're going to be in Australia at a time where there will be a lot of attention

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on cricket and The Ashes. Will you be able to take advantage of that in any way?

RORY McILROY: I don't think so. When we are in Melbourne there's going to be a test match going on in Adelaide. So I won't be able to go.

But I'll certainly be keeping a close eye on proceedings. I know they are starting in person today or tomorrow. It's going to be a really interesting series. I'm looking forward to following.

Q. And how much interest do you actually have in cricket?

RORY McILROY: Quite a bit. I mean, when the cricket's on, a lot. I used to stay up every Christmas night whenever the boxing test match would be on at the MCG to watch the start of that. My dad's always enjoyed it. My dad's always played cricket on the TV when it's on. I remember the '05 Ashes series with Freddie Flintoff, I remember that really, really well.

I've always enjoyed sitting down or even just having it on in the background. Obviously the T20 stuff is fun, but even just sitting down for a couple hours and watching a bit of test match cricket is always good, too.

Q. A silly question after the year you've had, but the Rory McIlroy sitting before us now, is this the happiest Rory McIlroy we've seen in a long time?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think it is. I don't feel like -- like I don't think my desire's gone. It's certainly not gone. But I think it's just going one of those things where I'm not going to have to pick and choose where to sort of place my desire and what I want my goals to be.

Yeah, I'm certainly not less driven but maybe just more driven in focused areas. Yeah, I don't feel like chasing as much anymore. I'm not out chasing the Grand Slam. I'm not chasing these things. I'm very content with what I've done in the game. I'm still driven to do more but you know, it's sort of a pinpoint to drive in certain directions.

I have a clear head and I'm out of all the political stuff in golf, basically, and I can just focus on playing and playing where I want to and making myself competitively happy by playing in the tournaments that I want to play.

And then having more time to make myself personally happy with doing the things I want to do away from golf, travelling with my family and showing my daughter different parts of the world and doing things like that I think is a very nice place to be in life.

Q. We touched on Colin's record. What would that mean to you to get closer?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, of course, to move from six to seven, to go one past Seve would be amazing. To get one closer to Monty would be amazing.

But I think when I say I'm not chasing anything, I think if I focused my energy on certain tournaments and try to play well at certain tournaments, then Race to Dubai is almost just -- it sort of takes care of itself. You know, hopefully these season-long awards are something that just come along because you've won some big tournaments along the way.

So yeah, I guess you could say I'm still chasing that, but I think that's just more a byproduct of playing the good golf that I know that I can.

Q. Yesterday you were with the Crown Prince and posted a picture about it. He's very into his sports. Did you ever try to get him into golf?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so we have a mutual friend in Abdullah Al Naboodah who a lot of people know in this room is very involved with the DP World Tour and on the board. Abdullah has tried a few times to get him into golf. But yeah, Fazza's more of -- I think he likes a bit more excitement than hitting a golf ball. I likes jumping out of airplanes and doing more of that stuff.

Yeah, he's very -- he wants Dubai to be a healthy city, one of the healthiest cities in the world. We talked about different things and different objectives that they want to achieve, and also the different things he's put in place.

So whether it be this 30x30 Fitness Challenge or the Dubai run, or he's talked about trying to get cycling races here or the Dubai Marathon on the same level as the Boston Marathon or New York Marathon, some big plans to make Dubai very, very active place. It already is, but he's very passionate about making Dubai one of the healthiest places in the world, which is very admirable.

Q. You spoke about not being involved in the politics at the Tour which has given you some free time. I remember talking to Tiger in the Bahamas, and he said that in the boardrooms -- I think I told you about this -- he said that Rory in the boardroom is so clued in. He knows almost everything that is going on. I was wondering how you managed so do that when you are involved with your own practise, personal life. How much time do you give to your business?

RORY McILROY: I'm very lucky that I have a really good team around me that plug me in when I need to be plugged in. I've always said I'm a golfer first and foremost, and the golf is what has given me the platform to try these other things and to, you know, get involved with the likes of the TPG Sports Fund or even when I was on the board of the Tour.

But I think when you do something and your name is on something, you want to do it to the best of your ability. That's sort of who I am as a person, and so whether that's being on the board of the PGA TOUR or being the face of a brand or being involved in an investment fund, you want to do it to the best of your ability. I think it would be a disservice to myself and a disservice to the people around me if I didn't do it like that.

So yeah, when I was on the board, I read the board materials. I was clued in. I talked to people. I got different opinions. But again, at that point, that was something that I really wanted to do but at the same time I felt like it was taking away from some of the other things I want to do in my life.

You know, you can't keep all the plates spinning at the same time and something had to give, and that was the thing that ultimately I had to stop doing to pursue some of these other things.

If you look at my golf since then, it's been a pretty good run. It's been a nice -- maybe a bit of a clearer head and a little bit more time to spend on practise and putting that into my game.

Q. What would you say was the turning point to becoming a happier Rory McIlroy, stepping off the board to focus on your family, your game and yourself, would that be the point of becoming a happier Rory McIlroy?

RORY McILROY: I would say that would be one aspect of it but there's probably a few other decisions that I've made over the past year that have led to that, too.

I think from a golfing perspective, you know, stepping away from the politics -- look, I sit in these and I opine on the politics of the game like I did last week with LIV and 72 holes but doesn't mean that I'm involved. But I can still give my opinion on it. I think stepping away from that stuff and being intimately involved, yeah, it's definitely made me happier from a golfing perspective.

You know, everything in my life is in a good spot and I'm very grateful for that.

SCOTT CROCKETT: Thanks for that, Rory. Congratulations on Rory McIlroy award and of course best of luck this week.

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