

Amgen Irish Open

Friday, 13 September, 2024

Newcastle, County Down, Northern Ireland

Royal County Down GC

Rory McIlroy

Quick Quotes

AMGEN
IRISH OPEN

 **DP WORLD TOUR**

RORY McILROY: Probably a little disappointed with the first nine holes. Played in benign conditions and I didn't feel like I took advantage of those conditions, and to only play the back nine in even par when I felt like I should have played it 2- or 3-under but played okay coming in. The conditions got a little bit more difficult. The wind switched direction a little bit and the last few holes were playing straight back into the wind. Overall another under-par round and obviously in a good spot going into the weekend.

Q. One off the lead at the moment, that may change but giving yourself a real shout.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, much better than nine years ago when I was watching the third round on TV. Happy to be here for the weekend and happy to give myself a chance.

Q. How nice that you have given yourself an opportunity to win an Irish Open in Northern Ireland.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's great to get a couple of good solid rounds under my belt and as I said I'm excited to be here for the weekend and get another couple of rounds here. It's not just a bonus that I'm in contention but just want to go out and try to play with the same attitude and the same patience and that's what this course demands, and if I can do that over the weekend, hopefully I'll have a good shot.

Q. At the top of the leaderboard, Shane is right in there as well. How good for the tournament?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's great. It's always good for a National Open for the home guys to be playing well. I saw Shane shot a couple under today. Tom played great, too. Got himself in for the weekend. Not too far out of it either. Always good to have that home interest and it will get the crowd going over the weekend.

Q. You looked like you really enjoyed yourself so far.

How determined are you that continues over the weekend and have some fun out there, too?

RORY McILROY: I always play my best when I'm having fun and staying relaxed. It's easy with Tom, Harry on the bag, the three of us go back a long way. It's easy to stay relaxed and have fun. It will probably be a little more difficult over the weekend to stay in that frame of mind but I know that's the frame of mind I do need to stay in.

Q. Starting to regret staying at home?

RORY McILROY: No, I'm happy to get a few nights in that bed.

Q. 36 holes, Irish Open, matter of getting the job done to a point where you have a chance this weekend, has that been the prevailing thought the first few days?

RORY McILROY: I think so. I would have liked to have taken advantage of the easier conditions this morning. Those first nine holes, you're not going to see it playing easier. To play level par was disappointing but played okay on the way in. Just a matter of making sure I was here for the weekend and give myself a chance. Sort of job done for the first two days and turn my attention to the weekend. That's where it will sort of tighten up, and depending on the conditions, I think the course will only get tougher from here.

So you know, looking forward to the challenge.

Q. We spoke yesterday about being a major challenge maybe in some of the strategic elements that you ever, but the atmosphere, the gallery have their expectations and those expectations on Thursday and Friday are going to be different when you're right in contention on Saturday and Sunday, are you anticipating the whole county, not just Northern Irish and Irish galleries.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I'm excited to that that support. Had a decent chance at The K Club last year as well. I feel like I'm fortunate, I get great support everywhere I go. But when I come home, not far from where I grew up with a

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

chance especially with a chance to win the tournament, I'm excited to play in that atmosphere over the weekend.

Q. Everybody is trying to clutch the trophy on Sunday but Shane spoke about how important it is for you and him to be up there and maybe Tom, how important is that for the Irish Open and here at Royal County Down?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's important to have home interest. We have play a few National Opens, and what Bob MacIntyre did this year. It's a big deal for the home guys to play well in their National Open and obviously this is no different and to have a few of us up there around the lead, it only enhances the tournament even more.

Q. How have you managed to stay so relaxed this week? You talk about pressure but how have you managed to stay as relaxed as you have?

RORY McILROY: I think my mindset has been, I was really excited to get back over to Europe after that sort of long stretch in America. In the summer, those three events and the FedExCup Playoffs, I was excited to get back to Europe and play some golf here on the European Tour. I'm just trying to embrace that the best I can.

I'm happy to be here. I don't feel -- yeah, I don't know, I feel like I really enjoyed coming back to Europe and coming back home even more over the last couple years. Just excited to spend more time over here.

Q. Does it feel like you're playing with make sure mates out with Tom, Ricky and Harry?

RORY McILROY: A little bit. It's more serious than that but I was just as engaged in Tom's game as I was in my own today, cheering him on, get him over the line to make the weekend and he has. Great for Tom and Ricky. Hope he has a great weekend and good tournament, not too good, but enough.

Q. The eagle on 1, the details?

RORY McILROY: Driver, 8-iron, 15 -foot putt. Wish every hole was easy as that.

Q. On 4, is that when the weather turned?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, the wind started to come out of a different direction. It started to come out of the southwest. Fooled me on that tee shot. 5, 7, 8, 9 played tricky with that wind.

I've really started to enjoy this type of golf. You look at my

last five U.S. Opens, I've started to enjoy having to make a lot of pars and stay disciplined, and definitely something that I'm proud of and I've matured in my game a bit to be able to do that.

So yeah, I used to shy away from it but I try to now embrace the more difficult, the better.

Q. You play with crowds everywhere, with the birdies -- how does that make you feel, your whole adrenaline?

RORY McILROY: I've been doing it for so long, I don't feel it. If you had, I don't know, some EKGs or sensors on me, maybe you'd see my physiology changes a bit but I think out there, you can't get too high or too low.

You have to try to keep as even-keeled as possible. I used to have big swings and emotions out there and I realised over time, staying a bit more level is the best way forward.

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