

# Italian Open

Thursday, 15 September, 2022

Rome, Italia

Marco Simone Golf & Country Club

## Rory McIlroy

### Quick Quotes

**Q. Slow start but on the third hole you made the eagle. What were you thinking at that point?**

RORY McILROY: Probably that I shouldn't have stayed up so late last night. Felt like I was still half-asleep playing that front nine.

Yeah, I think that eagle obviously ignited something and sort of kick started my round a little bit. I played some really good golf on the way in.

Yeah, I can't complain, I played the more difficult nine well and the easier nine not so well, so probably evened out. Just need to tidy up a few things going into the next few days.

**Q. You have 100 per cent record here in Italy, so far, and I'm sure you want to keep that up as well. Generally speaking what do you think the defence of the golf course?**

RORY McILROY: The rough. If you get it going off line here off the tee it's very, very difficult. The rough is incredibly thick and there's sort of jungle outside of that if you get a play way off line.

Keeping it in the fairway is the big key and then because there's so many undulations and different levels on the he is greens, it's trying to get the ball in the right place on the greens and because it was so windy today, they slowed the greens up a bit which made it tricky to read them. The ball wasn't breaking as much as it has the last couple days in practise.

Just a few things to adjust to, but yeah, overall, if I can get the ball in the fairway the next three days, I should have a chance.

**Q. And it's the first time that you get a good look at The Ryder Cup venue. How much do you think it will suit the Europeans?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think stats-wise, you look at



American Team, they are very good sort of from 150 in, so try to set the golf course up, it's a challenge to get your tee shots within that range. You'll see even this year compared to last year, some of the tee shots have been brought in and the rough has been brought in on either sides. You've got bunkers that you can carry at 300 or 310 but the angle it's created is very, very tight and you're hitting into smaller win dose.

I think by forcing people to play more conservative off the tee, I think that helps the Europeans a little bit. So I think that's part of the strategy for next year.

**Q. Good to be on the top of the leaderboard on the first day?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it was good. The first ten or 11 holes were a little slow but I made eagle and that kick started my round and started something. I played well from there. I think I played the last seven holes at 5-under par and that was the key for today.

The tough is very tough. You have to keep it on the fairway here. Especially after the rain this morning, it just got even denser and even thicker. Yeah, if I can keep it on the fairway off the tee over the next three days, I should have a good chance.

**Q. Looking toward The Ryder Cup --**

RORY McILROY: We all went for dinner last night with Luke, Edoardo, Francesco, Thomas, Viktor, Matt, myself, Tyrrell, quite a few of us, and I think it was good. It was good to catch up and talk about the golf course and talk about -- Edoardo is doing our stats and for us to talk about what we excel at and what the Americans excel at and try to set the golf course up in a way that suits us more than them.

**Q. How was your game today, 4-under, it was good?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it was good. The last seven holes were good, but the first 11, not so good. I got off to a



slow start but started to play a lot better towards the end of the rounds. It was good. It was tricky. A lot of crosswinds and hard to hit the fairway. I thought overall standing after nine holes at 1-over par if someone said you're going to shoot 4-under, that's a bonus.

**Q. This is a good course for The Ryder Cup?**

RORY McILROY: It is. I think it will be. Again, a Ryder Cup in Europe, it's all about how do we set The European Team up to win and we lost pretty badly last time, so we maybe give ourselves the best chance. I think the way this golf course is designed, and then if we can set it up the right way, I think that sets us up to have the best chance possible.

**Q. You have 100 per cent record in Italy.**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, that would be a nice record to keep. 100 per cent is always good. Today is a really good start. It is, it's a great first day. I've got three more days and I think as the week goes on, I'll hopefully get more and more comfortable on this golf course, and hopefully on Sunday, I have another good chance to win.

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