

# U.S. Open Championship 2022

Saturday, June 18, 2022

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

## Rory McIlroy

### Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Rory McIlroy, 3-over 73. Rory, can you talk us through your round today?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it was one of the toughest days on a golf course I've had in a long time. I just needed to grind it out, and I did on the back nine. You know, to play that back nine at even par today was a really good effort, I thought.

Just kept myself in the tournament. That's all I was trying to do. Just keep hanging around. I felt like I did well to get it in under par for the tournament at the end of the day.

I holed some really good putts for pars coming in. 13, 15, great up-and-down on 16, good putt on 17. Then was really fortunate at the last to get that drop from the grandstand and be able to hit it on the green from there.

It wasn't the greatest of starts, but sort of steadied the ship a little bit and happy to get it in a few lower than it could have been.

**Q. What shot were you considering on the 13th hole there on the left, and why did you ultimately end up making a different decision?**

RORY McILROY: That was all Harry. I was ready to hit a 4-iron and try to play it off my front foot and hit it up over those trees. He said to me, look, you could pull it off, but you could also make a 7 or an 8 doing it. He goes, why don't you play it out here, and we can try to get it up-and-down. That was huge.

That's the benefit of having a good caddie and someone that's strong and -- he said to me, look, just go here. Don't even think about it. For once I listened, and it paid off, and I was able to make a good par.

**Q. Was today more about what you left out there, or more about how you held it together?**

RORY McILROY: I think more about how I held it together. I think it was sort of like a tale of two sides. I left some out there on the front nine, but I held it together on the back,

and I think at the end of the day it evened out. I felt like a couple of bad breaks on the front nine, but then I got a really good break on 18.

It all sort of -- it all evened out at the end of the day, but I'm sort of going home thinking that I held this round together when it could have got away from me quickly.

**Q. Your putter suddenly seemed to have developed a case of the chills in the first six, but then it was red hot again after.**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I just haven't putted in this much wind in a while, and I hit a couple of putts today that I read and didn't play the wind, and they got hit by the wind, and then you're in two minds: Is this next putt going to be hit by the wind, or is it not?

Yeah, it was just one of those -- it was hard. I haven't played in conditions like this in a little while. It wasn't like it was that windy in Canada or Memorial.

I guess it sort of -- it reminded me of the Saturday at Augusta a little bit, but maybe just a touch windier than that. Again, that's why I missed those putts early on. I was sort of in two minds about whether to play wind or not, and then on the back nine I sort of got a little more used to putting in these conditions, and that helped.

I started to play the wind a little bit on the putts, and the wind was definitely affecting them.

**Q. Rory, maybe a couple of years ago this would have seemed like a round that could have gotten away from you. What skills do you have now that allowed you to hang in there?**

RORY McILROY: I think I'm a better putter, so that helps. You know, whenever you're giving yourself these 10-, 12-footers for par all the time and you're stepping up and making them, that's huge.

Yeah, look, I've always -- it's not as if I haven't been able to play good golf in bad conditions before, but I think in situations like this and like yesterday where the run could

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have got away from me, I just dig in there a little bit more. I guess I'm always trying to look for the positives. I'm always trying to think, okay, you can maybe birdie one of the next three, and then you've got a par-5 coming after that.

I'm always sort of trying to look at the positive side of things and be optimistic. Yeah, in this game of golf you need to be an eternal optimist. (Laughing).

**Q. I know there are limits to this, but given how difficult that golf course is, is it almost irrelevant how far back you are at the end of the day knowing that things can change so quickly?**

RORY McILROY: I don't think it's irrelevant, but it's maybe not as important as some other weeks. Like I know guys aren't going to go out there and shoot the lights out. I mean, 67 from Will out there today is unbelievable. Such a good score. 68 from Fitz as well.

I think depending on the conditions tomorrow, that's what it's going to take. From me it's going to take something like that to get the job done, but as we've seen today, things can change so quickly.

I certainly thought I was going to be a few shots further back than I was at the end of the day, but Jon struggled there coming in. Even though it was such a tough day and feel like I battled well and whatever, to still only be three back going into tomorrow I feel is a good thing for me.

**Q. When was the moment today when you knew the course was going to be playing just brutally difficult?**

RORY McILROY: Probably my second shot on 1. (Laughing). I landed it maybe 5 or 10 on the green. If you look at my shot yesterday into that hole from the left rough, similar, it had a little -- it stopped pretty quickly and left myself 15 feet below the hole for birdie.

Had a similar shot today, and the thing just bounded through the back of the green. That's when I knew the golf course had turned a little bit.

**Q. Rory, can you just talk us through what happened on 18 there from your reaction when you hit the drive to then getting relief to then that approach shot?**

RORY McILROY: I think it just got -- it was getting dark. It was getting cold. It was windy. I felt sort of uncomfortable with my swing most of the day, and then I just hit another -- made another poor swing and hit a bad tee shot.

When I saw it up there, I was, like, oh, no. Then I saw the rules official standing beside it, and she said, well, you can

get relief if you think you can get your ball from where it is back around and in line with the pin. I said, well, I can hit a draw pretty good, so, yeah, I think I can do that.

Then she said, then you're entitled for relief, and then I took relief. I still had to hit a pretty big draw around that tree, but it was a huge break. If that grandstand hadn't have been there, I'm sort of just chipping out, and a 4 would have been a real -- 5 was probably the score I would have made, and to have a putt for birdie on that hole was huge.

Yeah, it was fortunate. I said earlier I felt like a couple of bad breaks on the front nine, so that break on 18 definitely made up for them.

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