

U.S. Open Championship 2026

Friday, June 19, 2026

Southampton, New York, USA

Shinnecock Hills Golf Club

Rory McIlroy

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Rory McIlroy, 1-over 71 today. A bit of a tale of two nines. Can you just talk us through the round out there?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, got off to a very solid start. As you said, 2-under through eight holes. Had a good chance for birdie on 9. Let that one slip away.

Then, yeah, the back nine was a bit of a battle. Started with, you know, three bogeys in a row to start the back. Couldn't stop getting myself to hit it over the back of the green those three holes and then played pretty good from there on in.

That one mistake on 15, bad chip shot from over the back. But you know, the wind felt like it was laying down first the first few holes. Then it certainly got back up again, sort of around when we made the turn.

I thought we were going to get away with it and get some easier conditions, but the back nine was very, very tough. So, you know, I think anyone on this side will feel like they got the rough end of the draw, but still feel like I'm in the tournament and in with a decent chance.

THE MODERATOR: You're still sitting in the top 10. What's the game plan when you show up tomorrow morning for the weekend?

RORY McILROY: It seems tough. I mean, you know, it's not as if you can go and chase on this golf course. You just got to play super solid and hit fairways and hit greens and take your chances when they present themselves.

But, you know, I made two bogeys to finish yesterday. I made three bogeys in a row today and a double. You know, just try to limit the mistakes a little bit over the weekend, and feel like I'm playing well enough to pick off a few birdies here and there.

Q. How did you see the course changing over the course of your round? What do you think that holds for tomorrow?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, certainly fairways started to run out a little bit more. The greens were still receptive, but there were certain shots that surprised me with how much they run out. Even like the shot I hit into 17, definitely took a decent bounce forward.

So they were starting to dry out a little bit, so I would expect them to sort of keep trending in that direction, as we get into tomorrow and as the weekend goes on.

You know, I think the weather has been perfect. They've got everything back on track, so I'd say people should expect the Shinnecock they've gotten to know over the past couple of decades.

Q. Rory, what happened on those three shots 10, 11, 12, for you?

RORY McILROY: 10, honestly I was a little too close to the green. I think I had 82 yards adjusted, like, 77, up 5. So, like, hitting not a full shot up to that very elevated green. The wind was sort of down off the right. I went down the grip on a lob wedge. Also, I was near a drain, and it was a little soft. The turf was a little soft around there. I was almost afraid of chunking it, so I was trying to clip it and not take a divot, and I thinned it. It was a tricky shot, but no excuse to hit the shot that I did.

On 11 I saw Tommy and Ludvig come up short. They hit pitching wedge, and I hit pitching wedge and just made sure to get it up in the air. I hit a good shot and it got carried in the wind a little bit too much.

Then on 12, same thing. I pulled my wedge shot a little bit. It pitched where I wanted it to pitch, but it just got the downslope of the back of the green and went through. You know, three shots that -- okay, I'd say the shot on 10 deserved to end up where it did, but I didn't feel like the shots on 11 and 12 sort of deserved to end up where they did.

But that's this golf course and the margins are so fine.

Q. Also, I was walking with you out there. It seemed

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like you got very unlucky lies out there. Maybe you caught a break on 14, but other than that, it seemed like Shinnecock didn't smile your direction.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I don't want to sit up here and say I'm so unlucky and whatever, but yeah, look, it ebbs and flows. You get some good breaks, and you get some bad breaks. You just hope that they all even out by the end of the week.

Q. I feel like setup is kind of the buzz word at major championships these days, but when you look at the leaderboard and the fact that some major champs shot 77, some shot 65, how would you grade the setup so far through two days?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think the setup has been good. I think that's more -- I think that's more a reflection of the golf course rather than the setup. I would say that the storyline over the first two days hasn't really been the setup. It's been the golf course.

Yes, they've had to set it up in some ways quite benign because of at least the expected wind yesterday that materialized for some part but not all of the day.

Then today was, I would say, a typical day here at Shinnecock where the wind was, you know, 15 to 20, gusting to 25 to 30. But I would say less players in the weekend, starting a little bit later, you know, I think you'll start to see the golf course dry out a little bit and ramp up.

But I didn't really think there was any, like, borderline pins. I thought they've done a good job so far over the first couple of days.

Q. Rory, how far back is too far back at a U.S. Open on this course, do you think?

RORY McILROY: I mean, I don't think -- I think Brooks was pretty far back going into the weekend in 2018. So, yeah, if there's a course where you feel like you still have a chance if you're seven back going into the weekend like I am, it's definitely this one.

Q. I know you said it's tough to be aggressive at a course like this on the weekend, but I guess is there a mindset that you're looking to have, given that you're right now seven shots back when you think about tomorrow and then Sunday?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think, you know, and this is -- when you are chasing, it's sort of counterintuitive, but for me if I can limit my mistakes, I know that everyone else in the field is going to make bogeys, so if I can limit my

mistakes and pick off a few birdies here and there, I think that's -- hole a couple more 20-, 25-footers than other guys, that's really the strategy.

Again, you can't go chasing pins around here. You can't try to be too aggressive, because once you do that -- you know, today for me was a prime example. I was a little too aggressive to the pin on 11, a little too aggressive to the pin on 12. All of a sudden just two bogeys in a row out of nowhere.

I think you still have to play smart, try to keep the ball under the hole, hit it into the middles of the greens and take your chances when they present themselves.

Q. Has it been more of an emphasis on putting? It feels like most of the guys that are playing well are high up on the putting stats. Is that something that you expected?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think lag putting over-indexes here. If you look at the statistical breakdown, I think outside of 30 feet and inside of 6 are sort of like the two ranges that are really important.

So, yeah, but I think that goes for most U.S. Opens.

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