

# The 151st Open

Mixed Zone

Friday, 21 July 2023

Rory McIlroy



**Q. Talk about coming in under par with that finish today.**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, important. Certainly important to me. I got off to a great start. Was a couple under through 9, and then gave those shots away on two of the sort of easier holes on the course, 11 and 15. But it was nice to at least get one of them back on 18 there.

Yeah, it played tough. It played really, really tough. 10-under par is unbelievably impressive out there. We'll see what the weekend holds. But after two days I'm actually pretty happy with my two days' work.

**Q. Nine back at the halfway stage, how are you feeling about your challenge for the weekend and what do you think you'll need to do to try and win this?**

RORY McILROY: I don't think I have to do anything differently. I'm hitting the ball well from tee to green. I've missed a couple of chances on the greens. The wind got me today. It's hard sometimes in two minds whether to play the wind or not to play the wind.

But that stretch like 12, 13, 14, those greens are quite exposed, and you sort of have to play the wind a little bit.

Nine back, I might be nine back, but I don't think there's going to be a ton of players between me and the lead going into the weekend.

Depends what the conditions are tomorrow. Obviously depends what Brian does, as well.

Right now it's not quite out of my hands, but at the same time, I think if I can get to 3-, 4-, 5-under par tomorrow going into Sunday, I'll have a really good chance.

**Q. Gone are the days when people used to say that conditions (indiscernible) you seem to have every sort of gear in terms of playing hard courses in difficult conditions, and there could be some of those over the weekend. Are you prepared for that or are you going to almost welcome it?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think with the way I've been able to flight my iron shots, yeah, I think the week last week in

Scotland was great preparation for what we faced the last couple of days.

But yeah, I've felt more comfortable in the wind over the last few years, and I feel like I can perform in all sorts of conditions.

Whatever it throws at us over the next couple days, I feel like I'll be prepared for.

**Q. There seems to be a case that this is a course more like Carnoustie than maybe 20-under at Troon, something like that. Is this course shaping up in your mind as being one of the better ones for you?**

RORY McILROY: I mean, I'm not -- I don't really like to play favourites or feel like one style -- certainly maybe 10 years ago a certain style suited my game better, but I feel like I've become pretty adaptable to all conditions that we play in.

**Q. As somebody who's pretty tight with JT, he's been struggling a little bit. I'm curious if you empathize with him on that, if that's an illustration of how things can come and go?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, JT will be just okay. JT is one of the most talented guys out here. He shot 69 at TPC a couple years ago in like 40 mile-an-hour winds, and I always remind him of it, but I always go back to that, and if JT can put that sort of display on in those conditions, yeah, we all go through bad patches.

That's golf. There's not one player in the world that hasn't. But he's got the right people around him, and he's got the right work ethic to get himself out of it.

**Q. The R&A altered bunkers a bit. Did you notice that?**

RORY McILROY: I did. I mean, I hit a 4-iron into the 4th hole, 5th hole today, and it pitched on top of the bunker and came back in, and I thought it was going to be -- like I didn't know at this point that they'd made that little gradual rise up into the face, and when I got up there, I was pleasantly surprised that I had a shot.

Yeah, I wouldn't say there's one person in the field that wouldn't welcome that change.



**Q. You've slept on big leads in majors; done so successfully. What are the pressures of it?**

RORY McILROY: Not getting ahead of yourself, not thinking about what could happen or what should happen or what you're going to drink out of the Claret Jug. You just have to stay in the present and stay in the moment.

Brian is a pretty laid back unflappable sort of a guy, so I think he'll be okay.

**Q. How well do you know Brian? Seems like he's playing pretty well.**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, he's been playing great. He's been doing some good work with Justin Parsons, and yeah, he's been up there on leaderboards over the last few weeks. He was up there last week, I think, as well.

I don't know him that much, but obviously I've played a bit with him on Tour, and I think his ball flight and sort of the way he plays the game definitely suits this style of golf.

**Q. What do you expect from yourself over the next few days in terms of scores, or what would you like to see out of yourself?**

RORY McILROY: I think more of the same, patience, hitting fairways, hitting greens, making good decisions. If I can do that and have a good attitude towards it all, that's what I expect of myself.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports