

PGA Championship

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Quail Hollow Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning. Two-time PGA champion Rory McIlroy joins us now at the 107th PGA Championship.

Welcome to your 17th PGA Championship. It's been a memorable year for you so far to say the least. How do you feel this week heading into a place where you've had quite a bit of success?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, always nice to come back to Quail Hollow, for obvious reasons. I have obviously great memories from this place. First win on the PGA TOUR 15 years ago. Winning last year, I probably played my best golf of the year last year here, especially at the weekend.

Look, it's been an amazing 2025. There's been a lot of great golf played, but there's still a lot of golf left to play this year. I'm excited for the journey ahead. Looking forward to this week. Hopefully the weather clears up a little bit and the course can dry out a bit.

Excited to tee it up in another PGA Championship and give myself another opportunity.

Q. Xander Schauffele said recently that the prospect of you playing in majors without the burden of chasing the Grand Slam was scary. Do you see yourself as scary, or how would you describe your prospects going forward?

RORY McILROY: I'm just the same person. No, look, I turn up and try to have the same attitude and the same approach to each and every tournament and try to get the best out of myself. Some weeks that results in wins, and some weeks it doesn't.

As long as I approach every week that way, all I can do is go out there and try to play the golf that I know that I'm capable of. As I said, some weeks someone just plays better than you, and other weeks it's your time.

I've played over 400 events in my career. I've played a lot of major championships. I know how these things go, and

you've just got to go out there and play.

One of the things that I talk about with Rotella all the time is you just keep playing until you run out of holes, and hopefully by the time you run out of holes, whoever decided that 72 holes was the end of the golf tournament, hopefully your score is better than everyone else's.

Q. Or 73 holes at the Masters?

RORY McILROY: Or 73, yeah.

Q. Quick hypothetical for you: When you're looking at the four parts of the game, driving, approach, putting, around the green, if you were forced to trade one of those elements of your game for anybody currently playing, which would you choose, which part of the game, and who would you replace it with?

RORY McILROY: I wouldn't trade.

Q. If you were forced to.

RORY McILROY: But I'm not. (Laughter.)

Q. If I asked you what part of the game you admired in somebody else, who's somebody you admire putting, for instance?

RORY McILROY: I'm focused on my game.

Q. You said at Augusta that you were going to be playing with house money. Can you describe what it's like, how you feel now that you are playing with house money, and has the pressure of the Grand Slam been replaced by any other form of pressure?

RORY McILROY: Look, I have achieved everything that I've wanted -- I've done everything I've wanted to do in the game. I dreamed as a child of becoming the best player in the world and winning all the majors. I've done that. Everything beyond this, for however long I decide to play the game competitively, is a bonus.

Q. What do the wet conditions mean for the course,

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for the tournament, and does it favor you? There was always that sort of notion that this was good for you. Do you still believe that?

RORY McILROY: You know, yes and no. I think early in my career that these conditions favored me more. I believe that they favored me more.

But I believe that Pinehurst last year favored me. I believe that firm conditions favor me. I believe that any conditions that we play in, I have the abilities and I have the skill set to excel.

Q. Now that you've done the Grand Slam, do you have another North Star or ambition, one grand target which is motivating your career from here?

RORY McILROY: Not necessarily. I think everyone saw how hard having a north star is and being able to get over the line.

As I said at the start of this press conference, if I can just try to get the best out of myself each and every week, I know what my abilities are; I know the golf that I can play. And if I keep turning up and just trying to do that each and every week, especially in these four big ones a year, I know that I'll have my chances.

I've always said I'm never going to put a number on it. I've talked about trying to become the best European ever or the best international player ever or whatever that is. But again, that's not -- the numbers tell one story, but it's not -- mightn't be the full story.

I don't want to -- I feel like I sort of burdened myself with the Career Grand Slam stuff, and I want to enjoy this. I want to enjoy what I've achieved, and I want to enjoy the last decade or whatever of my career, and I don't want to burden myself by numbers or statistics. I just want to go and try to play the best golf I can.

Q. When you know a course as well as this one, how does your preparation change for the week, and is it a little different coming back here for a major, as opposed to coming back here for a Wells Fargo in your mind?

RORY McILROY: I thought it was going to feel different just because it was a major championship, and I got out on the golf course yesterday, and it felt no different than last year at the Wells Fargo.

The rough is maybe a little juicier. But fairways are still the same cut lines and same visuals. It doesn't feel that much different.

I think everyone's preparation has been somewhat hindered this week because of the weather. I decided to fly home from Philadelphia on Sunday night. I spent a day in Jupiter, got a couple hours' practice at home at the Bears Club before I came up here on Sunday meaning. I feel like I prepared the best way that I could.

I played the front nine yesterday. I'll play the back nine today. Yeah, it's not as if I don't know this place. I think it's a matter of just making sure that every part of the game feels in a good spot.

And yeah, because we all know this golf course so well, it's not as if you're going to glean anything new from a strategy perspective. It's just a matter of stepping up and hitting the golf shots when the gun goes on Thursday.

Q. Is the strategy the same in how you attack the golf course, or does that change, as well?

RORY McILROY: No, I think it's the same, especially with how soft it is. I think you have to be super aggressive off the tee, and then you have to pick your spots going into the greens.

Q. Looking back to 2010 here, I know it was 15 years ago, but what do you remember from that week, and how important was that win really for you at the beginning of your career here?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I wasn't even supposed to play this tournament in 2010. I had missed the cut at the Masters, and I was struggling with a bad back.

I went and got an MRI scan when I went home, and it showed some, like, edema and stress around L4-L5, and the doctor told me it's probably better if you rest for a few weeks and not play.

The weekend before, I played a round of golf at Royal Portrush, and I played really, really well, and I was sort of -- I felt like my back was feeling a little bit better, and I came over here excited. I came over here excited to play.

I didn't play so good in the first round, and it was my first, sort of like my rookie year as a member on the PGA TOUR. So I had the opposite tee times; so I was playing in the afternoon but off the 10th tee on Friday. I needed to play the last three holes in 2-under par just to make the cut, and I eagled 7, hit a 4-iron into 15 feet, holed that, and then I two-putted from about 60 feet on 9 to make the cut.

Then I played with Scott McCarron on Saturday morning. I went out, shoot 66, and it got pretty tough in the afternoon



and got me into the top 10.

I was excited about that, and I remember on the Saturday night, there was a big boxing fight on. It was like Manny Pacquiao or might have been maybe Floyd Mayweather, and we went to the Del Frisco's there in South Park and we watched it at midnight or whatever it was in Vegas; it was 9:00 p.m.

I remember getting to bed at like 2:00 a.m. I remember I woke up the next day, playing with Anthony Kim, and I went out and played one of the rounds of my life and won my first PGA TOUR event.

Yeah, I remember I got off to a pretty decent start, and then I birdied 11, and that's when I thought, okay -- and it was the first time ever where I got myself -- I'd been playing pretty well that year but not as well as this. I set myself a target score.

I think I birdied 11 to get whatever it was in the tournament, and I said, Okay, if I can get to like 13-under par, I might be able to win this. I think I got to 13-under par playing the 15th hole.

So then it was just a matter of trying to do what I needed to do. It was an amazing day. It feels like such a long time ago, but at the same time I can remember that.

I think those important things, the first -- whether it's your first win or first major whatever it is, those things stay with you, and I think part of the reason that I've played so well here since is I had such that positive momentum, those positive memories, and every time I come here, I just have -- those good feelings get rekindled. It's been a good place for me.

Q. I'm assuming that your reaction on 18 at Augusta was a bit of an out-of-body experience. I'm wondering as you look back on it, what your emotion is when you look back at that and your recollection?

RORY McILROY: Yes, I've tried not to watch it a lot because I want to remember the feelings and I want to -- I've talked about this before, but I think when I rewatch a lot of things back, I then just remember of the visuals of the TV rather than what I was feeling and what I was seeing through my own eyes, so I haven't tried to watch it back too much.

But anytime I have, I well up. I still feel like I want to cry.

Yeah, it was an involuntary -- I've never felt a release like that before, and I might never feel a release like that again. That could be a once-in-a-lifetime thing, and it was a very

cool moment.

Q. You talked about the different venues where you've played well, you feel like you're a good rain player, then a good hard-and-fast player. Could you talk about how you got to this evolving mental attitude to be able to do that, and how much has Rotella helped you get through some of that?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think I talked about this at the Masters press conference, but statistically I had my best season in 2019. I won THE PLAYERS. I won the FedExCup. I had a good season.

But I felt like my performances in the majors were disappointing. I wrote in my journal or my notebook that I wanted to try to change that, and I wanted to become -- I wanted to try to tailor my game around the four biggest tests of the year, and I wanted to be known as someone that excelled at the hardest venues.

So I set about, okay, what do I need to do, what aspects of my game do I need to get better at, and I think a lot of it had to do with mentality and embracing the toughness of a U.S. Open test, for example.

So I missed the cut at the U.S. Open 2016, 2017, 2018, and if you look at my results since then, I haven't finished outside the top 10 in the U.S. Open, and that was a real effort.

I wanted to be known as a player that could excel in those toughest environments, and even though I haven't won a U.S. Open since then, my performances have been a lot, lot better.

It was really about trying to retool my game in some ways, trying to master some shots that I hadn't quite mastered and probably haven't still mastered, but I've got better at them.

And then just, yeah, the attitude thing is a big thing. Working with Rotella pretty consistently since 2021, I've sort of went on -- we've worked on and off for quite a while but really consistently since '21, has made a big difference.

Q. Bryson said after the final round at the Masters that you barely spoke to him because you were so locked in. I wonder about your perspective on that, and if you've had a chance to speak to him on Sunday.

RORY McILROY: I don't know what he was expecting. We're trying to win the Masters. I'm not going to try to be his best mate out there.



Look, everyone approaches the game different ways. Yeah, like I was focused on myself and what I needed to do. That's really all that it was. It wasn't anything against him or against -- it's just I felt that's what I needed to do to try to get the best out of myself that day.

Q. When you're playing practice rounds in wet and soft conditions, what is then the difficulty of having to make an on-course adjustment as the greens will eventually firm up come the weekend?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I tried to hit a lot of downhill putts yesterday just to try to feel what the speed of the greens might be like towards the tournament days.

But yeah, it's a little different. The chip shots are reacting a touch differently. The sand is firm so you're probably getting a little bit more spin out of the bunkers. It's probably not a true representation of what we're going to face this week in the tournament days. It looks like it's going to dry up, especially at the weekend.

I think it's just about getting more familiar with -- or refamiliarizing yourself with the greens. We sort of all know where the pin locations are going to be, too. So certain hole locations and hitting chip shots or putts from where you think the ball is going to finish; it's more of that.

But these three days probably won't be a true reflection of what we're going to face during the tournament.

Q. Just wondering, what's it like to achieve the dream of a lifetime? Was it different than you maybe expected it would be, and is one dream of a lifetime enough for any man?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's everything I thought it would be. I think the outpouring of support and congratulatory messages has been absolutely amazing.

Look, everyone needs to have goals and dreams, and I've been able to do something that I dreamed of for a long time. I'm still going to set myself goals. I'm still going to try to achieve certain things. But I sit here knowing that that very well could be the highlight of my career.

That's a very cool thing. I want to still create a lot of other highlights and high points, but I'm not sure if any other win will live up to what happened a few weeks ago.

Q. As a winner of all four, if you think back to Kiawah and Valhalla, what's it like when they hand you that Wanamaker Trophy and you go to lift something that feels like it's got two bowling balls in it?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's nice for the pictures because your biceps are usually flexed. So it makes you look a bit stronger than you actually are. But it's very cool. It's a very cool trophy. And you know you've beat one of the strongest fields, if not the strongest field, of the year.

It's a huge championship in our game with a lot of history.

Q. Did you know it was that heavy?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, it looks heavy. It's big. I didn't know how heavy it was, but it's pretty meaty.

Q. Did you lose the top one year?

RORY McILROY: Ted Bishop lost it, I think. Ted was the one that dropped it. I caught it.

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