



Rory McIlroy

Press Conference

Friday, April 11, 2025

THE MODERATOR: Rory, good afternoon. I'd like to welcome Rory McIlroy back to the media center.

Rory shot a bogey-free 66 today, four birdies, one eagle. Great round, Rory. I'd like to open it up to questions.

Q. Just saw you glancing at the leaderboard. When you look at the top of it and see those names, what are your thoughts?

RORY McILROY: I was just looking for my name. I was not really worried about the others (laughter).

Q. Can you take us through the 13th hole and kind of your decision from the pine straw and what you were thinking when that ball was sailing through the air?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I only had -- I think it was like 189 front. So it was -- I don't think it was really a decision to go for it or not, but it was -- I was between a 4- and a 5-iron. And usually the ball comes out of it spinnier out of the pine straw. So I hit a 4-iron, and the follow-through, definitely I saved it, and I was glad that I hit 4-iron. I covered that little corner there.

But yeah, when the ball was in the air, I was like, you idiot, what did you do? It's one of those ones, as well, it's a pin that even if you do hit it into the hazard, it's a pretty -- not a routine up-and-down, but it's a little easier than, say, where the pin was yesterday in that front section.

Yeah, I rode my luck a little bit with that second shot, but was nice to take advantage of it.

Q. Your career has had so many great moments. You've had some tough moments. Just wondering about the emotions. Yesterday, that great round, the two double-bogeys at the end, obviously not very good, and today this remarkable round, you're in this wonderful position right now. How do you feel after having a big bump, already being in this great position midway through?

RORY McILROY: I think overall just proud of myself with how I responded today after the finish last night. I just had to remind myself that I played really good golf yesterday, and you know, I wasn't going to let two -- you know, two bad holes sort of dictate the narrative for the rest of the week.

But yeah, just ultimately, yeah, just proud of how I got back into it today.

Q. Can you walk us through 15 yesterday, and then compare that to making birdie there today?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, you know, I hit two good shots into 15 yesterday, and I felt like I hit a pretty good chip shot. I was really surprised at not so much the speed -- I knew it was a fast chip; I've hit that chip a hundred times around this golf course -- it was just more the first bounce was so firm. I mean, that green is so much firmer than any other green, even the other -- the three newer greens.

And like at that point, I didn't know that, you know, a couple of people had done that before I did it, as well.

Yeah, and then I actually -- you know, I was obviously surprised that I had done that. And I forgot that I could try to play it again. I went straight to the drop zone, and then afterwards, I was thinking, like, oh, I could have tried to just chip that again.

But I was, you know -- it was just one of those things where, you know -- I think that's the thing. I was so frustrated last night because I played so well, and you can make these big numbers from absolutely nowhere on this golf course, just like the most benign position.

So it was a good reminder. It was a good reminder last night that you just have to have your wits about it you on every single golf shot. And then today, when the second shot was in the air, it was a little touch and go. Even where the ball finished sort of on the slope, I was thinking of running to mark it to make sure it wasn't going to run back down the hill.

It was nice to make a 4 there. I guess just keep the momentum going that I had built up through those previous holes, 10, 11, 13.

Q. Bryson was saying that he's working on a lot of stuff. You've hit a lot less balls this week. Are you working on anything, or is it all systems are going this week?

RORY McILROY: Working on trying to get the ball into the hole as fast as possible. That's basically it.

Q. How about your thought process from the pine straw on 14 going high?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it was a poor tee shot. But I was fortunate to have a gap, and it was a perfect window. I had 9-iron out at the start, but I -- you know, the wind started. When the wind gusts here, it really just funnels down a lot of the holes.

So it was funneling down, so I switched to a wedge. And it was a perfect lie in there. I could get spin. Yeah, it was -- you know, I got lucky with that. I rode my luck a little bit on 13 and 14 and 15 and thankfully got away with it a little bit.

Yeah, I think those are the sorts of things that you need to happen in major championships, and, you know, I feel like it got a little unfortunate yesterday in some parts, and I got a little fortunate today.

Q. It's a little off-topic, but 72 to 66 is a great improvement. Nick Dunlap shot 90 yesterday --

RORY McILROY: I did not know that.

Q. But he's 3-under today. How do you guys do that? How do you turn things around?

RORY McILROY: I think you'll have to ask him. It reminds me of a story at Memorial the other way. I shot 63 the first round at Memorial in 2014 and backed it up with a 79. And I came in to have lunch, and I saw Jack there. And he said, "How the hell did you shoot 16 shots more today than yesterday?"

So it's just, you know, like championship golf, it can be volatile. The conditions can be tough. You can just start -- and the momentum can start to go the wrong way on you.

But, you know, we're all great players. We're playing in the Masters. You know, we're all capable of shooting good scores.

Q. In here yesterday morning, Jack, Gary and Tom were asked who they thought would win and who they would like to win, and you've probably heard that they said you. How does that make you feel?

RORY McILROY: They are getting old (laughter).

Q. Talk about resetting last night and how it might be different now than it would have been a year ago, two years ago.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, you know, I sort of just tried to leave -- once I left the property last night, I just sort of tried to leave what had happened here.

You know, I rushed out of here to get home to see Poppy before she went to bed. So that was sort of nice to get to see her before she went to sleep.

Yeah, I guess that's something that I didn't have a few years ago, to be able to get home and have that sort of, you know, take my mind off the golf a little bit.

But yeah, I just -- I feel like I just did a good job of resetting. I had a good conversation with Bob Rotella this morning, mostly around not pushing too hard too early and trying to get those shots back straightaway. And you can sort of see how I started today with eight pars and a birdie on the front nine. I just tried to stay really, really patient.

I feel like that patience was rewarded with a nice little stretch there in the middle of the round.

Q. To yourself and to the world, what did you prove today?

RORY McILROY: I don't think I proved anything. If anything, I just backed up the belief that I have in myself, and I -- and the belief that I'm as resilient as anyone else out here.

You know, again, like I've -- I've been really proud of how resilient I've been the whole way throughout my career, and I think today was just another example of that.

Q. Where would you say your mindset is right now compared to where it was yesterday at this time after your round?

RORY McILROY: Not as frustrated, obviously. But I mean, it's -- it's only -- it's only halfway. You know, we've got 36 holes to go on a very, very tough golf course. Anything can happen. You know, and all I'm focused on is trying to hit a good tee shot in the fairway on the first hole tomorrow.

Q. I just wonder how energized you are right now after what you did today following yesterday as you look forward to the weekend and you see how close you are at the top of the board.

RORY McILROY: Pretty tired. It was a quick turnaround. This course takes it out of you physically and mentally, more so than most other golf courses.

I wouldn't say I'm too energized. I'm ready to get some food and chill this afternoon and get a good night's sleep.

Q. I just mean the prospects of the weekend, getting back into this thing, when probably last night you were probably kicking yourself.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I guess -- I mean, I think more just excited for the opportunity. Yeah.

Q. You spoke to us a couple of days ago. You said that you were ready -- well, you suggested that you were ready to kind of embrace heartbreak. I know we're only halfway there, but do you feel like you've already done that this year?

RORY McILROY: Like at this tournament?

Q. Yeah.

RORY McILROY: Not at all, no.

Again, golf tournaments are so long, and there's so much that can happen, even in the next 36 holes.

My mindset was, I shot even par yesterday. I probably need to get to somewhere between 12- and 15-under to win this tournament. You know, there was plenty of time to do that.

So yeah, again, just about staying patient.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you very much, Rory. Thank you, and have a good week.