



# Rory McIlroy

## Press Conference

### Sunday, April 13, 2025

THE MODERATOR: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a privilege to welcome our 2025 Masters Champion, Rory McIlroy.

Congratulations on winning the 89th Masters in dramatic playoff fashion. You've now completed the career Grand Slam.

Please share with us your thoughts at this moment.

RORY McILROY: I'd like to start this press conference with a question myself.

What are we all going to talk about next year? (Laughter).

Look, it's a dream come true. I have dreamt about that moment for as long as I can remember. I mentioned it out in the prize ceremony, but watching Tiger here in 1997 do what he did, and then winning his first green jacket, I think that inspired so many of my generation to want to emulate what he did.

You know, there were points in my career where I didn't know if I would have this nice garment over my shoulders, but I didn't make it easy today. I certainly didn't make it easy. I was nervous. It was one of the toughest days I've ever had on the golf course. In a funny way, I feel like the double bogey at the first sort of settled my nerves.

And it's funny, walking to the second tee, the first thing that popped into my head was Jon Rahm a couple years ago making double and going on to win. So at least my mind was in the right place, and was at least thinking positively about it.

But just a complete roller coaster of a day. It felt -- it was very tricky out there. It almost felt more like a U.S. Open than a Masters at some points just with how firm and fast the greens got. But yeah, just really proud of how I bounced back from the double on 1, from the double on 13. I don't know if -- I don't know if any Masters champions had four doubles during the week, but maybe I'm the first. But yeah, just a complete roller coaster of emotions today.

And honestly, you know, what came out of me on the last green there in the playoff was, you know, at least 11 years, if not 14 years of pent-up emotion. You know, since 2011, I think it's so ironic, as well. I got to my locker this morning and I opened it up, and there was a note in there from Angel Cabrera, and just wishing me luck. And Angel Cabrera was the player I played with on the final day in 2011, it was a nice touch and a little bit ironic at the same time. It's been 14 long years, but thankfully I got the job done.

**Q. Well done, Rory.**

RORY McILROY: Thank you.

**Q. Expanding on that, and now you've done it, can you expand on the level of difficulty or torture of what it's like coming**

**back here every year, people speaking about you winning it and not doing it, and I suppose you probably couldn't say things at the time that you thought. How difficult was that in reality?**

RORY McILROY: It's very difficult. I think I've carried that burden since August 2014. It's nearly 11 years.

And not just about winning my next major, but the career Grand Slam. You know, trying to join a group of five players to do it, you know, watching a lot of my peers get green jackets in the process.

Yeah, it's been difficult, and I've tried to approach this tournament with the most positive attitude each and every time that I've shown up, and I think just the sort of cumulative experience that I've gained coming back here each and every year, I just I feel like I get a little more comfortable with the shot needed. I talked about it at the start of the week, but you know, there's talking about it and actually doing it.

And yeah, today was -- today was difficult. I was unbelievably nervous this morning. Really nervous on the first hole, as you witnessed with the double, but as I said, that sort of calmed me down and I was able to bounce back and show that resilience that I've talked about a lot.

Yeah, look, it was a heavy weight to carry, and thankfully now I don't have to carry it and it frees me up and I know I'm coming back here every year, which is lovely.

**Q. No extraordinary achievement comes easy, right. So can you describe how hard you've worked for this, and how you've managed to keep the faith?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, look, you have to be the eternal optimist in this game. You know, I've been saying it until I'm blue in the face. I truly believe I'm a better player now than I was ten years ago.

You know, it's so hard to stay patient. It's so hard to keep coming back every year and trying your best and not being able to get it done.

You know, there was points on the back nine today, I thought, you know, have I let this slip again? But you know, again, I responded with some clutch shots when I needed to, and really proud of myself for that.

But yeah, just -- yeah, it's been an emotionally draining week for a lot of reasons, a lot of just roller coaster rounds and late finishes. And so just, you know, absolutely thrilled to be sitting here at the end of the week as the last man standing.

**Q. You just said it, where at times today you thought you let it slip by. Can you talk about before the double at 13 when Bryson was clearly falling off and you pretty much on your own, what happened in your mind when that happened and you saw all those guys coming after you?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, I thought I played the 13th hole smartly, at least for the first two shots, 3-wood off the tee, laid it up into a good position.

I had 82 yards to the pin. It had went into a little valley and it was on the upslope. And usually when I hit wedge shot off upslopes, they come out a little bit left on me. I gave myself like a couple of yards of room to the right. I wasn't aiming at the creek, but it came out, you know, a little weak and a little right, and that was -- you know, to make a double there, when it's a birdie chance, and then seeing what Rosey was doing, and also what Ludvig was doing at the time, as well.

But at the same time, I knew I had 15 to play. The bogey didn't help on 14, either. But I still felt like -- I still felt after the tee shot on 15 that I was still in it.

I think the one hole that I was not worried about but was sort of in the back of my mind was 16 because that was an unusual Sunday pin on 16, probably for the 50th anniversary of Jack holing that in '75. So that's the one, it's a very difficult location, and to hit the shot that I did; I think the iron shots that I hit coming in, 15, 16, 17, not quite the last in

regulation, but in the playoff, I made a lot of good iron swings.

I think over the last I don't know how many years, it seems that the people that lead approach at this golf tournament are usually the ones that go on to win or have a very good chance. I think my approach play for the most part this week was very good.

You know, that showed on the last few holes.

**Q. If you could go back in time and see yourself here on Sunday night in 2011, what would you see and what would you say?**

RORY McILROY: I would see a young man that didn't really know a whole lot about the world. I would -- yeah, I'd say I probably would see a young man with a lot of learning to do and a lot of growing up to do, and also -- so I would -- and maybe I probably didn't understand myself. I didn't understand why I got myself in a great position in 2011, and I probably didn't understand why I let it slip in a way. But I think just having a little more self-reflection.

You know, that experience, going through the hardships of tough losses and all that, and I would say to him, just stay the course. Just keep believing. And I would say that to any young boy or girl that's listening to this. I've literally made my dreams come true today, and I would say to every boy and girl listening to this, believe in your dreams, and if you work hard enough and if you put the effort in, that you can achieve anything you want.

**Q. For those of us who will never know what it's like to step up on the first tee with a two-shot lead at the Masters with a career Grand Slam on the line, can you walk us through what you were feeling, how did the nerves manifest? What were the bodily sensations you were feeling?**

RORY McILROY: What tee?

**Q. The first tee.**

RORY McILROY: Oh, the first tee. Yeah, everything that you would -- knot in your stomach. Haven't really had much of an appetite all day. Tried to force food down.

Yeah, your legs feel a little jelly-like, and those nerves that are natural, and they are all good things. If you weren't feeling like that, I think that's more of a problem than when you do feel them.

It's such a battle in your head of trying to stay in the present moment and hit this next shot good and hit the next shot good. You know, that was the battle today. My battle today was with myself. It wasn't with anyone else. You know, at the end there, it was with Justin, but my battle today was with my mind and staying in the present.

I'd like to say that I did a better job of it than I did. It was a struggle but I got it over the line.

**Q. Did anybody ask you about the second shot on 11 yet?**

RORY McILROY: Not yet.

**Q. Okay. I feel like when you win golf tournaments, when anybody does, you need a few good breaks. I feel like today on 5, not only having the shot to get it out of there but also where your ball ended, and when you look at what happened to you on 11, could you see that ball stop? And if you could, what was going through your mind when you saw that ball stop almost on the bank?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, look, I've rode my luck all week. And again, I think with the things that I've had to endure over the last few years, I think I deserved it (laughter).

So, yeah, anytime I hit it in the trees this week, I had a gap. Even the second shot on 7 today, which I probably shouldn't have taken on. Harry was telling me not to. I was like, "No, no, I can do this."

So I rode my luck all week, and you need that little bit of luck to win these golf tournaments. I didn't see the ball on 11, but I heard the sort of groan of the crowd as it was rolling towards there and then the cheer when it stopped, and I obviously saw it.

Actually, Bryson hit his shot in the water, and I was looking at my ball thinking, like, should I run down and hit it? Should I go down and hit it out of turn to make sure it doesn't roll in? But I got down there, and it was on a little flat spot, so it was okay. But yeah, was quite fortunate.

**Q. Back to 7. It looked like after that shot, your body language really changed. You even, I think, tipped your cap to Bryson or somebody.**

RORY McILROY: Dottie.

**Q. That shot and also the shot on 15, even though you didn't make the eagle putt, it looked like a huge draw. Can you take us through the dynamics of both shots? Because they are kind of ironic, I think, of the day.**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so 7, I had problems all week with the 7th, 14th and 17th tee shots, all going that direction for some reason. I just had -- I just struggled seeing tee shots.

When I hit it left, you know, I knew where the pin is -- or I knew where the pin was. I knew that the front bunker wasn't bad. I could have chased it up into the front bunker, but I saw a gap, and I was like, I can actually get this on the green, and if it goes in that little bowl, it could go close.

It was actually a very similar shot to the shot I played yesterday on 7 from the right trees, just opened up a 9-iron and hit it as hard as I could. To be able to pull it off was pretty cool even though I didn't hole that putt either.

15 was an advantage. I had 8-iron in my hand, and Bryson hit first and hit it in the water. The breeze had freshened up, so I switched back to a 7 and then hit that shot. It was one of those where I knew it was enough to cover, and if it turned it, great, and if it didn't, you're sort of in that right trap and it's not an easy up-and-down, but it's a decent miss.

So that was -- that was the sort of mindset on that one.

**Q. Can you describe the internal feeling of joy and relief when you hit your knees on the 18th hole when it was over in the playoff?**

RORY McILROY: It was all relief. There wasn't much joy in that reaction. It was all relief. (Laughter).

And then, you know, the joy came pretty soon after that. But that was -- I've been coming here 17 years, and it was a decade-plus of emotion that came out of me there.

**Q. What did you say to Justin and vice versa?**

RORY McILROY: I just -- I congratulated him on a great week. I said, we -- it's ironic how these things happen. We were invited to a dinner by a few members of the club on Tuesday night, and we were the only two players at that table, and we are the ones that end up being in the playoff. It's funny how these things work.

But he's a great champion. He has displayed so much grace throughout his career. You know, selfishly, I was happy that it was another Euro in the playoff. We're on a good run at the minute. We're Ryder Cup year and all that.

But yeah, you know, Justin is a great champion. And I remember watching the playoff in '17 when he went up against Sergio, and that didn't quite go his way, either. But he's had a phenomenal record around here, and I feel for him a little bit because he's been so close.

Yeah, he's a good friend, and yeah, hopefully he has a few more opportunities.

**Q. Quick detail. What's the size of your jacket?**

RORY McILROY: I think it's a 38 regular.

**Q. How did you regroup after missing the putt on 18?**

RORY McILROY: After scoring, Harry and I were walking to the golf cart to bring us back to the 18th tee, and he said to me, "Well, Pal, we would have taken this on Monday morning."

I'm like, "Yeah, absolutely we would have." That was an easy reset. He basically said to me, look, you would have given your right arm to be in a playoff at the start of the week. So that sort of reframed it a little bit for me.

Yeah, again, I just kept telling myself, just make the same swing you made in regulation. And I hit a great drive up there, and yeah, the rest is history.

**Q. And what would you say has been the low point during this drought?**

RORY McILROY: There's been a few. It's hard because, like, I've played so much good golf. It's hard to call the second-place finishes and the -- St Andrews was a tough one to take because you only get a few opportunities there, you know, during the course of your career.

The U.S. Open last year was awful. But yeah, the losses are hard, and you know, again, just so proud of myself that I keep coming back and putting myself in positions to win these championships.

**Q. You made 30 3s this week.**

RORY McILROY: Is that good?

**Q. Yeah, that's good. And there were a couple of other numbers in there, too.**

RORY McILROY: A couple of 7s.

**Q. How did you navigate the second nine? Was there a lot of positive talk? How did you just get through the up and down of the second nine?**

RORY McILROY: So when I birdied 10 and bogeyed 11, which was fine, and made a good 3 on 12, hit it where you're supposed to hit it, 2-putt and move on.

Walking to the 13th tee, I was thinking, I can play the next three holes in 4, 4, 4. That's what I was thinking. Didn't quite materialize that way. But I was really just trying to break it down into threes. I felt like I played 10, 11, 12 well. I was trying to play 13, 14, 15 well. Didn't quite materialize. I played 16 and 17 well. Didn't feel like I played the 18th badly, and had a chance to win in regulation.

But yeah, I just basically broke it down into three-hole stretches.

**Q. Earlier this week you were asked about Jack and Gary Player and Tom Watson all picking you and rooting for you, and you deftly deflected the question. I wonder now if you can speak to the burden that comes with history, the burden that comes with fellow greats or guys you want to count yourself amongst. What does that feel like?**

RORY McILROY: It's tough. You know, you've had Jack, Gary, Tom, Tiger, you name it, come through here, and all say that I'll win the Masters one day. That's a hard load to carry, especially -- it is. It really is.

You know, these are idols of mine, and it's -- look, it's very flattering that they all come up here and they believe in me and they believe in my abilities to be able to win this tournament and, you know, achieve the Grand Slam and all that.

But it doesn't help, you know. (Laughter) I wish they didn't say it.

But, you know, I think as well, as the years have went on, I've just become more accustomed to the noise that sort of surrounds my whole Masters week and I've become a little more comfortable with it.

**Q. Curious what you think the best shot you hit today was, and why you feel that way?**

RORY McILROY: The best shot I hit today was -- it could be the second on 7, but I think the most -- one of the most important ones for me was the second shot on 3. You know, I started 6, 5. Hit a good tee shot on 3. That's not an easy second shot, bumping it up that hill. To judge that well and make a 3 there, when Bryson then made 5, and then to go ahead and birdie the next hole, as well, I thought that was -- you know, it was very early in the round, but it was a huge moment.

**Q. You and Harry grew up together in a tiny town playing childhood games together. What does it feel like to have him standing beside you today when you achieved that childhood dream?**

RORY McILROY: Eamonn. Yeah, I've known Harry since I was seven years old. I met him on the putting green at Holywood Golf Club. We've had so many good times together. He's been like a big brother to me the whole way through my life (tearing up).

To be able to share this with him after all the close calls that we've had, all the crap that he's had to take from people that don't know anything about the game, yeah, this one is just as much his as it is mine.

He's a massive part of what I do, and I couldn't think of anyone better to share it with than him.

**Q. Congratulations. I wonder if you can talk us through your plans for tonight and the next few days. I can't imagine you'll be finishing that John Grisham anytime soon.**

RORY McILROY: I don't know. I'll stay here tonight. I'll probably head home to Florida tomorrow. I'd really love to see my mum and dad. They are back in Northern Ireland. So maybe a trip back home at some point next week.

**Q. Will you be taking the green jacket to Old Trafford?**

RORY McILROY: If it can inspire some better play, absolutely.

**Q. Where does this rank amongst the best days of your life, and how proud of yourself are you?**

RORY McILROY: It's up there. I'm not going to compare it to life moments like a marriage or having a child.

But it's the best day of my golfing life. And yeah, I'm very proud of myself. I'm proud of never giving up. I'm proud of how I kept coming back and dusting myself off and not letting the disappointments really get to me. Talking about that eternal optimist again. Yeah, very proud.

THE MODERATOR: Before we go, can you take us through the clubs?

RORY McILROY: Sure. The birdie on 3, I talked about. It was a little chip bump-and-run up the hill with a lob-wedge.

I hit a 5-iron on the fourth hole.

The ninth hole, I hit like a three-quarter lob wedge in there.

10, I hit 8-iron.

15, I hit a 7-iron for my second shot approach, and then on 17, I hit an 8-iron.

THE MODERATOR: And in the playoff?

RORY McILROY: And in the playoff, I hit a gap wedge, yeah.

THE MODERATOR: Well, Rory, thank you and congratulations.

RORY McILROY: Thank you so much. Thank you.