



**Rory McIlroy**  
**Chairman Fred Ridley**  
Butler Cabin Interview  
Sunday, April 12, 2026

FRED RIDLEY: Rory, you now join only three Masters champions to successfully defend their titles: Jack Nicklaus, Sir Nick Faldo and Tiger Woods. What makes this win so special?

RORY McILROY: I just can't believe I waited 17 years to get one green jacket, and I get two in a row. It's just sort of the way -- I don't know. I think all of my perseverance at this golf tournament over the years has really started to pay off. It was a tough weekend. I did the bulk of my work on Thursday and Friday. But just so, so happy to hang in there and get the job done.

**Q. Just how hard was it with that six-shot lead on Friday night, co-leader after 54 holes, you lose the lead early today, and again, you once again fight back?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it felt pretty similar to last year. I made a double early on the first hole last year. I made a double on 4 this year. Then I played flawless golf after that. I made four birdies and no bogeys going to the last tee knowing that I had a two-shot lead. It's nice to have that two-shot cushion instead of the one like I had last year.

I looked at the board after I made the bogey on 6, and I think I went back to 9-under at that point, and I said, okay, if I can get to 14-under, I think I've got a really good chance of winning this tournament. I didn't quite get there. I got to 13. But 13 was good enough standing on the 18th tee.

**Q. What was the key shot if you had to identify one? You made a birdie at 12 but only three there today. Was there one that really stood out in your mind?**

RORY McILROY: I think the tee shot on 12 and then the tee shot on 13, just to give me the option to go for the green in two. I struggled with that tee shot all week. I was up in the pine straw there one too many times, and I made a really good committed swing off the 13th tee, and that enabled me to go for the green in two. To make a birdie there following the birdie on 12, that was massive.

**Q. How special was it this year for your mom and dad to be here to witness this?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, incredible. It's the second major my mom has been at, second major win. She was at The Open at Hoylake in 2014.

There was a piece of them that didn't want to come this year because they thought, okay, we didn't come last year; maybe that was the reason. But I'm so glad that they got to experience this today. I'm going to -- we're all going to have a great time tonight.

**Q. Did you scoreboard watch at all out there today?**

RORY McILROY: I did. I felt like I needed to, especially after the rough start. I needed to know where I was in the tournament, and after the 6th hole I was like, okay, if I can get back to even par for the day, which I did with the birdies on 7 and 8, I knew I was going to be right in there going into the back nine. I was keeping an eye all day.

Yeah, thankfully there was a few guys that made a run but nothing like what Justin did last year with that 66. Some good play by me, and unfortunate the guys didn't really come at me this year either.

**Q. Throughout our coverage today we had a live shot at Hollywood Golf Club, and wait until you see the celebration that was going on there around midnight tonight. Any message you'd like to send back home to everyone?**

RORY McILROY: Just thank you for all the support. I was a little kid with a dream, and the support that I have from my family, my friends, everyone back home, some people probably thought it was outlandish to dream the things that I wanted to do, but I had amazing support from back home, and can't thank them all enough for that continued support.

FRED RIDLEY: Rory, you continue to be a wonderful champion, and we look forward to watching you compete and wearing the green jacket here at Augusta National for many years to come. It will be my honor to place the green jacket on you once again.

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