

Genesis Scottish Open

Wednesday, 9 July, 2025

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



BRIONY CARLYON: Delighted to welcome back Rory McIlroy to the Genesis Scottish Open.

Rory, obviously a lot of history has been created and you've got great history here in Scotland at this event having won in the past and this is the first time you're back on this side of the pond since completing the career Grand Slam. How nice is it to be back around familiar faces and in Europe?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it is lovely. Got over to this side of the Atlantic a couple weeks ago trying to get settled into our new place down in Wentworth. Yeah, it's been really nice. It's lovely to get back up here and start to play a little bit of links golf. It's a great week to shake any competitive rust off; obviously with one eye looking ahead to next week at The Open.

Yeah, great to be back. This is a tournament and a golf course that has grown on me over the years. You know, I don't think I started out too well here but learned how to play the course a little bit better. Obviously had that great finish in 2023. Played well again last year.

Looking forward to getting out there tomorrow and getting going.

Q. I enjoyed your "good player in any era" comment yesterday hitting that persimmon have you ever given much thought to that, like how your game would have suited in the '70s and '80s?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, I'd like to think of myself more as an artist than a scientist when it comes to the game. But I think in this generation at this point with TrackMan and biomechanics and all the technological advances, I think -- again, I think my perception of myself as an artist. But I think with the way the game has went over the last 20 years, we are probably are more scientists than we are artists.

I'd like to think that I have the game or adaptability to do well in that era with that equipment.

Q. You spoke about getting back across to this side of the Atlantic and so much going on in your life and everything that's happened, but do you have a freedom when you come back here, almost kid-like to get back to being the young guy and playing golf in the summer the sunshine and the links? Can you be that young kid again and get free of all the other stresses?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think the one thing I would say about the last couple of weeks is I felt like I could detach a little bit more and sort of hide in a way. And sometimes you need that to completely get away from -- I feel like this world of golf can become all encompassing if you let it.

But I think if you remove yourself a little bit from that environment, Justin Rose and I came up here together yesterday and we were just chatting about the -- I don't know, there's a detachment from the sort of week-in, week-out grind when you get back over here, when you play PGA TOUR golf for that sort of first 25, 30 weeks of the year. We were sort of talking about that yesterday on the way up here.

Yeah, look, it's been lovely to get back and see some familiar faces, and as Briony said, it's the first time back playing in the U.K. since what happened at Augusta, which that's a really nice feeling, as well.

Q. When you think back to when you were a kid, how enjoyable was it this morning when a young lad had waited there since seven o'clock to walk up that 6th hole with you? How satisfying is that still for you after all you've achieved in the game?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, to me, it doesn't seem that long ago that I was standing in line to get autographs at The World Match Play at Wentworth or the World Golf Championships at Mount Juliet or whatever it is.

I remember how happy I was when a pro threw me a golf ball or if they signed my hat or whatever it was. Yeah, it's lovely to be able to do that for people and, it obviously doesn't -- it's not like I'm doing anything different. I'm just sort of going about my day. You know, it's nice to be able



to have that effect.

Q. You told us 12 months ago you had not had a holiday for a while. Now that you've got the Grand Slam in the pocket, will you take a little bit more time to enjoy life? Because it is a grind; you talk about the grind on the tour.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think I've done a good job of that since. I missed the cut at Troon and went straight to Portugal; so that was my first holiday.

But then, yeah, I think over the past 12 months, one of my New Year's resolutions was to have more fun, and I've really tried to do that. So whether it's me and a bunch of friends went to Dortmund in January and watched the Borussia Dortmund v. Bayer Leverkusen game; we then stopped off in Istanbul for a night off on our way over to Dubai. Poppy's starting to learn how to ski, so we went to Montana in February and took a skiing holiday.

Yeah, I think there's opportunities throughout the year that you can do these sorts of things. I think now at this stage of life that I'm at, I'm actually trying to build my schedule around those weeks instead of the other way around, trying to sort of fit them in here or can I take four days off.

It's more, no, these are going to -- not take the priority, but they are going to become more important in scheduling the year, and yeah, then fit the golf tournaments around those.

Q. I was out with Matt Wallace yesterday in the Pro-Am and he mentioned that amateurs don't quite understand how good you guys are, in particular, he mentioned you and Scottie, and how easy you guys can make the golf course look. Just how difficult is it to stay on top of your game for a long period of time, and how much does it take out of you and how do you keep on top of it, basically?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think it's one of the underappreciated things about any sport. You look at what Djokovic is doing at Wimbledon over the last couple weeks or what some of those guys have done or what someone like a Cristiano Ronaldo is still doing at 40 years old, or Tom Brady in American football; that longevity piece is something that maybe isn't talked about enough.

Because once you get to a certain level, I feel like the journey on the way up is almost -- it's not -- I'm not going to say it's easy but you have to momentum and you're riding that wave to the top.

And then once you get there, yeah, it takes just as much work, if not more work, to stay there. Because I think

about my career before I won this major this year, the last major I won in 2014, I had never heard of Scottie Scheffler.

So these talents and these players just keep coming and keep getting better each and every generation, and I think you have to adapt your game to make sure that you're able to hang with these generations, and I feel like I'm one generation ahead of Scottie, for example, who is still in his 20s.

You see all these younger kids that are coming up, the likes of a Michael Thorbjornsen or Luke Clanton or these guys that basically are ready to play at the top level coming out of college, and you have to make sure you're staying on top of what makes you such a great player.

But you also have to look at the trends and see, okay, well, the guys that are playing well, what are they doing or what are they -- is there something that I need to add to my repertoire to keep trying to stay ahead of them.

So I think that is a very important piece of it, and this is -- you know, it's my 18th year or tour. I've been winning professional events for 16 years, and I just think my drive to keep trying to get a little bit better or trying to look for little holes in my game that I can tidy up, I think that's a big piece of it.

Q. I just wonder if I could ask you to reflect on what an incredible past 20 years it's been for golf on the island of Ireland, obviously with your major successes and the other guys, but also the fact that The Open is going back to Royal Portrush next week. In years to come, historians are going to look at that period and see it in an incredible light, I would imagine. I wonder what your reflections on that would be.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, look, Pádraig Harrington got the ball rolling. He won the The Open in 2007 at Carnoustie, and he obviously won the back-to-back majors in 2008. I think the other Irish players looked at that and that gave them belief.

G-Mac goes and wins the U.S. Open in 2010. I remember being at home in Northern Ireland after missing the cut that week watching him do what he did at Pebble Beach, and I played basically all my practise rounds with G-Mac at that point, and I thought, well, if he can win the U.S. Open, then there's no reason why I can't.

And then I go and I win the U.S. Open the next year, and then you see, you know, Darren Clarke go and win at St. George's. I just think that having people that you're close to and your peers do something that you may think is a little bit out of reach gives you that belief that you can do it.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

And I think just that momentum that we all had at that period of time and in conjunction with the R&A looking at Royal Portrush to potentially host The Open Championship again, and then for it to go there -- I think it's Irish golf and the players that have come through and how well that we've done.

But I also think it's a great representation of how far Northern Ireland has come in the last 30 or 40 years because in the 70s and the 80s and the 90s, no one would have dreamt of hosting an Open Championship in Northern Ireland in those times.

So I think it's a testament to the people of Northern Ireland for how far we as a country have come, as well.

Q. I was going to ask something similar about Portrush, and obviously a lot of it occurred before your time, but you seem to have a good perspective on just how far that has come, and the idea that it's not only hosting one but now two in a short amount of time from where it came from. Do you have a good sense, maybe from your dad even or people that you grew up with or older than you?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I lived a little bit of it. But I was -- I think my generation, honestly, couldn't care less about what had happened in the past. Everyone's just looking forward.

Yeah, my Mum and dad both grew up in the 60s and the 70s and Northern Ireland was a very different place. Yeah, I feel very fortunate that I'm of the generation that I am that I didn't have to deal with any of that or very little of it.

Yeah, it's come a long, long way, and I think just the support of -- I think people really appreciate when a huge sporting event that the world's eyes are on that week, everyone there really appreciates that and excited to show the country in the best light possible.

Q. In terms of this week, seems to be a tournament that's getting bigger and bigger and the field stronger and stronger, would that suggest this is more than just a buildup to next week?

RORY McILROY: Absolutely. I think there's a lot that sets this tournament apart.

I think a few of the changes that were made to the golf course over the years, I think the majority of the field like the golf course a little better than, say, back in 2019, for example. I know that Pádraig Harrington has made a few little tweaks here and there.

Then I think the fact that it's become a co-sanctioned event, I think that's a big -- especially for some of the top guys in America, to come over, knowing that they are playing an event in Europe but they are getting FedExCup points, it's sort of crunch time in that race, as well, so that's a big part of it.

Having a great sponsor like Genesis that has put a lot of money behind this event, and both tours in general, with the genesis Invitational over in California. You know, personally for me, they are a supporter of TGL in America, as well. They have put a lot of the money behind golf. So I think to have a really good, stable sponsor hike that helps tremendously, as well.

And you see the social posts of the American guys going out and playing North Berwick at nine o'clock at night and all that, I think that has a certain appeal to some guys, as well.

Logistically, as golf tournaments go, this couldn't be any easier. You stay on site. The range is really good. The course is benign enough that you don't feel like you're getting beaten up before The Open Championship. I just think all that together, it makes for a recipe for a very good golf tournament.

Q. You want to win the Masters, you and everybody, basically, and if you don't, then you've got next April and next April, etc. But what is it like when you would like to win as a pro in your home country, and you have so few chances? How many times has the Irish Open been at Royal County Down?

RORY McILROY: Twice. It's been twice. I think it's the same thing. If venues in golf matter to you, it maybe puts a little bit more pressure on you.

So yeah, I would love to win an Open at Portrush, absolutely. I would love to win an Open at St Andrews. I would love to win a U.S. Open at Pebble Beach. I'd love to win a PGA at PGA Frisco -- no. (Laughter).

But it's like there's venues in the game that just mean a little bit more. Frisco might get there one day, who knows.

But yeah, and I think, as well, having Portrush from home and the experience I had there last time, you know, I want to, the Friday was amazing, the Thursday, not too much.

It's a little like Djokovic won the Olympics last year, he knew that was doing to be his final chance, and you saw the emotion and you saw how much it meant to him. You think about it, and you can't pretend that it's not there. But



when you are on the golf course, you just have to go out there and play as if you're not playing at home and just play as if it's another golf tournament.

But yeah, it obviously is a little more -- it has a little more, like, emphasis. There's something extra there, just like there is at an open at St Andrews or a U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, for example.

BRIONY CARLYON: Rory, thank you for your time.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports