

BMW PGA Championship

Tuesday, 9 September, 2025

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference

TOM CARLISLE: Thank you for joining us here at the BMW PGA Championship, delighted to welcome Rory McIlroy. How special is it to come back to a venue where you've had success in the past?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it is. I feel like I'm playing two home events in a row, and being as a resident here now, as well.

Yeah, it's good to come back, even since the win here in 2014, I've had a lot of close calls to get my name on the trophy again. 2018 was second to Francesco. 2022, I think, second to Shane. But I think if it was four rounds I would have got him. And obviously last year, getting beaten by Billy in the playoff. But I've had a good run here at Wentworth.

I'd say relationship with this golf course wasn't great at the start of my career, but I finally sort of figured it out. I love coming back here and playing. I think it's one of the best events of the year. It's one of the best atmospheres. It gets pretty -- quite rowdy at the weekend, which it's cool to play in that atmosphere and I look forward to another great week.

TOM CARLISLE: Saw you on the range this week. Does that highlight the importance of preparation over the next few weeks?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, last week was great and I won, but it doesn't change anything. I'm using this time to prepare for what's coming in a couple weeks' time. Yeah, I wanted to get out there. I wanted to get on the golf course and familiarise myself with the place.

Yeah, might as well take advantage of the good weather over the last couple days as well. Might get a bit of rain tomorrow and during the course of the week.

Q. You talked about what's coming obviously in a couple of weeks. As a leader on the team, how do you go about making a rookie like Rasmus feel comfortable and make him able form?



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RORY McILROY: Yeah, so I think the good thing about Rasmus is he really was a part of our team last time in Rome. Obviously his brother played but Rasmus was a part of the backroom team, so he was around the team for the entire week.

Obviously it will be his first time playing but he's at least got experience in terms of what the week is like, what the cadence of the week is like. Obviously in a way, Ryder Cup is a little bit different, as well.

But Rasmus has been around for quite a while now even though he's still very young. I think at this point, he's very comfortable with all of us. I've obviously made it known to you guys and to them, as well. I think they are very talented brothers and I think they have a lot of potential in the game. You know, but he doesn't need me to tell him that. He knows his potential and how good he is. He qualified for the Ryder Cup Team which is a hard thing to do.

In terms of making him feel comfortable, we all walk into that team room as he equals and we walk out of that team room as equals. He needs to see himself on the same level as Jon Rahm, myself or anyone else. We are just 1 of 12. We are just 1 of 12, and when we walk in there, we hopefully will make the collective group stronger, and I think Rasmus probably got a sense of that from Rome last time.

Q. You said the other day that Harry only has one of the four majors. Is that a motivation for you to keep winning a full set, and how special has it been to have him on the bag this year?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it is. Look, I don't think I need any extra motivation to try to win major championships, but I think doing it with him definitely adds something more and is very special.

Look, we've done a lot in the game together. We've won Ryder Cups. We've won FedExCups. We've won Ryder Cups. We've won players championships. We've won the Masters. We've done a lot in the game. It's not like I'm trying to give him new experiences but at the same time last week winning with him on the bag or winning the

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Masters, that -- you have to ask him, but it certainly means a lot to me that my oldest friend and the guy that I can talk to about anything is there beside me when I'm doing these things.

You know, even like last week, it was cool seeing the images of us together, him caddies for me 20 years ago at the 2005 Irish Open. Fast forward 20 years, we are still on the course and striding the fairways together.

Yeah, like, I'm excited about what the future holds, and excited that hopefully Harry is going to be part of that journey besides me, unless he feels he can get a better bag, but hopefully have another few good years left.

Q. Two or three years ago, you talked about the likes of the Højgaards and Bob being the future of the Ryder Cup from a European perspective? How pleasing is it that they have risen to the challenge? Because at that time they still had a lot to prove in that sense.

RORY McILROY: Absolutely, but I think, as I said, we all knew these guys had a lot of potential. But they have went out and they have earned it.

Bob has turned himself into one of the best players in the world, a really gritty competitor. It was Nicolai last time in Rome and Rasmus this time in New York, and probably we weren't even talking about Ludwig at that time because he was still in college.

Yeah, it's great to see. I think I said this week, but you could make an argument that the 12 guys that we have going to New York are more accomplished golfers than they were two years ago when most of us were in Rome. But it is. It's amazing that those guys have stepped up and filled those spots that have been vacated by some of the older guard that have moved on at this point.

Yeah, I will be one of those older guards that's going to be moving on here in the next decade or so, and I'm sure there's going to be great European talent coming to take my spot as well.

Q. I watched the conclusion with my mom on Sunday, and I happened to mention you're off to India and Australia in the winter, and she said, Oh, is he off backpacking and kind of laughed. You've been on the hamster wheel for 20 years. Is there any sense that this the golfer version of that, the backpacking trip?

RORY McILROY: I want to go and play in different places in the world and experience things that I haven't experienced before. 20 years into a year, or 18 years, to be able to do things for the first time. So go to India and

play for the first time or whatever that may be, that excites me.

You know, going back to the -- I don't want to name a tournament, but you're going back to the same place, the same thing 15, 20 years in a row, it can get a little bit monotonous and a little bit tedious.

To mix it up and do these things -- I had a chat with Roger Federer, I don't know, a few years ago sort of at the end of his career and he was saying he wanted to go and play a lot of the places he could never play in his career. So some of the smaller 250 events just because not a lot of people had never seen him play tennis before.

I think as time goes on and I get to this stage of my career, I get excited about doing that sort of thing.

Q. And one other quick one, the faces of those children we saw on Sunday, I think you came here as a child. Was there any similar moment you experienced?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I came and watched The World Match Play here in 1999, 2000, 2001. It was always during sort of half-term, October. My mum and dad would bring me over and I would run around this golf course twice. I would run 36 holes and watch the maps.

Yeah, same thing. I remember Sam Torrance throwing me his golf ball. I remember Mark O'Meara throwing me his golf -- yeah, things like that. I think that's why I have such an affinity for this place is because I had that experience as a child, and I've got great memories from here.

But yeah, I mean, even the image, I threw that little girl a ball. It's a very cool feeling to think that -- it's not like it's some great gesture. I'm handing a kid a ball, but what it can do for them, and if that makes them a fan of golf for life or makes them want to get into it or play it more, that's a really cool thing.

Q. Said you said last week it wasn't a necessity to win before the Ryder Cup. Now that you have, how much of it is build on the win, how much of it is preparing for the Ryder Cup and how much of it is spending time with your teammates, as well, this week?

RORY McILROY: I think it's probably a blend of all of those. I think there's still some things in my game that I want to tidy up. I think there's always things in my game I want to tidy up regardless of what I have just won. You're always trying to find ways to see if you can get better.

But also, I think it's important this week to put in a good



performance because that will give you confidence going into the Ryder Cup. It will also hopefully provide you with more of a cushion in The Race to Dubai going into the back end of the year.

And then, yeah, spending some time with teammates, whether that's tonight we have a dinner or what the pairings are Thursday and Friday, I'll probably get to spend some time with a couple of them on the golf course. I think it's a bit of everything.

But first and foremost I want to play well because confidence-wise I want to be in the right state of mind going into the Ryder Cup, and then I also think it's another good week and a good opportunity to add to the win column but give myself that cushion looking towards the end of the year and The Race to Dubai.

Q. What is your version of the well-known Pete Cowen/Shane Lowry fat-kid-in-glasses story. Do you know the one I mean?

RORY McILROY: Yeah.

Q. Your version.

RORY McILROY: Of Shane?

Q. Well, of the story, really.

RORY McILROY: Of the story? I think at that point I didn't know -- Shane was a bit of a late bloomer. So I probably really didn't get to know Shane until we were like 17 or 18 years of age.

I think Shane always had -- you could always see the potential. He always had the hands. He always -- but I don't know if there was a moment. Obviously Pete is there and he was coaching us or he was brought in as a consultant for the golfing union of Ireland but obviously Pete has worked in a lot of world-class players over the years. He obviously has an eye for seeing these things.

But for me, look, Shane was the kid with the glasses that had a great short game. Like that was sort of it, yeah. You know, he's turned out to be obviously a hell of a player, major champion and a great competitor. I think that's the thing like that I respected more about Shane than anything else is just his grittiness and his competitiveness, and he cares a lot. I think that is a good thing 99 percent of the time, but sometimes I would say maybe he cares too much sometimes.

But yeah, he's obviously one of my best friends out here and carries himself so well, and obviously happy to play on

the Ryder Cup Team with him here in a couple weeks.

Q. Just talking about going to Australia and Federer, it sounds like you're thinking more on the back nine of your career, as it were, more closer to the end?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, absolutely, 36.

Q. Has that increased more since the Masters, that feeling?

RORY McILROY: No. I mean, if you go back to my quotes from -- I was asked about this at THE PLAYERS even before I won the players and I said the same thing. I don't want to be grounding out here at 50 years of age. I'll turn up and play the majors and have a nice time but you know, whenever I'm done, I'm done, whenever that is. That's certainly not right now, but I'm certainly closer to that point now than I was in 2007 when I turned pro.

Again, at this point I want to play golf when I want to play golf. I want to play in the locations that I love to go to, and I want to play the majors and the Ryder Cup. That's it. I'm not going to be going by minimums or anything else. Like I'll obviously do my bit to make sure I keep my membership and all that on certain tours, but I'm going to play where I want to play.

Q. After the Bethpage scouting mission, the time off, have got any plans to get away from it all and or will you go back to your place?

RORY McILROY: No. There's probably no point in going back to Florida. The golf courses there still aren't ready. They do a lot of maintenance over the summer. Greens will be soft and slow. I'll say we'll probably stay up around the area, play some of the golf courses around there for a few days, and then we'll all reconvene at Bethpage on Monday. But I think a lot of us are going to stay up around that northeast area.

Q. You mentioned at the start what the difference is or what the challenges of an away Ryder Cup have been. How hard is it, really, to go on an away Ryder Cup and win, and with that in mind, what will it mean to arrive with and ultimately depart with the trophy?

RORY McILROY: History would tell you it's very difficult. There's a reason that in the last decade, each Ryder Cup has went to the home team.

Yeah, look, it would obviously be great to bring the Ryder Cup back to these shores, and, look, we know how difficult it's going to be. We are under no illusion. I have complete confidence and Luke and his vice captains and the team

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that they have put together.

I keep saying this: We have a massive opportunity to do something that not a lot of Ryder Cup teams say that they have done. I have been lucky enough to be part of one Ryder Cup Team that won away. We have got a lot of people within that team, whether they are myself and Justin Rose that are playing, but then obviously you've got Francesco and Luke on the vice captain side that were there that played. So we have experience in knowing what it takes.

But I think we all know it's going to be very, very difficult, and you're not just playing 12 American golfers. You're also trying to get past the crowd, and that's the same thing that they feel when we come here and play in Europe. Just it definitely gives you a bit of an in-built advantage to start the week, and that's something definitely that we're going to have to overcome.

But I think it's a wonderful opportunity. I don't want to speak on behalf of everyone that's on the team but I would assume that we are all very, very excited for that opportunity.

TOM CARLISLE: Rory, thanks for your time.

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