

BMW PGA Championship

Tuesday, 15 September, 2026

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference

BRIONY CARLYON: I'm delighted to welcome the reigning Masters champion Rory McIlroy here to the BMW PGA Championship. Rory, back at Wentworth, a course that you love and have had some victories around here, how much are you looking forward to this week?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's always nice to be back, I guess even more meaningful now that we have a home here. It really does feel like a home event. I haven't always had the best of times around the West Course, but certainly over the last few years I've played well here, given myself some chances to win.

I feel it's a great event. A great field is always assembled, and we always play in front of an amazing atmosphere. Honestly, it's one of my favourite weeks of the year. Looking forward to getting going again.

Q. You're going for your eighth Race to Dubai title this year. I wonder how much motivation does that give you this stage of the season, and seeing Patrick Reed's name above yours, does that give you any extra motivation given the battles you've had with him?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, obviously I'm in a very fortunate position, I guess, to be going for an eighth Race to Dubai. I can't believe I'm sitting here with seven. So, yeah, I'd love to give myself a chance again.

Last week wasn't a great week for me in terms of the overall points. Patrick had a good week, and I didn't have such a great week. I'm going to try -- I'm going to have to try to make up for that this week.

I'm certainly motivated to play well for the rest of the year. Still working on some things in my swing, so just trying to have a balance between still keeping an eye on that but trying to play my best golf and give myself some chances to win.

It doesn't matter who's up there. I think being second right now and being a little ways off first, that's motivation



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enough to try to finish the year off well.

Q. Rory, you've spoken about the realisation that you've come to about focusing more on craft and processes, and hopefully the winning will take care of itself. Where would you say you are on that journey, and are you still enjoying the exploration of process and practice?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I am. I think you always need like an objective or a slightly longer term goal to then structure your practice and inform what you're going to do. I think if there's no real plan in place, you can get almost too curious and go down too many different avenues when looking on ways to improve.

But I think if you have a clear goal or goals in mind, I think it makes everything -- it would be hard if you're practising and not really able to quantify if you're moving towards that goal or if you're getting further away from it. So I think that's why -- and I've always been a bit of a goal-setter anyway.

But the goals are, I think in this period of the year for me, more about where is the club halfway back? Where is it at the top of the swing? Those are sort of more of the goals -- again, as I said, there's a balance there between goals from a practice standpoint and a technical standpoint and then goals from a playing standpoint.

Sometimes when you spend so much time on the practice and the technical side of things, trying to free yourself up and clear your mind of those thoughts and just go out and play instinctive golf, that's sometimes difficult to do. So that's the balance I'm trying to strike.

I still enjoy that side of the game. Golf is a game that is like an endless pursuit, and I don't think anyone will ever feel like they've mastered it. You're always trying to find ways to improve or ways to -- especially at this time of the year.

I think from the bulk of the season through major season, you're really just trying to manage what you have. Then there's these periods where you can maybe try to make some changes that set you up better for the year ahead.

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Q. With the rumored fall series between DP World Tour and PGA TOUR, I just wondered -- you've obviously travelled a lot recently, India, Australia, and places. Is there anywhere the Tour doesn't go or hasn't gone previously that you'd like to see it go or that you would like to go to?

RORY McILROY: I'm not sure. I guess I can only comment on the places that I've been and that I've enjoyed. I think it's great with this partnership with the Asian Tour again, we have the Hong Kong Open back and the Singapore Open back. I think they're tournaments that obviously are in a different part of the world, but they have quite a big ex pat community, and you can get quite a lot of people to those events that know golf and have been around golf. So I think it's good to have those two events back.

We haven't played an event in China since 2019. Whether we go back there remains to be seen. I think it's great we've got the DP World Championship in India at this time of the year. That field is going to be very strong in a month's time.

I'm trying to think. Australia, hopefully with the PGA TOUR and their schedule and maybe more of a commitment towards international golf at the end of the year, that will be built up and become a bigger event where I feel it should be in its stature and sort of sit amongst the big national Opens in the game.

Unfortunately, there's only so many weeks in a year, and it's hard to get to everywhere. Even like this year, Sun City and Australia are on the same week. So it's hard to be all places at once. But I think the DP World Tour does a great job of covering the places that need to be covered internationally, especially at this period of the year.

Q. Now that you've won two Masters in a row, what have you learned about picking yourself up to motivate yourself for the rest of the year, considering the emotional release that winning it could be?

RORY McILROY: It's -- I find it pretty difficult. I certainly found it difficult in '25. I don't think I found it as difficult this year, but there was still an underlying -- not for the major championships, but for some of the other events that you feel like you're just filling time to get to the next major championship in some ways, and that's hard because you don't want to feel like that.

You want to bring the best of yourself every week, of course you do, but when you have success earlier in the year, sometimes it can lead to that, or it certainly led to that for me at times.

But certainly I was better at it this year than I was last year. If I win the Masters again next year, hopefully I'm better at it next year. These are all good problems to have.

Q. Given the two disappointments Shane suffered earlier in the year and didn't make it to the TOUR Championship, was maybe under a little bit of pressure, how impressive was it for him to return to his winning ways? Could you imagine a Ryder Cup at Adare Manor without Shane involved? Still a long way to go obviously.

RORY McILROY: Still a long way to go. Like I said to Shane afterwards, on Sunday, form is temporary and class is permanent. He is that caliber of a player we all know he is. It was just a matter of him getting back to that point and winning a tournament.

I think him finishing it off in emphatic style the way he did, I think it will do a lot for him, and it will hopefully do a lot for him with how he approaches final rounds going forward because I think he would admit himself that final rounds have been a struggle over the last couple years for him.

But I think for him to go out, shoot 63 on the final day leading your national Open with all that crowd support behind you, he really went out there, and he grabbed the tournament by the throat and made it his. It was amazing to see.

He alluded to it on Sunday night as well. He's had some hard times this year, and we've had some chats and heart-to-hearts about it. All I can try to be is a good friend and provide encouragement and maybe provide examples of what I've tried to do in those circumstances.

Yeah, as I said, I think it was only a matter of time. It was amazing to see.

Q. Aaron Rai was in here just now saying how touched he was and how proud, I think, when he heard the remarks that you and Jon in particular had said about him after Aronimink. What is it that you like about him so much?

RORY McILROY: I don't think there's anything not to like. I think if we all had a little more Aaron Rai in us, the world would be a better place. I think just his humility, his humbleness, and his kindness, his work ethic, his dedication. He's the ultimate professional, but he does it all in the right way.

He's -- again, like I don't -- you walk up-and-down that range all day, you wouldn't find one person who had a bad



word to say about him. Yeah, he just does everything with class and grace and humility. He was a very deserving winner of the PGA.

Q. May I follow up with a completely different question? What is the best thing that has happened to you this year?

RORY McILROY: What is the best thing that has happened to me this year? Oh, my goodness. I would say winning -- not even winning the match, just having my parents at the Masters, getting to play with my dad that Sunday before. Yeah, I would say that was probably the best. Yeah, having them there was very special.

Q. Did you manage to see any highlights from the Solheim Cup, I wonder, and do you feel we're on something of a roll when it comes to team events given the last few weeks?

RORY McILROY: I didn't actually see -- I didn't see much of it at all. I saw the Americans drinking beer and chanting on the bus on Saturday night. That was interesting. I honestly didn't, but obviously a great result for the European side, after what we did in Bethpage, what the Walker Cup guys did. All we need now is the Internationals to do it in a couple of weeks. That would be great.

Q. I'm sure you know that they've announced the membership criteria for the new competitive structure on the PGA TOUR.

RORY McILROY: I just saw it. I was reading it as I was walking in here because I knew one of you was going to ask me about it.

Q. They said that they -- the only bit that's sort of a bit vague is they say they're not sure what to do with the top performers from the DP World Tour yet. It's been considered as part of the ongoing discussions as part of the future of the strategic alliance. Is that something to be worried about?

RORY McILROY: No, I don't think so. I just think it's a conversation about the PGA's structure has changed. There were 10 cards that were given out from the DP World Tour. I guess from my point of view I don't see any reason why a DP World Tour player would go to the Challenger Series. I don't see that as an upward move in your career. I see it as a very lateral move.

So it would just be, okay, how many cards is reasonable to give to the DP World Tour for the Championship Series? I would imagine that's sort of what they're -- what the

ongoing discussions are. But I guess from DP World Tour -- I mean, obviously I'm a dual member, but I just don't see --

I mean, you're really trying to create something on this Tour that is a viable alternative to the Challenger Series. Obviously this is going to be a pathway to the Championship Series. No one's going to argue that the Championship Series is going to be the highest level of Tour golf that you can play, and then it's just deciding what an adequate number of cards is to go from here to the Championship Series.

Q. Otherwise it could be seen as Division 3, couldn't it?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, as I said, I just don't see it as an upward move in your career. I see it more as like a lateral move. So why would you -- you would only give the opportunity to DP World Tour members if they were progressing in their career, and I don't see the Challenger Tour as a progression from the DP World Tour, and I would say a lot of players would feel similarly here.

Q. Rory, I don't think you can overemphasise how nice it is to sleep in your own bed in a tournament week.

RORY McILROY: It is. It's very nice. Don't get to do it very often anymore. I guess counting down a couple years ago here. No, it is. It's lovely. It's lovely to be here. Yeah, it is. It's our -- certainly our summer home, and it certainly feels like that.

Yeah, lovely to sleep in my own bed. Yeah, it's just good to be back at Wentworth. It's certainly one of my favourite weeks of the year.

Q. I've lost count how many tournaments you're a multiple winner of. Does it feel over the years you should be a multiple winner of this event by now?

RORY McILROY: I feel like I've had my opportunities to be a multiple winner. I had the win back in 2014, and then I've had my chances. I had a good battle with Francesco in 2018. I've had a few chances after that. I joke to Shane all the time that if the tournament in 2022 was four rounds, I would have got him.

Yeah, I've enjoyed a lot of good golf here and some success, but I'd love to get another win around here for sure.

Q. I know you can't be part of the scouting trip to Adare yesterday, but just a year out, I suppose the question is how hard do you think it is now to get into

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that Ryder Cup team? There is a spine to that team that seems they're just not going to shift. How many rookies could you anticipate in 12 months time?

RORY McILROY: I think rookies are going to -- if there's ever a place to blend rookies, it is in Europe. We saw that a little bit in Rome with Ludvig coming in, Nicolai, Bob. Maybe Bob is not -- anyways.

The thing that I preach around the European Ryder Cup team is there's this like continuity, and I think continuity between the captain, the players, the vice captains, like that's a big thing in a team environment.

Look, inevitably there might be some new faces on that team, but I don't think there's certainly not going to be wholesale changes. I think the nucleus of our team will remain the nucleus. You might have a couple maybe, but I'd say for the most part, as long as everyone plays well and stays injury-free, you're going to have a very similar looking team to what we've had the last couple times.

Q. Obviously a lot to shake out in men's professional golf at the moment, a lot of restructuring going on. Reading between the lines on the PGA TOUR release today, it seems there's going to be less of a strategic alliance down the road between the two Tours. Can you envisage a day where perhaps not exclusively playing the DP World Tour, but the majority of your schedule is playing back here on this Tour?

RORY McILROY: I'd love to envision a day like that, but to keep hold of your PGA TOUR membership, you need to play a certain number of events. Obviously the fields are deep, and you have to make sure you stay within that top 70 or 90 or whatever it is.

One day maybe. One day that would be really, really nice and finish my career where I started my career. That would be something that I would love to do. But right now while I'm in the sort of thick of things and what I feel is like still the prime, I'm just going to have to try to split my time as best as I can between the two.

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