

Hero Dubai Desert Classic

Wednesday, 25 January, 2023

Dubai, UAE

Majlis Course at Emirates Golf Club

Rory McIlroy

Quick Quotes

Q. Coming in here as world No. 1, how different are you as a golfing person from that 2009 Rory to the one that's here right now?

RORY McILROY: Hopefully not that much different. You know, we all get nostalgic when we think about our former receives or whatever. I'd like to think that I still have the enthusiasm for the game that I did back then. You know, that was my second full year on tour and everything was still sort of new and exciting. This is my 17th year coming back to the Dubai Desert Classic. It's been a while.

I would hope, to answer your question, I'm not too far removed from that 19-year-old in 2009. I feel like I still have a love and a passion for the game that people can feel.

Q. Last year, you returned to the top spot in the World Ranking, a testament to the consistency you have shown; major championships are always on the radar. Is there anything that you do differently this year to give yourself a better opportunity to start winning more of those trophies?

RORY McILROY: I mean, yeah, it's hard, because when you look at the -- you just look purely at the results of the majors last year, the Masters is the one that I did the best at but it's the one that I had the least chance in. I felt like I had a chance going into the last day of the PGA, the U.S. Open and obviously The Open as well. I just have to keep doing the same things. It's a shot here; it's a putt there.

And I think all of these experiences of knocking on the door, it sort of felt similar -- going back to 2009. I was knocking on the door for my first win as a pro. I was beaten in a playoff in Crans, I was beaten in a playoff in Hong Kong, I had a chance to win in South Africa. I was knocking on the door, and I think all of those experiences, you learn something from them.

And then as long as you can like get right back on the horse and try to rectify what mistake you made or what you can learn from, like that's sort of the process I feel like I'm



going through again trying to win a major that I haven't won coming up in nine years.

Q. Last year was a big political year for the game of golf and you were front and center for that. Do you feel like you delivered what you delivered on the course in spite are or because of what was going on?

RORY McILROY: I would say a little bit of both. I would say there was parts of it were because of, and other parts just in spite of. I think I said a lot last year, and I wanted my actions to match my words.

So there's no point in just being a mouthpiece when you can't back that up by playing good golf and showing people the rewards people can have out here if they are playing well. And it's a merit-based system. That's the thing that I've always struggled with: If a five-year-old boy or girl know that they work hard and they shoot the scores, there's a merit-based system in golf all the way through junior golf, amateur golf, all the way up to the professional level and they can make it to the top levels of the game.

And this is the one thing that's come into the game that has disrupted that, and you're not certain; you're not certain to play on that league or that tour. It's not a merit-based system, where I think golf has always been that, and I've always appreciated that about our game.

Q. Social media, big story that a tee peg was thrown your direction at Patrick Reed. That's the story on social media. From your point of view, what happened?

RORY McILROY: Nothing. Patrick came up to say hello and I didn't really want him to. In my -- from my recollection, that was it. I didn't see a tee. I didn't feel a tee. Obviously someone else saw that. But it's definitely a storm in a teacup. Obviously nothing -- I can't believe it's actually turned into a story. Yeah, it's nothing.

Q. There's also an element of naivete for someone to think he's doing what he is in the world at the moment; that everybody should be able to get on with what's happening.



RORY McILROY: Yeah, I was subpoenaed by his lawyer on Christmas Eve. So of course, trying to have a nice time with my family and someone shows up on your doorstep and delivers that, you're not going to take that well.

So again, I'm living in reality, I don't know where he's living. If I were in his shoes, I wouldn't expect a hello or a handshake.

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