

Hero Dubai Desert Classic

Thursday, 16 January, 2025

Dubai, UAE

Majlis Course at Emirates Golf Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



Q. Your first competitive round of the year, one over through eight, 3-under for the last ten. Tell us your verdict on today's work?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, pretty scrappy. Actually I felt I played probably better the first eight holes where I was 1-over compared to the last ten where I was 3-under.

Yeah, it was a bit scrappy. First competitive round of the year. First competitive round in a while. A little uncomfortable over some shots. Definitely not as comfortable as I was in practise and coming in here.

But it's nice to get a card in your hand. It sort of exposes the things that you need to work on. I got it around today. I got it around and got it in in a couple under, which is nice, and didn't put myself out of the tournament, which is the main thing.

Q. How much is this course, the way it's been set up, testing the various difference aspects of the game?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think it's a great setup. It obviously tests you off the tee. But I think more, so the approach shots because I felt like the hole locations today were pretty tricky. They were tucked in some corners, and you're getting up there, and usually the way this course is set up, if you miss it a little bit, you're going to be okay.

But short-side yourself here now, and it's really difficult to get up-and-down. So that sort of plays into your mind as you're over your approach shots, and then if you do miss a green, it's obviously very tricky.

I did a good job of scrambling today. I made a lot of key up-and-downs. Bonus of a chip-in on 7. But I don't want to have to rely on my short game the rest of the week like I did today.

Q. You mentioned the short game. Pre-tournament you said last year your short game was up and down and you want to be more consistent this year. How do you achieve that?

RORY McILROY: I think sticking with the one wedge. Part of the short game shots that we're made to play around the green is usually with a lob-wedge with the way a lot of the courses are set up, and I went back and forth with a few wedges last year, different grinds, different soles, different lofts. Just finding a wedge that I'm really comfortable with is one part of it.

So I've been messing around a little bit in the off-season. I actually went with two degrees more loft with the lob wedge, so I went to a 61-degree lob-wedge instead of a 59, which definitely makes the short-sided shots a little bit easier, and it was nice to see that a little bit today.

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