

Men's Olympic Golf Competition

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Paris, France

Le Golf National

Ireland

Rory McIlroy

Shane Lowry

Press Conference



PARIS 2024



chance to play the Old Course but why did you play yesterday and can you talk about the ribbing you had with the Americans as you walked up 18, I think it was.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, none of your business why I was there but it's always nice to play St Andrews.

Yeah, it was good. I wasn't expecting quite the crowd on the last few holes that we got but yeah, it was good. That was the first game of golf I've had since Troon. I thought at least one game of golf before I got here was probably beneficial.

Q. Obviously you were both in Tokyo, which is a very different games with all the restrictions and everything like that. Wondering if you guys are going to try to make more of the Olympic experience while you're in Paris?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, we were just in there planning what we want to try and do this afternoon. Try and get tickets for something and go somewhere. I have my wife here this week, so yeah, we are hoping to maybe go watch a couple of Irishmen this afternoon maybe. I suppose when it goes to Thursday, I'm not sure if the tee times, and with how hot it is, you don't want to be trying to do too much if you're trying to compete.

Maybe today or tomorrow afternoon, might do something. It's certainly a different experience than it was in Tokyo. In Tokyo, remember we had that room in the hotel; we were only allowed to go to that room for dinner, and it was just the four or five of us all week.

Yeah, certainly different and it's probably going to be more enjoyable, as well.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, for me, I just got in last night. So pretty focused on preparation the next couple of days. So we'll see. I'll probably -- I don't know if I will or not this week. But I'm going to hang around for a couple of days after the golf finishes for us and spend a couple days in Paris and then try to get to some of the other events which will be fun.

STUART MOFFATT: Welcome to this morning's press conference with Shane Lowry and Rory McIlroy of team Ireland.

Shane, first of all, you had the honor of carrying the Ireland flag in the Opening Ceremony. How was that for you?

SHANE LOWRY: It was amazing. It was an amazing experience and something that I'll remember forever.

Yeah, it was a big honour and when I got there and got to experience the whole thing, yeah, memories for a lifetime and just even being there and being around the other athletes, it was pretty cool.

You know, to see the Olympics from there, it's something that when I was growing up, you never -- as a golfer, you didn't really think was going to be achievable. So yeah, it was an amazing experience.

STUART MOFFATT: You got to look at the course this morning. How much are you looking forward to this weekend, challenging for a medal?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's a great go. Obviously some great memories for me from the 2018 Ryder Cup here. I've played a few French Opens as well. Yeah, it's great to be back. We both had a really good time in Tokyo three years ago, and great to team up again.

Personally, I was close to getting a medal that time and obviously would love to try to go one or two or three better and get a medal.

Yeah, I'm excited for the week.

Q. You were at St Andrews yesterday. I just wondered why you went for -- obviously it's always a great



... when all is said, we're done.®

Q. Obviously you're focused on this week but there's been some chatter that in L.A., 2028, there might be a mixed event in the golf. Is that something you would welcome?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, absolutely. I think different -- that was the thing, when golf got back in the Olympics in 2016, I think some people were surprised that it was only individual stroke play, and they didn't try to mix it up with some different formats.

So you know, if that came to fruition in L.A. where there was a mixed-team event, or even -- and another team event that was not mixed and Shane and I could play in it if we qualify, yeah, I'd love that. I think that would be a great format to bring to this competition.

Q. Can you talk a little bit more about the opening ceremony? What was the after like on the boat during staging? Did you get to meet any other athletes or see anyone that was particularly noteworthy or interesting for you?

SHANE LOWRY: Obviously the weather played a big part in the whole thing and a new of us, we tried to stay a bit dry at the start of those but it was one of those, well, we're wet now, might as well enjoy it. As the boat ride went down the crowds got bigger and bigger and honestly was just soaking it all in, enjoying the atmosphere, and like trying to spot the Irish people in the crowd. There's a lot of Irish flags. Obviously when you get down past all the sites in Paris and then towards the Eiffel Tower, it's kind of a bit of a surreal experience.

Other athletes outside of the Irish, I didn't see of those or mix with any of those. But it was nice to kind of be in the Village for a day and hang out with some people.

I spent the whole day with Sarah Lavin. I got to know her pretty well that day and the story and what she's been through is nothing short of incredible. She gained a huge new fan that day and I hope to see her go on and do great things next week. Yeah, just see what people do and what other athletes go through is a pretty cool thing.

Q. You have a situation where Bryson has had the year he's had and three majors, not just one, but the great finishes and he's not here. Is that right or does that undermine the ranking system of the Olympics a little bit?

SHANE LOWRY: No. 9 in the world is not here, either, for the Americans. The American Team is a hard team to make.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think that's the nature of qualification for the Olympics. I mean, you could have the fifth-best sprinter in the world but if he's from a certain country, he's not able to make it.

So I think it's just the way that the qualification works in the Olympic Games, and that's not just in golf. That's in other disciplines, as well.

Q. Do you feel that the field here is strong enough for it to be the event it should be?

RORY McILROY: I mean, yeah, you watch --

SHANE LOWRY: Like Rory said, you watch other sports, that's the way it is. If you don't run the time and don't qualify, you're not in. If you're from a country -- no, you watch the American nationals, it's the biggest race of the year, the Jamaican nationals in the sprint. If they run a bad race, even though they might be one of the best in the world, they are not here competing.

I know we are not used to that in golf; that the biggest events have the best fields. But you know, there is a few players maybe that would make it better, but it's still the Olympics and we've all qualified to play for our country and we're all here to win a medal.

Q. Quickly on that for either one of you, and I don't mean this strictly as a LIV-type question, but given the nature of the sport, is there another way to determine qualifying, or is the World Ranking the most practical way?

RORY McILROY: I mean, I don't think there's any other way to do it because it's hard to compare the golf that they play to the golf that we play. That's the reason they didn't get World Ranking points, right.

So if you want to qualify for the Olympics, you knew what you had to do. Just like if you wanted to qualify for the Ryder Cup, you knew what you had to do. They were very aware of the decision they made when they did.

Q. You've done a reasonable job of trying to answer the unanswerable in terms of a medal stands in relation to the rest of the sport, but can you give an idea of what your focus is, practise days going into this compared with the other four?

RORY McILROY: I'd say my focus is pretty high. The last time you guys saw me, I didn't give a very good account of myself at Troon. I want to make sure I'm right where I need to be teeing off on Thursday.

Again I've been asked this question a lot, where would an Olympic Medal sit in sort of the hierarchy of my career achievements and it's something I probably won't be able to answer until when everything is said and done.

I think as golf is in the Olympics for a longer period of time, it will become more of -- I don't know if anything will be able to sit alongside the majors. We have our four events a year that are the gold standard. But I think this is going to be -- in time, going to be right up there amongst that.

Q. Did you get a chance to see the first Irish medal last night?

SHANE LOWRY: I did, yeah. I was picking up my bags at the airport and I watched it on my phone. It was pretty cool. I watched the race in the heat, yeah, the semifinals.

It's great. It's great to get the medal tally off and running and hopefully another one tonight with Daniel and hopefully one of us can add one or two between us. That's the plan. That's why we're here.

Q. Obviously the last time you were together as a team, you won. Can you spark off each other to maybe get a run going?

SHANE LOWRY: I'm just disappointed I'm not going to be hitting off Rory's drives this week, playing as a team.

Yeah, I would like to think we are good for each other when we are around each other. I would like to think we are both going to perform pretty well this week.

Q. What would a Gold Medal do for your year?

SHANE LOWRY: It would be better than Silver (laughter).

RORY McILROY: It would be the achievement, certainly of the year, if not -- I think for me, it's well documented that I haven't won one of the Big Four in ten years. It would probably be one if, if not the biggest in my career for the last ten years.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, look, I felt I had a good chance to win The Open a couple weeks ago and I was really disappointed to not give it a better go on Saturday and Sunday.

Straightaway after that, I sort of felt like I have a chance to redeem myself here in a couple of weeks. For me, look, if you look at the media and what it was like back home yesterday when Mona (McSharry) won that Bronze Medal, I think if I was to win a Gold Medal and bring it back to Ireland, yeah, it would be pretty cool.

Q. Just for those watching at home be, probably have not seen golf at Le Golf National since 2018. How different will the golf course play?

RORY McILROY: I don't think it will play that much differently. It's so pure. It's in such great shape.

But the rough is thick. It's a pretty meaty setup.

Q. Is the rough as thick?

RORY McILROY: It's pretty well -- maybe not as --

SHANE LOWRY: Probably not as long.

RORY McILROY: Ask the Americans. I wasn't in it much that week.

SHANE LOWRY: (Laughing).

RORY McILROY: I think when I played a practice round.

It's a good setup. I think it would be similar to like a PGA setup. You know, it's pretty big, fast greens, but pretty thick rough around the greens. I think if you miss fairways, it's a little hit and miss. I got some pretty bad lies out there, and I know there were some lies that were okay but definitely lose a lot of control of your ball.

The greens have got a little bit of bounce to them already, I would say. So I think it's a good test.

STUART MOFFATT: We'll bring things to a close there. Rory, Shane, thanks for your time and good luck this week.

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