

PGA Championship

Thursday, May 18, 2023

Rochester, New York, USA

Oak Hill Country Club

Rory McIlroy

Flash Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Rory McIlroy is joining us after the opening round of the 105th PGA Championship. We'll go straight to some questions.

Q. On 2 you pitched it over the green. You got that up the slope for four. You make it, and then it sort of kicks you off for the rest of the round. How important was that save mentally just to keep you in it?

RORY McILROY: It was massive. I was staring sort of just hoping to get done in two and make bogey and go to the third hole at 4-over par.

When you walk off the green 3-over and then you hit a tee shot like that, and all of a sudden, the pendulum swings or momentum goes the other way, and all of a sudden you make a couple of birdies in a row, and you feel like you're sort of right back in the tournament.

So, yeah, it was massive. I don't know how -- depending on what happens over the next three days and what I go on to do, you know, I may look back at that shot as being the sort of turning point of the week.

Q. Obviously only two fairways and a little bit of a slow start. What do you attribute that to?

RORY McILROY: Just not at my best. I'm just struggling with my swing. Yeah, it's pretty messy out there, so just trying to make pars.

I guess it was tough as well. There was a lot of crosswinds off tees, so it made it hard to hit fairways. Yeah, no, I can definitely hit it better than that.

Q. Is there something more satisfying about the trajectory of this round starting slow and finishing the way you did rather than the other way around?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I feel a bit better than if I got off to a good start and made a couple of bogeys on the way in.



I guess, if anything, I started to see a couple of better golf shots coming down the last few holes. Hit that good 6-iron into the third hole and two great shots into 4. Good iron shot into 6. Nice wedge shot into 8.

There was a couple of glimmers of hope in there coming in.

Q. Following up on that, coming into the week a lot of people were saying driving accuracy was going to be at a premium this week. How do you turn just two fairways into a fairly decent score?

RORY McILROY: I'm getting pretty good at getting out of the rough. Getting pretty used to it.

I've always been pretty good out of the rough. I've always been able to get steep on it and have a bit of speed and maybe hit a couple extra clubs out of lies that maybe some guys can't, so that's a little bit of an advantage to me this week.

Yeah, it's you are in for a tough day when you keep hitting it out of the rough like I was today.

Q. Then on No. 14 I'm not sure how backed up you were when you were there, but it seemed like a lot of groups were getting stuck on there. I know there were a couple of groups stuck on there when you were on No. 1. Did you see that? Do you have any thoughts on that?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, you're on a dual tee box, and it's a drivable par-4 coming off the back of a par-5 going into a par-3, so it's -- yeah, it's just that whole area is quite a bottleneck.

Q. Did you have to wait today or no?

RORY McILROY: A little bit, but not a huge amount.

Q. The TV microphones picked up a little conversation you were having with Justin Thomas just walking off the 10th tee box this morning. You said something about you had slept a bit better and had a bit more energy. Maybe implying that you hadn't been feeling



100 percent. Are you okay?

RORY McILROY: I'm fighting something. I thought I got a great night's sleep last night, and I look at my Whip, and I was 22 percent recovery, and my skin temperature was 3.5 degrees higher than what it's been. I'm fighting something.

But I actually feel better today than I felt yesterday, so plenty of water and a bit of rest, I'll be fine.

Q. Just hopefully a case of something you will get over as the week progresses?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, exactly.

Q. Scottie was in here saying he thought this might actually be the easiest of the days this week. Do you agree with that, and do you see this tournament becoming a real grindfest?

RORY McILROY: I don't know. I don't know what the conditions are going to be like over the next few days. It was certainly benign out there.

It actually -- I think what happened this morning as well, as the frost thawed, it made the golf course a little softer than it had been over the last couple of days. The aprons weren't quite as fiery as they were Tuesday/Wednesday. If the place firms up a little built again, I could definitely see this being the easiest day.

Q. Do you feel up for the fight? It's going to take some energy, right, like mental energy?

RORY McILROY: I take it hole-by-hole.

Q. The start of the round, was it the same swing thing you've been dealing with the club getting open, or was it something different?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I don't know. I started the round okay. Yeah, I hit a couple. Tee shot on 17, tee shot on 18, they were the two ones that are to the right. I don't know if I just spun out of them or if the club face was open. That's something I'm going to go and try to determine on the range now.

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