

PGA Championship

Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Louisville, Kentucky, USA

Valhalla Golf Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, we are very pleased with welcome Rory McIlroy to the 106th PGA Championship. I believe you all saw the statement yesterday from Rory's communication team specifically that he will not be making any additional comments on his private life, so thank you all for respecting his wishes.

A win on Sunday at Quail Hollow and you won the last major championship here at Valhalla ten years ago. How do you feel coming into this week?

RORY McILROY: I feel good. Obviously had a great day on Sunday at a golf course that I've grown to love over the years and had a lot of success at, coming to a venue where I've had some success at before as well.

Obviously get to go back to Quail Hollow every year. Don't really get to come back here too much. Today was the first time I was on the golf course since ten years ago, so it was good to refamiliarize myself with the place.

The golf course is a little different than it was ten years ago, a little longer. A couple little minor changes but for the most part pretty much the same that I can remember from ten years ago.

But yeah, look, game feels good coming off the back of two wins, a fun one in New Orleans with Shane, and then a really good performance last week.

Just trying to keep the momentum going.

Q. How long has it been since you had this level of confidence in your game, and what other than the victories, what in the technical part of it is giving you that confidence?

RORY McILROY: Yes, I would say -- I think I was asked this question last week. I went on a run last summer, sort of from -- it was actually after this tournament. I felt like my game wasn't in really good shape after Oak Hill. Sort of needed to reset, work on a few things.

But then I came back out. I played Memorial, Canada, U.S. Open, Travelers, Scottish Open, Open, Playoffs. That stretch of golf, I think I had, like, ten top 10s in a row. I got the win in Scotland.

So my game felt pretty -- it doesn't seem like that long ago that my game has felt this good. But I would say from a technical standpoint, some of the shots that I hit last week, some of the three-quarter shots, some of the wedge shots, some of the iron shots, combined with, you know, how good I feel with the driver at the minute, you know, when I can see those three-quarter shots and those wedge shots going and starting on the right line, you know, that obviously gives me a lot of confidence.

Q. We've talked through the years about how you've tried to go back to a mentality of just show up somewhere, play a practice round, and then go out there and play free. When you come back here, do you think of the mentality that you had when you won here ten years ago, and do you try to use that again?

RORY McILROY: Sometimes I struggle to remember what I did yesterday. So I don't -- I think if I look that far back, I mean, it's hard to rekindle those feelings and those memories. I can vaguely remember, you know, coming here off the back of winning The Open and the old WGC at Akron.

But you know, I think it's all about confidence and momentum, and I have a lot of confidence and quite a bit of momentum coming into this week. So as I said at the start, it's just about trying to keep that going.

But as you say, like trying to play with freedom, I think this is a golf course that allows you to play with freedom because it's a big golf course. The corridors are wide, not too dissimilar to last week at Quail Hollow, so you can open your shoulders up off the tee and try to take your chances from there.

Q. Can I ask you about Jimmy's board resignation, what you thought about that and what the implications might be in your mind?



RORY McILROY: Yeah, honestly I think it's a huge loss for the PGA TOUR, if they are trying to get this deal done with the PIF and trying to unify the game.

Jimmy was basically "the" relationship, the sort of conduit between the PGA TOUR and PIF. It's been really unfortunate that he has not been involved for the last few months, and I think part of the reason that everything is stalling at the minute is because of that.

So it is, it's really, really disappointing, and you know, I think the TOUR is in a worse place because of it. We'll see. We'll see where it goes from here and we'll see what happens.

But you know, I would say my confidence level on something getting done before last week was, you know, as low as it had been and then with this news of Jimmy resigning and knowing the relationship he has with the other side, and how much warmth there is from the other side, it's concerning.

Q. So Shane Lowry mentioned that you told him that what you had off the tee, the driver at Zurich was the best you've ever driven the ball and you also said you like to play your way into form. Why is it that you are able to play your way into form?

RORY McILROY: So from a driving perspective, yeah, I think it's -- honestly it's probably the best driver I've had in the last few years.

I've really gotten comfortable with the driver, and I think some of the technical things in my swing are just a little bit better, and I'm -- the good drives are still very good but the bad drives aren't as bad so the misses aren't as wild.

And then -- sorry, what was the second part of the question?

Q. Just you've always historically said you like to play your way into form. Why is that the case for you?

RORY McILROY: Play into form. For me, it's not -- I can -- I can stand all day on a driving range and hit balls and not really learn anything. Because I think so many of us out here have got such great hands and have hit so many golf balls in our lifetime that we are just going to be able to figure it out some way. So you know, change a little feeling here or there. So to me, I learn the most about my game just by playing. I've played a lot this year. I've sort of figured out where my weaknesses are, what my tendencies are, how I can manage my game better, and yeah, I just -- after the win in New Orleans, I didn't pick up a club for six

days. I hit balls for a couple of hours at The Grove on Sunday before going to Quail Hollow and I go and produce a performance like that.

I think you need to know yourself, and sometimes it's about grinding on the range and working on technical stuff, but at other times, it's just about getting on the golf course, playing with a card in your hand and understanding, you know, how you're playing a game.

I think that the one thing about golf, compared to any other sport is we don't practice on the field that we play on. So it would seem counterintuitive to spend all your time on the practice range instead of on the golf course. I've just tried to spend as much time on the golf course as I can.

Q. It's been quite a few years for you. How are your energy levels, and just on a personal level, how are you doing?

RORY McILROY: I'm ready to play this week.

Q. Given the success of Europeans in other major championships, can you put your finger on why they have had relatively little success in this championship?

RORY McILROY: I mean, I think if you think of quintessential American golf, I think golf courses that we go to for the PGA Championship are usually somewhat like these.

I would say Kiawah was a little bit different, or maybe even somewhere like Southern Hills a couple years ago. But yeah, I don't -- I mean, I don't know if I can put my finger on it. You know, it's the same thing. I think G-Mac was the first -- I don't know if he was the first European or the first British player to win the U.S. Open since Jacklin in 1970. These things are cyclical. I don't know if I can put my finger on it but just, you know, it's a big golf course, thick rough, soft-ish greens. That seems to be more of an American style of play.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks for your time, Rory. We appreciate it.

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