

Travelers Championship

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TPC River Highlands
Cromwell, Connecticut, USA

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



TRAVELERS CHAMPIONSHIP

THE MODERATOR: Rory, we'll start by, this is your fourth trip back here at Travelers. You got off to a good start pretty much every round of those previous three starts. What do you like about coming back here; and just secondly, you're on the back end of a four- or five-week stretch and you're probably pretty fried, so just comment on that too.

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, look, I think first and foremost, I'm happy to be back in Hartford and playing this event. I didn't play last year. I sort of tend to try to play this event when the U.S. Open's on the East Coast. It's obviously really, I mean, especially from Boston last week.

But, yeah, it's a great event. I think we've got a really strong field this week. We've got the top-2 players in the world, obviously and a bunch of other guys in the top 10. It's produced some dramatic finishes over the years with Jordan holing that bunker shot against Daniel Berger, and Harris winning in that playoff last year.

So it's a golf course that can produce a lot of drama, a lot of low scores, and it's a great field, so it will be a good week.

Yeah, this is my fourth week in a row and definitely feel like a little bit of fatigue setting in. I got a night in my own bed down in Florida on Monday night, which was really nice. But, yeah, I came back up here yesterday and played the pro-am today and going to get an early night tonight. I've got an early start again tomorrow. But excited to get going and especially continuing the run of form I'm on. I'm playing some really good golf and I want to continue trying to do that.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take some questions.

Q. There's been a lot of talk about loyalty over the last couple weeks, not just to the TOUR, but this place in terms of the tournament. What does the TOUR do and what does this tournament do to engender that loyalty to keep guys like you coming back year after year?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I think it's not lost on me what PGA TOUR events do to, or what they can do for the communities that they're played in. You look at somewhere like here, the community supports this event really well in Hartford and in return I think the charitable dollars that are raised is really, really important.

You look at somewhere like Dublin, Ohio. When Jack started the Memorial Tournament, I don't know, 5,000 people maybe lived in Dublin, Ohio, and now it's 200,000. I mean, he's basically built a town around a golf tournament. So when you think about PGA TOUR events and what they can do for communities this is a good example, Memorial's a good example, and obviously a number of others.

But I think that's not lost on the players that when they come and play PGA TOUR events they're helping to do something really good in the community that they're playing and I think that's important.

Q. This is as one top golfer looking at another, can you kind of size up the way Scottie's been playing and what, just what that looks like from your standpoint?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, like, he's been on a tear, and he's been threatening to go on a tear for awhile. Like, even, he doesn't seem like he hasn't been on TOUR that long, but he very quickly got the title of best player never to have won on TOUR, and then he broke that dyke earlier this year, and then he's just, he's such a consistent performer week-in, week-out. Even if he doesn't win, like last week, he's always up there and contending and, for the most part.

But he's had, this is his breakout year and he's riding a pretty nice wave of momentum right now. You look at the world rankings, he's head and shoulders above the rest of us at the minute.

Q. Were you surprised by Brooks' decision, and if so, why, and if not, why not?

RORY MCILROY: Again, I'll go back to what I said at -- was it last week? It might have been Canada. I don't



know.

But am I surprised? Yes, because of what he said previously. I think that's why I'm surprised at a lot of these guys because they say one thing and then they do another, and I don't understand that and I don't know if that's for legal reasons or if they can't -- I have no idea. But it's pretty duplicitous on their part to say one thing and then do another thing.

Q. You're talking about something he said two years ago or a week ago?

RORY MCILROY: The whole way through. The whole way through, in public and private, all of it.

Q. Secondly, if the TOUR is moving toward really elevating a certain number of tournaments and fields and prize money, etcetera, really spiked purses and what have you, is there any fear of minimizing other tournaments like this one or the rest across the schedule, how do you balance that?

RORY MCILROY: I don't think so, because I think certain guys always have their tournaments that they like to play, I think this tournament's looked after the guys really well the last few years and has done a good job to make them feel really welcome in Hartford and do everything they can to get the top players to play in this event.

Look, there's obviously going to be some elevated events coming up here and I think that's important. I think it's important for the future of the TOUR and it's important for where we are right now, but I don't think it will minimize any other tournaments. You're going to have tournaments that guys love to play and they're going to come back and keep playing them.

Q. You talked about the course earlier. Can you talk about the atmosphere here with the fans and everything all being back now?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, it's great. It's always been a, it's always been a very fan-friendly event here. It's really, it's a great event, it's supported by the community, we've got a great sponsor in Travelers and it's fun. You look at the last few weeks on TOUR, Memorial, Canada, obviously U.S. Open's a major, but the last three regular stops on the TOUR they're great events, so well supported, great atmosphere to play in front of and great fans. So it's been a fun run for everyone.

Q. You mentioned you're feeling a lot of the fatigue of a four-week run. How much of that do you think is from the golf inside the ropes and how much of that is

mental fatigue with dealing with everything that's going on outside the ropes?

RORY MCILROY: I must say after the board meeting yesterday my head hit the pillow and I was out. So mental fatigue yesterday after sitting through a five-hour board meeting and trying to get through some of these issues.

But I think the three weeks that I've played, like Memorial's a very demanding golf course. Canada wasn't so demanding but when you get yourself in contention and you play a weekend like that, then that takes quite a lot out of you. And then you follow that up with a U.S. Open. So I think it's a combination of everything. Mentally I'm totally fine, but I'm, you know, it will be nice to sort of rest up this afternoon and get another good night's sleep and get ready to play tomorrow. But four weeks in a row is pretty rare for me these days. I haven't played four in a row in a while and you start to remember why (laughing).

Q. I wanted to ask your opinion on the proposed new fall series and everything that's going on with that. What do you think would be best for the PGA TOUR to do in that portion of the schedule?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I sort of addressed this a little bit earlier in the year. It's hard when you're trying to make a cross section of the membership happy. You're trying to give the top performers time off and an off season, basically, because that's what they say they want. You want to give them the break from grinding in the FedExCup season. You want to give them a break from feeling like -- I think what a lot of top players have struggled with in the last few years is they only want to play one or two fall events, but then by the time they get to January they feel like they're way behind, so they feel like they're forced to play a little bit more.

So I think having the FedExCup season go to a calendar year, like January to August, I think that would be a pretty good idea. So then it gives guys the opportunity to play if they want to play in the fall or if they don't want to play in the fall they don't have to, they're not forced to, it's not going to make a difference in any way.

But again, a lot of these fall events are destination events. Like Napa and Mexico and places where people like to bring their families and sort of have a sort of like half golf tournament, half vacation. So you're still going to have guys that play in some of those events.

But again you're trying to give playing opportunities and create prize funds for the lower half of the membership, but also by trying to accommodate what the upper half of the membership want as well by saying they want an off



season, time away from FedExCup schedule. So it's a balance.

I mean, selfishly, for me, I would like an off-season. I would like to not turn up in February and be 150th in the FedExCup point list because I just didn't want to play in the fall and I wanted to take some time off and spend some time with my family, whatever it is.

So again it's hard for me to speak from that perspective because I'm on the board and I've been elected to try to think of all the membership and what makes sense for every single player on this TOUR.

Q. What do you see as the future of the European Tour?

RORY MCILROY: I mean, I think I would like to see, and I've always advocated for something where the tours work more closely together or we create some sort of world tour model or ATP model. Where there's different events going on in different areas of the world, but they're all governed under one umbrella. So, I mean, I would like to see the PGA TOUR and the European Tour start to work more closely together and maybe try to forge a path to where all the biggest golf events in the world are under the same umbrella.

Q. Do you see that happening?

RORY MCILROY: I think it's hard to say at this point, but I would like to think that it's a possibility.

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

RORY MCILROY: Thank you.

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