

BMW Championship

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Owings Mills, Maryland, USA

Caves Valley Golf Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



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DOUG MILNE: We'd like to welcome Rory McIlroy, 2012 BMW Championship winner. Thanks for joining us. Coming into the week inside the top 30 in the FedExCup standings, world No. 16, making your 11th start at the BMW Championship. Just some thoughts on Caves Valley. You've had a chance to see the course and kind of your take on how the week is setting up so far.

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, first look at Caves today. It's a big ballpark, can certainly let it rip out here, hit a lot of drivers. I think there's been a lot of rain in the Baltimore area, so it's pretty soft, so the ball is not really going anywhere when it hits, which is good. It makes the course play nice and long, which I like.

Yeah, it's a good track, good test. I have a few friends that are members here, and they've told me all about it and rave about the place. I can see what they're talking about. It's a cool venue, and I think everyone is excited for it this week.

DOUG MILNE: Just a couple thoughts on how you're feeling with your game coming into the week. You obviously picked up your 19th win earlier in the season in Charlotte. Just coming into the week, kind of assess the state of your game.

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I think I feel like a lot of guys feel right now, a little jaded, a little tired. End of the season, there's been a lot of golf. Yeah, so a lot of travel.

So yeah, I'm just sort of getting through it, to be honest. I'm going day by day and just trying to get through it as best I can and try to make it to next week. After that, two weeks off before the Ryder Cup.

Yeah, just taking it day by day. The game feels pretty good, okay. Energy levels are somewhat sort of trying to dig deep at this point, but yeah, try and keep going and try and put in a good finish this week to make sure I'm in Atlanta next week.

Q. I think if you go back to last year, this is the sixth or

seventh course on TOUR that you had not seen. What's that like compared with the stuff you go back to week after week? What's the difference?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I think there's pros and cons to each. I think sometimes when you get to a new course you don't have the memories of hitting it in places that you shouldn't and maybe having that in your mind somewhat. But then you go to some courses that you like and you play well on and you've got great memories, like Quail Hollow for example this year for me, and you can play well on them.

I seem to -- for the most part seem to do well on golf courses that I haven't seen before, and especially at a golf course like this. It's big, it's right in front of you. There's tons of definition. There's not many blind shots.

Yeah, I don't -- I certainly don't think guys are going to struggle this week because we haven't seen this golf course.

Q. Tony when he won on Monday seemed like a very popular win. Why?

RORY MCILROY: He's such a good guy. I've known Tony for over 20 years. He comes from a great family. He's a wonderful person. Obviously he hadn't won in a while, but he never complained. He just sticks his head down, goes about his business.

It was a really popular win in the locker room. I think Cam Smith is obviously a great guy, as well, and I think that would have been received really well, especially with how close he's been over the last few weeks, but I think everyone was pulling for Tony, and it was a real popular win.

Q. Just wondering your impressions of Baltimore in general. Not sure if you've been able to see much of the town or where you're staying, but curious what your thoughts are there.

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I saw the airport for about 10 minutes yesterday and then I drove straight here and I'm staying on property, so I don't -- I can't really give you much of an answer on that one.



I can tell you that Caves Valley is beautiful and where we are this week, but haven't -- I've never been to Baltimore before, and I haven't made it downtown yet this week. Hopefully at some point I will.

Q. There's a young girl in your life about to have a birthday. I was wondering, looking back on the 12 months since Poppy was born, how has life changed?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I mean, it's changed a lot. I want to spend a lot more time at home. I wanted to get home even in between these two events, so I flew down from New York Monday night so I could get a night in my own bed Monday, spend a few hours with her yesterday, a few hours with her and Erica, and then I flew up here yesterday afternoon. Yeah, any chance I get to get home, especially at this point in the season when we've been away so much, I'm going to take it.

Yeah, you have to manage your time a little better and you have to be a little more efficient with what you do. I think obviously it's a big adjustment for anyone, but it's been great. It's the most fulfilling thing I think you'll ever do in your life, and nothing can replace that feeling.

Q. Can I ask you about one other young lady, your reaction to Leona Maguire getting picked for the Solheim Cup, first Irish girl, as you know, and just the impact for Irish women's golf in general.

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I saw the news yesterday that Leona is on the Solheim Cup team. I think it's wonderful. I got to spend a little bit of time with her in Tokyo. I think, as well, like from back home, Leona is -- both the girls but especially Leona was sort of earmarked for success for a long time, sort of child prodigy coming up. She sort of went through all the ranks, Curtis Cup and now into the Solheim Cup, and she's been putting some really good scores together, obviously shooting that great round the last day at the Evian.

So yeah, she's been playing well. I think her selection is well deserved, and it's just another stepping-stone in the right direction for her. It's a great achievement, and yeah, I certainly don't think this is -- I think she's just getting started.

Q. When it comes to late summer, kind of dog days like you were talking about, what is the most tiring or monotonous part of the week-to-week preparation?

RORY MCILROY: I don't know. I think just the -- I mean, this morning, I was tired. Look, we all had a long week last week, as well, but even just summoning up the effort to get out of bed and go get to your 7:20 pro-am tee time, it look

a little more effort today than it usually does.

But yeah, just everything. It's a lot of golf. It's hard to feel fresh at this time in the season. It all just sort of catches up with you. I don't know if I could pinpoint one particular thing. It's just sort of everything blended together.

Q. Is there one particular thing you're looking forward to once you do get a break?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I mean, just not traveling for a little bit. I'm going to take a bit of time off after the Ryder Cup, and that'll be nice.

It's been a -- since we came back after the sort of COVID halt, I guess, when we came back in Colonial last year, I think this is my 33rd event since then. Next week will be 34 and then Ryder Cup 35. So all that in a space of 15 months, it's a lot of golf. It's probably too much for me. I've played more than I probably should have and feel like it's just sort of all caught up with me.

Q. You were on the range for like ages yesterday working really hard. Just curious what those practice sessions look like and what you're working on.

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, so I needed to try to get into a new 3-wood and into a new driver. I threw my 3-wood onto the New Jersey Turnpike off the 9th hole yesterday, or on Monday, and so I was without a 3-wood coming here.

The driver I just felt was spinning a little too much last week, so I just needed to get into something that wasn't spinning as much, and that was really it. So going through a bunch of different heads and shafts as you saw yesterday, and feel like I landed on a good driver and got a pretty good 3-wood, too.

That was the purpose of yesterday's range session.

Q. You said the 3-wood went where exactly, on the New Jersey turnpike?

RORY MCILROY: I mightn't have reached the road but I threw it into the trees off the 9th tee at Liberty National, so if someone wants to go get a 3-wood, there's one in there somewhere.

Q. Just talking about kind of the energy deficit you feel right now, it occurs to me that you learned at Hazeltine and I guess all the way back at Medinah that playing a Ryder Cup in America takes a ton of energy, and it can be incredibly taxing. Is that of concern to you at all?

RORY MCILROY: No, I think having two weeks off after the TOUR Championship is going to be nice. Like I sort of was planning to go over to Wentworth to play the BMW, but it's just too much travel, and with what's coming up with Ryder Cup -- yeah, that's a long week, no matter if you're in Europe or the States, especially I haven't missed a session yet. So say I play five sessions again, yeah, it's a really long week. So the two weeks off after the TOUR Championship are going to be well needed, and I'll go in there nice and refreshed and ready to give it my all.

Q. You've played under five captains now. Do you expect one day you would be a captain? I wanted to ask, of the guys you played under, what qualities from each ones would be something that if you were a captain you would use?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I think captaincy for me is still hopefully 20 years down the line. But yeah, there's been -- I think every captain I've played under has brought their different qualities to the team, whether it be individual man management of some players to sort of like a group leadership type of role.

Yeah, everyone has brought sort of some different stuff. I thought Thomas Björn last time was wonderful. I thought he did a really good job. He was a very -- he sort of was quite an emotional leader. He played us this video on the Thursday night before the first session on Friday morning and there wasn't a dry eye in the room. So just stuff like that, and sort of -- he put a real -- he sort of gave everyone meaning of why they were there and the people that came before us.

It was a really -- to put it in that perspective I think was really cool, and it just gives you a real sense of you're part of this Ryder Cup team but you're part of something that's obviously a lot bigger than that, so that was really cool. That's just one thing that sticks out in my recent memory.

Q. One person who will be alongside you next month and probably for those next 20 years at Ryder Cups is Jon Rahm. I wonder how you would describe the evolution of his game since he came out here, and then we all kind of always describe him just in the default way as fiery, but is there another perspective that a player might have that's different than that?

RORY MCILROY: No, I think with Jon what you see is what you get. Hell of a player, though. I mean, just doesn't seem to miss a shot, is super aggressive all the time, no matter what shot or how he's played beforehand.

Yeah, he's fiery. Obviously it means a lot to him. He takes it very seriously. He's a very -- like he knows how good he

is, and I think when you're that good and you know you're that good, you can -- he's got a great mentality for the game. He's so consistent. Every time he tees it up, he's up there.

Yeah, he's a hell of a player. He's by far the best player in the world right now, and he shows that every week that he plays. It's up to the rest of us to up our level a little bit to try to play alongside that.

Q. You guys are both trying to play top golf while being a new dad. Is that a conversation you've had at all or not?

RORY MCILROY: No, not really. I think everyone has different ways of dealing with it and parenting, and I'm certainly not going to go to anyone else and tell them how to do it because I'm a novice, too.

But yeah, I think it's an adjustment for all of us, but it certainly hasn't seemed to hurt his game at all. So yeah, I think he's doing just fine.

Q. We were just talking to Tony Finau a little while ago, and he admitted that it's harder than it looks to speak to reporters after a close loss, like the series of close losses that he had, but he felt like it was the right thing to do. Do you likewise feel responsibility to do that even after a tough disappointment?

RORY MCILROY: I wouldn't necessarily say I feel a responsibility to do it, but I guess it's just sort of -- it's the accepted way to do things. It's sort of what -- you're met off the 18th green and a representative from the TOUR or someone else sort of ushers toward a line of reporters. Sometimes I'll say no because I just don't want to, but most of the time I'll say yes because -- yeah, it's just the done thing. It's the status quo, I guess. That's the way I would put it.

Q. Is it harder than it looks? Is it harder for you to do that, for people to do it do you think than they let on?

RORY MCILROY: Yeah, I think if you've had a s--- day, it's hard to like go and talk about it, right? If you guys have a bad day and we come to your office and try to talk to you about it, you might want to confide in your family or your friends or you might want to -- I think the tough thing is sometimes doing it right there and then. Sort of I think sometimes letting us cool off for 30 minutes or 45 minutes and then try to let us gather our thoughts, I think sometimes that could be a little bit easier.

I don't think anyone enjoys sort of trying to explain a day where it hasn't went the right way for them. But I think it's



accepted that when you're at a certain level it's just part of the job.

DOUG MILNE: Okay, Rory, we appreciate your time as always. Have a great week.

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