

# BMW Championship

Wednesday, August 13, 2025

Owings Mills, Maryland, USA

Caves Valley Golf Club

## Rory McIlroy

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: All right, everyone. We'd like to welcome Rory McIlroy to the Media Center here at the 2025 BMW Championship. Rory, you're a three-time FedExCup champion. You won this tournament in 2012, and you're making your 15th start here. Just talk about your pro-am this morning, golf course, first impressions.

RORY McILROY: Good to be back. I thought the tournament here four years ago at Caves Valley was really cool. Felt like it was the first really big crowd post-COVID. It was really cool to play in that atmosphere. I guess they're anticipating really big crowds this week, and that will be cool to play in front of.

Yeah, the golf course, it's a little different than last time. 18, completely new green complexes. The whole golf course is a little drier than it was last time. Definitely think it will provide a lot more of a challenge this time around.

Yeah, it's good. It's a good setup. The greens have got a bit of firmness to them. You've got to put the ball in play. It's going to be a good week. I'm excited to get back at it.

**Q. Rory, just playing off the golf course, just wondering in particular, that 18th hole was the hardest hole on the golf course. Just wondering kind of what you see about that hole that makes it a difficult finisher.**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, for me it's a little bit of an awkward visual off the tee. They've moved those bunkers a little closer to the tee this year. If you want to take them out of play, you're going to be leaving yourself quite a long ways back. You've really got to challenge those bunkers on the left, and obviously you've got the creek off the right.

It's all about the tee shot. If you get the tee shot in play, I feel like it's a gettable hole. For me, I could hit -- as I said, I could hit 3-wood and maybe leave it short of those bunkers, but it leaves you 7-iron in, or you could challenge and hit driver and get you a short iron or wedge. It really just depends how you're feeling with the tee shot.



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The last two finishing holes -- I mean, 17 is a lot longer than it used to be as well. Looking back at the playoff between Patrick and Bryson there a few years ago, it's not going to be a 9-iron or whatever it was that those guys were hitting in.

So, yeah, it's a big golf course. A couple of those par-5s previously are now par-4s. I think they're going to -- I think 12 is probably going to play the toughest hole this week.

Yeah, it's a big golf course. You've got to drive it well, and even from then, there's a lot of sort of mid to long irons out there.

**Q. What did you think of 5?**

RORY McILROY: 5 is -- it's obviously they've tried to make it a risk/reward hole, but I just don't know if the risk is worth the reward. It's just a very, very tough green to go for off the tee, and if you miss the green at all on the right in that rough, it's going to be almost impossible to hit the green with your chip shot.

I think you're just going to see a lot of guys lay up there and take the 100-yard wedge shot and try to make 3 that way.

**Q. What kind of risk did you take in the pro-am today?**

RORY McILROY: I played the other side, but I hit driver -- I played that front side on Monday, and I hit it, I hit a good tee shot, and it just sort of caught the false front and went over to the left near the hazard, and it was a decent chip up the green. But it's just a little -- if you're thinking -- sometimes I think we think about these risk/reward holes too much in isolation instead of thinking about the entire week. You've got 72 holes to play; you play that hole four times, I think if you play that hole in 1-under for the week, you're probably doing well.

So I backed myself to make a birdie there from the fairway with a wedge in my hand instead of trying to hit a little chip shot out of some rough. You're just going to see a lot of guys lay up and take their chances with a wedge in their hand.

**Q. Last thing from me. You are a three-time season-long FedExCup champion. Are you the**



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**season-long champion if you win next week, or whoever wins next week, can you consider that a season-long champion when you just get to East Lake and win one tournament?**

RORY McILROY: Who knows at this point?

**Q. That's why I asked you.**

RORY McILROY: I don't know. It's hard. It's like every other sport has -- or every other American sport has playoffs, and they sort of try to make a big deal of the end of the season. I think it's hard in golf -- look, I come from a place where like the Premier League, Liverpool won the Premier League last year with five games to spare. That's sometimes what happens in sports. Sometimes you have guys or you have a team that is just that much better than everyone else that season, and they are the deserving winner.

I think from a player perspective, it seems like the consensus was that people didn't like the starting strokes. So to get rid of that is a good thing.

But I now think that the TOUR Championship not being starting strokes, it's sort of its own -- it's its own thing now. Obviously you win the TOUR Championship, which then means you win the FedExCup, but I don't necessarily think that means that you're the season-long winner -- unless Scottie Scheffler wins it and he is the season-long winner. Everyone knows Scottie Scheffler is the -- you know, he's won two majors this year. He's head and shoulders above the rest in terms of the points going into this week. He'll be ahead of everyone in the points going into next week. So he's deservedly got his bonus all the way through.

Then everything resets, and it's sort of -- yeah, I guess I see it as more of a one-off event than a culmination of the entire season.

**Q. Rory, they're calling this kind of a bridge year with the TOUR Championship. Is there something that you would like to see change to make it even more compelling for the future?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, I don't -- there's obviously been a lot of discourse about should these playoffs be mandatory or not. Obviously I didn't play last week, and is that something that they need to look at? It could be something where -- and I've heard this idea kicked around, where everything resets after Wyndham and then the top 70 just play for the top 50 spots to get into the next week and then everything resets again here, and then the top 30 from this week then make it to the TOUR Championship.

I mean, if you want to try to make it straight playoffs and elimination, I think that would be a good way to go.

You're trying to balance a lot of different things. You're trying to balance the competitive integrity of what the playoffs are, but you're also trying to keep the media rights partners happy, you're trying to keep the sponsors happy. They're the people that are paying the big bucks to expect the big names to be playing in their golf tournaments, and that's a delicate balance.

**Q. If you had gone from being No. 2 back to the very end of 50 for not having played last week, would you have still skipped?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah. I'm playing nine times between now and the end of the year, so I think by the time October, November comes around, I'm going to be glad of that extra week off, yeah.

**Q. As you try to figure out kind of new goals, I'm curious is being a Ryder Cup playing captain something that you aspire to? Is that something you want?**

RORY McILROY: No, I've been asked to do that, and I've turned it down.

**Q. You've already been asked to be the captain?**

RORY McILROY: No, I've -- the idea of me being a playing captain sometime soon coming up has come up, and I've shot it down straight away.

**Q. Why?**

RORY McILROY: Because I don't think you can do it.

**Q. I don't know if you publicly said it, or maybe you did in an interview a long time ago, you sort of telegraphed that you weren't going to play last week. So it wasn't maybe a big surprise, but obviously there was some reaction to it. Wouldn't you think, though, or do you think that you're maybe a little bit the outlier? You just mentioned that you've got a big schedule coming up, where most of the guys don't, especially the American guys. They're kind of done after next week except for the Ryder Cup. So I'm just curious if you think you're maybe the outlier? Guys aren't typically skipping \$20 million tournaments.**

RORY McILROY: No, and a lot of the guys aren't 18 years into their professional career either. I feel like I'm in a little bit of a different position than some of the guys. Yeah, as I said, I'm playing nine times between now and the end of

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the year, so I've still got a pretty busy stretch coming up.

I just think that extra week off will do me good with the events coming up. Some big events that are important to me -- the Irish Open, Wentworth, obviously the Ryder Cup. I want to try to win my seventh Race to Dubai over in Europe as well. There's some things that are still important to me that I want to go play in. That was a big part of the reason why I wanted to take that extra week off last week.

**Q. Could you just elaborate on why you think it would be so difficult to be a playing captain?**

RORY McILROY: I just think the commitments that a captain has the week of -- you think about the extra media that a captain has to do, you think about the extra meetings that the captains have to do with the vice captains, with the PGA of America, in Keegan's case, preparing your speech for the opening ceremony -- just there's a lot of things that people don't see that the captain does the week of the Ryder Cup, especially now that the Ryder Cup has become so big.

If you'd have said it 20 years ago, I'd say, yeah, it was probably possible to do, but how big of a spectacle and everything that's on the line in a Ryder Cup now, I just think it would be a very difficult position to be in. So I just think for those reasons.

Then the captain isn't going to be on the course all day, so really the captain's only going to be able to play one session on Friday, one session on Saturday. Would you rather not have a player that has the flexibility to go twice if he's playing well? There's a lot of different things that go into it, and that's why I think -- look, it's just my opinion, but I think it would just be very difficult to do.

**Q. I think you played with Keegan at Hartford.**

RORY McILROY: Yeah.

**Q. Is that right?**

RORY McILROY: Maybe the first couple days, yeah, yeah.

**Q. Just the state of his game, what do you see from him as a player right now?**

RORY McILROY: I definitely think he's one of the best 12 American players right now. That's why everyone is so interested and it's such a compelling case, and it's going to be -- I'm just as interested as everyone else to see how it all plays out.

**Q. If you were a captain at some point, what would**

**you look for in a pick? What would stand out to you?**

RORY McILROY: Meshing. You have to be able to blend in with the rest of the team well. Maybe you already have a partner in mind that you could play with for foursomes, and then maybe for the better ball also.

I think that adaptability and that flexibility, having someone that can go five if they're playing really well, if they're playing well that week. That something, that someone that the rest of the guys are really comfortable with. You don't want to have an fox in the henhouse.

**Q. A little bit of a change of pace here.**

RORY McILROY: Thank you.

**Q. Obviously you've made a lot of money in your career. Do you remember what you spent your first TOUR paycheck on?**

RORY McILROY: Yes, a watch.

**Q. A watch?**

RORY McILROY: With diamonds around it. It was horrific. I can't believe, it was like the worst purchase ever. It was so bad.

**Q. Do you remember the make and model?**

RORY McILROY: I do. It's not the make and model that I'm sponsored by now, so I'm not going to say it.

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