

# TOUR Championship

Sunday, September 5, 2021

Atlanta, Georgia, USA

East Lake Golf Club

## Rory McIlroy

### Quick Quotes

#### Q. How would you summarize your season?

RORY McILROY: Some good. Some bad. It started -- it started okay. Well, actually, didn't. I got some decent results at the start of the year but it never felt really comfortable. And then there was that transition period when I started working on some new stuff. Struggled a bit in the springtime, sort of PLAYERS, Match Play, Masters, but after that it got pretty good. The win in Charlotte was nice.

Yeah, I guess I didn't feel like my game was consistent at the start of the year, in the middle of the year, it's certainly more consistent than it has, been which is good. Still feel like I have a few things to work on. Overall I feel like it's been a work-in-progress from April onwards, but I think it's been going in the right direction.

#### Q. You're one of the few guys who has won majors, PLAYERS, WGCs and FedExCups. Where above do you think the FedExCup ranks?

RORY McILROY: I think it's a big deal. You could come in here 100th in the FedExCup in the first Playoff event and have the best three weeks of your life and end up winning the FedExCup. So I get that it mightn't be -- it mightn't be like the benchmark of consistency that it used to be.

But saying that, I think if you put yourself in position in the FedExCup enough times, like sooner or later you're going to get over the line and get it done. And that's what I've been most proud of is the, whatever, 12 years that I've been on TOUR, I've put myself in position enough times to win it that I've gotten the job done a couple of times.

One FedExCup is great, and you know, a lot of guys have done that, but putting yourself in position year after year to try to win it like DJ has and got his eventually last year, that's the benchmark and that's what we're all trying to do.

#### Q. Harris said you were either going to love or hate the Georgia Bulldogs. What are your thoughts?



# TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP

RORY McILROY: I know their slogan or motto at this point. It's better. I played with J.T. here last year and all I heard was "Roll Tide." I feel like Georgians don't have quite the accent that the people from Alabama do. "Go Dawgs" is a little easier on the ears.

#### Q. How do you handle the barking?

RORY McILROY: It's okay. Obviously Georgia had a good win last night, so everybody is amped up and excited for the season.

#### Q. You've heard worse at The Ryder Cup?

RORY McILROY: Yeah.

#### Q. Does this prepare you for The Ryder Cup in any way?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's not as if you've got anyone else to focus on, and especially when you're playing with them right there, and it's been that way for the last three days basically.

I think Jon's playing next week in Napa, so I was going to say, last competitive start before The Ryder Cup, so at least they are getting used to the way it's going to be. But yeah, it's compelling viewing. It's going to be really interesting these last few holes.

#### Q. When is the first time you saw Jon --

RORY McILROY: I didn't play with him until Irish Open 2017, first two days at Portstewart I think was the first time I played with him and I didn't really know much about him until when he won Torrey Pines, held that putt on the last green. I don't think I had heard of him before that. I thought, oh, this guy seems pretty good. He'll be a good Ryder Cup player in the future. That was the first time.

What's it been, four years since then? He's just went up the levels.

#### Q. Can you see it as a player in someone else --

RORY McILROY: No, first time I played with Jordan Spieth was the first two days at Valero San Antonio in 2013 and he didn't play well and he missed the cut. I said to

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whoever it was, I said, I don't know what the big deal is about this guy (laughter) and Jordan ends up going and nearly winning every major in 2015.

So it's hard to know -- Phil obviously played enough golf with him over the course of his time at Arizona State that he was like, no, this guy is going to be really good. I just had two rounds of not so stellar play by Jordan to go off and I made a pretty bad assumption.

**Q. What's your schedule like between now and The Ryder Cup?**

RORY McILROY: Two weeks at home. First week I'll relax. It's been -- this is like eight out of ten weeks and it's been Europe, Japan, back here, a lot of travel, a lot of time without the family.

So I'll go home and be a husband and a dad for a week, and then I'll start to ramp it back up and get prepared for going up to Wisconsin.

**Q. I was going to ask the ramping up. Do you feel like you have a good sense of the rhythms to make sure you're peaking for The Ryder Cup?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, and it's even -- we all get in Monday, and even from Monday to Friday morning, it's a long time. I tell the rookies not to do much in the start of the week because that's driving range itself, the practice rounds, the press conferences, the Opening Ceremony and everything else that goes along with it. Try to conserve as much energy as possible.

**Q. On paper, the Americans look to be the favorite, but as one of the leaders in the European Team what do you feel like the attitude or feeling should be toward the Americans?**

RORY McILROY: I think all you need to do is look at the Solheim Cup this week to look at the favorite on paper versus -- I don't know how this afternoon went, but Europe got off to a pretty good start. And I don't even know, do they have one in the Top-20 in the world? Look, on paper is just that. It's on paper. We've been underdogs in these things enough the last few years to know that doesn't really matter. Especially match play over 18 holes, anything can happen.

But over the course of the three days, I think the better team is always the one that comes out on top, and I guess we just have to look at our track record over the last ten Ryder Cups that have been played. We've won eight of them, and that's a pretty good record.

**Q. Should people be looking at history?**

RORY McILROY: It could play a part, I guess but in golf you have to go off form, and form would say that the Americans are playing very, very well at the minute. But it's a collective effort.

Again, we see it all the time in the Match Play, even in Austin, it's a top five player in the world will go out against somebody ranked 60 and they will lose.

It's not, to make the analogy of tennis and the US Open, yes, there's a couple upsets yesterday, but more often than not, the top seed always wins. In golf, it doesn't quite work that way for whatever reason. The Top-50 in the world are so tightly bunched, you line up the Top-50 players in the world on that range and you wouldn't be able to tell who is 1, would be 27, who is whatever. The margins are so fine in this game.

**Q. Naomi was talking about -- inaudible -- have you ever been there?**

RORY McILROY: No, because winning -- it's different in golf, right. Yeah, look, there's certainly been times when I haven't enjoyed the game as much as I would want to. But I think that's still -- I've tried really hard and I spoke about this quite a lot in 2019 about separating who I am as a golfer and who I am as a person and trying to not let that define me, and it seems what Naomi is going through at the minute is that same thing. How can I play tennis and enjoy it and not let the results define who I am.

I think that's her -- I think that's what she's going through right now and I think everyone just needs to let her have time to figure that out. And she seems like a really smart girl, and hopefully she'll be able to do it and come back and start enjoying the game just like when she picked the racquet up when she was a little girl, because that's -- doing it as a job or for a living, and that's when the joy goes out of it and that's when you lose your innocence and that's when you lose -- there's a part of that that goes the further along you get in this professional career, and the more you can hold onto that joy and innocence of remembering what it was, the reason why you picked up a golf club and why you picked up a tennis racquet, that's the important thing.

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