

THE PLAYERS Championship

Friday, March 12, 2021

Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida, USA

TPC Sawgrass

Rory McIlroy

Quick Quotes

Q. Rory, is it going to be good to get home?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I'm looking forward to it. I don't want to say it's been a long four weeks, but definitely -- it's funny, I used to think four weeks in a row was nothing, and then I feel like I'm getting old because by the fourth week I'm like, a little achy, a couple things are hurting, so I'm looking forward to getting home. That's not the reason I didn't play very well this week, but yeah, it's felt like a long four weeks.

Q. What are you most frustrated with?

RORY McILROY: Probably the swing issues and where it all stems from, probably like October last year, doing a little bit of speed training, started getting sucked into that stuff, swing got flat, long, and too rotational. Obviously I added some speed and am hitting the ball longer, but what that did to my swing as a whole probably wasn't a good thing, so I'm sort of fighting to get back out of that. That's what I'm frustrated with.

I felt like I made some good strides. I played well at TOUR Championship, played well at the U.S. Open. I sort of look back at Winged Foot and I look at my swing there, and I would be pretty happy with that again, and then after Winged Foot I had a few weeks before we went to the West Coast and I started to try to hit the ball a bit harder, hit a lot of drivers, get a bit more speed, and I felt like that was sort of the infancy of where these swing problems have come from. So it's just a matter of trying to get back out of it.

Q. Is it something you feel like you can get out of quickly, or if you didn't fall into it immediately it'll take some time?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it'll take a bit of time. Like with anything, the slightest change in your swing is going to feel uncomfortable for a while. It's not like it's that far away. I go back to last September, October is where it looked and felt pretty good, so it's just a matter of sort of -- maybe not erasing the stuff, I'd still like to keep the speed and what



I've been able to -- but just not make the swings that are sort of producing that speed.

Q. Not to play amateur psychologist, but you're obviously one of the longest players on the PGA TOUR. Why do you think you went down that route?

RORY McILROY: I think a lot of people did. I'd be lying if I said it wasn't anything to do with what Bryson did at the U.S. Open. I think a lot of people saw that and were like, whoa, if this is the way they're going to set golf courses up in the future, it helps. It really helps.

The one thing that people don't appreciate is how good Bryson is out of the rough. Not only because of how upright he is but because his short irons are longer than standard, so he can get a little more speed through the rough than us, than other guys. And I thought being able to get some more speed is a good thing, and I maybe just -- to the detriment a little bit of my swing, I got there, but I just need to maybe rein it back in a little bit.

Q. I know you mentioned it's been four weeks in a row, but it's also been like seven of eight for you. In hindsight do you worry that that may be a little too much to bite off?

RORY McILROY: It was certainly ambitious, especially going Abu Dhabi to the West Coast. But I wanted to play. I felt like we didn't -- I played sparingly sort of from September onwards last year, so I wanted to play quite a bit.

I think these next three weeks coming up it'll give me some time to -- it'll give me some time to work on some stuff and I can get ready for that place that you have on your facemask.

Q. You have three excellent rounds to end in November there; is some of that confidence you got from that a little diminished by what has happened in the last couple weeks?

RORY McILROY: I think so. I struggled there on the first day, just sort of started to trust myself a little bit and found something in between that first and second round on Friday, and then, as you said, I played really well from then



on in.

I mean, I certainly have like an idea in my head of the way I want to play that golf course, and I felt like I really made some good strides in November. But if you're not hitting the shots, then it doesn't make any difference. First and foremost I have to be able to hit the shots and get the ball starting on my line and control the flight and control the spin. At the minute I'm struggling to do that, and if you can't do that going to Augusta, you've got no chance.

Q. It was a beautiful day to play golf, you're playing with two guys you know well, it's a nice golf course. Is there any pleasure out of today for you at all?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I couldn't -- Sergio is one of my closest friends out here. His young son and our daughter met each other for the first time yesterday. They came over to the house afterwards and we had a good time, so that was good fun.

And Pauly and Webb, any time I see I'm paired with them, I look forward to it. They're two of the nicest guys out here. If I had to be miserable for a couple of days it was good to do it with them.

Q. Right now do you have any desire to play and practice?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I want to get on the range right away and try to get through this. Yeah, I'm pretty determined to get back to where I know I can be.

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