

Arnold Palmer Invitational

Friday, March 6, 2026

Bay Hill, Florida, USA

Bay Hill Club and Lodge

Rory McIlroy

Quick Quotes



Q. Pleased with that round today?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, very pleased. One bogey. Hit it in the water on 8. But made a good putt for bogey there. I really felt like that kept any momentum that I had for the round going. I played the last 10 holes really, really well. Overall real really pleased. Played a very sort of controlled, patient round of golf, which you need to do around here. Yeah, good day's work.

Q. (No microphone.)

RORY McILROY: I felt like I played yesterday okay as well. I made a couple of big numbers. I felt like the wind got very strong on us for a portion of the back nine yesterday. Definitely got a lot tougher. I wasn't too displeased with how I played yesterday, obviously I just didn't hold it together and score the way I wanted to coming down the last few holes. But I felt like my game's in pretty good shape the last couple days.

Q. For a Friday, conditions-wise, how does this compare to what you've seen here in the past?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, pretty similar, I would say. If we don't get any rain the next couple days, which it looks like we won't, it's going to be very, yeah, it's going to be really difficult. It's difficult even if you hit the ball in the fairway, with this little bit of breeze, with the firm greens, I mean, it's hard to get the ball close. You're hitting good iron shots to 25, 30 feet all the time, and then you're not going to make a lot of those. So really have to make the bulk of your score on the par-5s and just stay really patient for the rest of the way.

Q. What did you hit out of the bunker on 16?

RORY McILROY: 7-iron.

Q. You've come back from injuries, do you have any advice for Justin Thomas doing the same?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, look, I haven't went through

surgery, so I don't know what that's like to come back from. But, yeah, it's going to take time. I saw J.T. a few weeks ago and he said that this is going to be his first start and I said, Oof, that's probably not the best place to come back to after six months off. But look, J.T.'s been one of the best players in the world for the last 10 years, he'll be fine. He just needs to get sort of sharp again and get into tournament mode and all that stuff. But, I mean as long as he got through these two days and didn't feel any ill effects of the back or the surgery, then I think he's in a good spot.

Q. How was the trip to Augusta with your dad?

RORY McILROY: It was great. Yeah, it was fun. It was a lot of fun.

Q. Was that his first time there since you won?

RORY McILROY: It was his first time there since I won, yeah.

Q. So any reminiscing about shots or any of that or during the round or?

RORY McILROY: Not really. A little bit. I hit the show on 15 again, just as like just to replicate it.

Q. How did it come out?

RORY McILROY: I nearly pitched it in the hole. It was actually a better shot than I hit in the tournament. It was actually unbelievable, I wish I could have got it on camera.

Q. More club?

RORY McILROY: No, I hit 7-iron. I'm a little stronger this year. I've put in a bit of work in the gym.

Q. When you say it was pitched in the hole, right in front?

RORY McILROY: Like literally, you know, the pitch mark was that (indicating) from the hole, and just sort of went to the back edge of the green.



Q. So you went to the spot and you drew it around like before.

RORY McILROY: Yeah.

Q. (No Microphone.)

RORY McILROY: Not yet. Maybe have to win a couple more of them to get something.

Q. If they were to put a plaque on that course Augusta National --

RORY McILROY: They won't.

Q. -- would you have a place?

RORY McILROY: They won't. They won't.

Q. If they did. If they did.

RORY McILROY: Well, bridges or water fountains.

Q. (No Microphone.)

RORY McILROY: No, that's true. Could be half a degree stronger. I have no idea. I don't know. I mean, the wedge on 18 in the playoff?

Q. Is the 7-iron on display?

RORY McILROY: Yeah.

Q. Did you see it?

RORY McILROY: Yeah.

Q. So where is it?

RORY McILROY: It's in the champion's locker room.

Q. Are you able to say who you're sharing a locker with?

RORY McILROY: I think so. Raymond Floyd and Ben Hogan.

Q. (No microphone.)

RORY McILROY: Yeah.

Q. I spoke with Brad Faxon, he said your putting this year is the best.

RORY McILROY: Well, last like 2025 statistically, yeah,

that was my best putting year of my career, for sure, yeah.

Q. How is it this week? Are you happy with your putting?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I'm putting nicely, yeah. Again, when you're hitting it to 25, 30 feet all the time it's hard to hole a lot of putts. But I feel good.

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