

RBC Canadian Open

Wednesday, June 4, 2025

Caledon, Ontario, Canada

TPC Toronto at Osprey Valley (North Course)

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by 29 PGA TOUR winner and two-time Canadian Open winner, Rory McIlroy. You just finished your pro-am, were able to see the front nine of TPC Toronto. What's your initial thoughts on this new course we've added?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I don't know if you can call any course a typical TPC setup but that's kind of what it's like. A little bit of room off the tee, the fairways are quite generous, but if you miss them, the rough is pretty penal. The greens are tricky, undulating, really got to hit it into the right sections.

I think it could be a good test by the end of the week if there's no rain and it firms up a little bit and they can tuck the pins away. I think you're going to -- there's certainly going to be some birdies, but it's a long course for a par-70. There's some chances out there, but for the most part, it's going to be a decent test.

As you said, I saw the front nine today. Won't really get a chance to see the back nine, but Harry has been here the last couple days and walked around, so hopefully he can point me in the right direction for the back nine tomorrow and then we'll go from there.

Q. You obviously mean a lot to this tournament. I'm curious what this tournament means to you.

RORY McILROY: It means a lot. I haven't, I guess, hidden my sort of aspirations for national Opens and where I would like them to be, what their standing is in the professional game of golf. So this has meant a lot.

I first came here in 2019. Once the date changed after -- it used to be that week after the Open Championship, which wasn't ideal for a lot of players. I honestly love the date change. I love that it's the week leading into the U.S. Open.

I told this story a little bit, but before playing in this event, 2016, 2017, 2018, I missed three cuts in a row at the U.S. Open, and since playing the Canadian Open the week



before, I've had six top 10s in a row. So there's something to that.

But then obviously playing in front of the Canadian fans and everything that goes along with that and the enthusiasm, you guys only get to see this sort of golf once a year, so I think once it does come along, it's really appreciated.

Then I think that atmosphere is really appreciated by the players that get to play in front of those fans.

Q. 25 years ago Tiger Woods completed the Grand Slam, comes here, wins the Canadian Open. Obviously you've completed the Grand Slam, come here, back at the Canadian Open. I'm curious what these days are you chasing? Are you chasing Tiger? Are you chasing records? Are you chasing just joy in your everyday life? How would you describe what you're chasing these days?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I don't know if I'm chasing anything. I would certainly say that the last few weeks I've had a couple weeks off, and going and grinding on the range for three or four hours every day is maybe a little tougher than it used to be.

You have this event in your life that you've worked towards and it happens, sometimes it's hard to find the motivation to get back on the horse and go again.

I think the last two weeks have been good for me just as a reset, just to sort of figure out where I'm at in my own head, what I want to do, where I want to play. Yeah, reset some goals.

I thought it was a good time to reset some goals. I've had a pretty good first half of the season, and I want to have a good second half of the season now, too.

Q. We know that you're a real student of the history of the sport. What would it mean to you to win this trophy for a third time and enter even more elite company?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, look, anytime you start to rack up



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multiple wins in places, especially with a trophy like the Canadian Open and the names that are on that trophy, there's not many that are on it three times, so yeah, it would be very cool.

I'd love to get myself in the mix at the weekend and have an opportunity to do that would be -- it would be the perfect way to sort of end the week and with one eye going towards the U.S. Open. It would be a great way to go in there.

Q. This tournament always seems to have a good European field. Do you think that's a timing thing, or is there a certain draw to coming to Canada during the spring or summer that's predominantly in the U.S. on the PGA TOUR?

RORY McILROY: I think it's a little bit of both. I think a lot of the European guys like to play the week before a major. I think there's that part of it.

And yeah, look, we play so much in the States anyway, and you come here, it feels a little different, but you're not that far away. I think when the tournament has been a little closer to the city and we've been able to stay in Toronto, it feels a little more, I won't say European, but cosmopolitan and may be different from what we do week in, week out.

But I think for the most part, it's become a very, very good tournament, and I think because of that, and you see guys playing each and every year, I think the field then starts to become stronger because you see your peers do something, and we're all like sort of sheep out here. Once one person does something, we all sort of try to do the same thing.

I just think this tournament has grown from strength to strength over these last few years, and that's a lot to do with Golf Canada and RBC and everyone behind it, and they should be really proud of what they've built.

Q. Going back to the PGA Championship, considering all the good vibes you brought into that after the Masters, it was a little surprising when you didn't speak after your rounds. Was it performance related? Was it something else? More broadly, where do you think the responsibility is for players to speak to the media after rounds?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, look, the PGA was a bit of a weird week. I didn't play well. I didn't play well the first day, so I wanted to go practice, so that was fine.

Second day we finished late. I wanted to go back and see Poppy before she went to bed. The driver news broke. I

didn't really want to speak on that.

Saturday I was supposed to tee off at 8:20 in the morning. I didn't tee off until almost 2:00 in the afternoon, another late finish, was just tired, wanted to go home.

Then Sunday, I just wanted to get on the plane and go back to Florida. Yeah, look, and also the driver stuff, there was -- I was a little pissed off because I knew that Scottie's driver had failed on Monday, but my name was the one that was leaked. It was supposed to stay confidential. Two members of the media were the ones that leaked it.

Again, I didn't want to get up there and say something that I regretted, either, because there's a lot of people that -- I'm trying to protect Scottie. I don't want to mention his name. I'm trying to protect TaylorMade. I'm trying to protect the USGA, PGA of America, myself.

I just didn't want to get up there and say something that I regretted at the time.

With Scottie's stuff, that's not my information to share. I knew that that had happened, but that's not on me to share that, and I felt that process is supposed to be kept confidential, and it wasn't for whatever reason. That's why I was pretty annoyed at that.

From a responsibility standpoint, look, I understand, but if we all wanted to, we could all bypass you guys and we could just go on this and we could go on social media and we could talk about our round and do it our own way.

We understand that that's not ideal for you guys and there's a bigger dynamic at play here, and I talk to you guys and I talk to the media a lot. I think there should be an understanding that this is a two-way street, and as much as we need to speak to you guys, we're sort of -- like we understand the benefit that comes from you being here and giving us the platform and everything else. So I understand that.

But again, I've been beating this drum for a long time. If they want to make it mandatory, that's fine, but in our rules it says that it's not, and until the day that that's maybe written into the regulations, you're going to have guys skip from time to time, and that's well within our rights.

Q. You've spoken about kind of the amount that you put yourself out there during the LIV stuff. I just wonder, did that experience kind of come to mind when you made that conscious decision to step back from the mics in Quail Hollow? You had kind of gone through that and know what it's like to throw yourself out there. Was that part of the decision, too, to take



the step back?

RORY McILROY: No, not at all. Like I haven't been -- I've skipped my fair share of media requests over the years, so it's not as if -- it was nothing to do with that. It was just some days you don't feel like talking.

Q. You're playing with Luke Clanton the next couple days. He had four top 10s as an amateur last year, kind of unprecedented. What would you say about the impressive nature of what he did, how hard that is to do as a college player, and if you've met him and what you look forward to about playing with him now that he starts his PGA TOUR career.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I haven't really met him, or I certainly haven't played with him, so I'm looking forward to that over the next two days.

It seems like a lot of these college kids are coming out just ready. You look over the past few years, Ludvig, for example, Michael Thorbjornsen, obviously Luke. I think this PGA TOUR U program is so good. If it was up to me, I'd give the college kids five or ten spots on TOUR instead of just one.

I think to bring that new blood through each and every year I think is so important for the TOUR, and to see Luke and some of his other peers take advantage of that opportunity and get their cards and come out here and play well, it's awesome to see. That's the future of the TOUR.

I love that PGA TOUR U program, and it's great that it's working in the way it was intended to work.

Q. You mentioned at THE PLAYERS in your post-rounder about the importance of reframing negative thoughts into positive thoughts. I was wondering if you could elaborate on how that helps you as you're going along and why it's important to stay positive out there, particularly with all the pressures.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think for me, if anyone knows my father, he's the most positive person in the world. He could find a silver lining at a funeral probably.

It's the way I was brought up. It's what I -- it's how I perform my best. I think just trying to see the good in everything. I think sometimes when you're out on the golf course, it's hard to do that when you're making bogeys and not hitting it the way you want to, but it's a lot better than being stuck in an office. There's a lot of ways to see the positives out there.

Q. Can you quantify just what it meant to change from TP5x to TP5 at Augusta National and win the Masters?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I would say looking back on it I'm trying to think of some of the pivotal shots that I hit. Like maybe the two shots into 15 at the weekend, I don't think the TP5x spots on the green the way the TP5 did. Those two holes.

The 8-iron on 17 on Sunday, I don't think a TP5x stops as quick as what the TP5 did there, and it also has enabled me to -- it's forced me almost to hit a lot more of these partial three-quarter shots because it does spin more, and even on firm greens like the greens got at Augusta on Sunday, with those three-quarter shots, I can still put enough spin on it to stop, where the TP5x you start to take speed off and the ball, for me anyway, it would start to knuckle a little bit and it would start to chase. Instead of the ball running out three or four yards, it would run out nine or ten yards, so that makes a big difference.

Yeah, certainly I think for the toughest tests, especially the major championships, Oakmont next week, for example, using a softer, spinnier golf ball, I think it's been a good find for me, and it's certainly helped this year.

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