

Aberdeen Standard Investments Scottish Open

Wednesday, 7 July, 2021

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference

Q. Good to see you back here once again.

RORY McILROY: Thank you.

Q. How is the course this morning and how different is it from when you were last here a few years ago?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's obviously soft just from all the rain there's been the last couple of days. But it's good. It's a good test. I think they have added a couple of tees. It's a bit longer. The rough's up a bit more than it probably was last time. So yeah, I mean, I think with benign conditions like this and with it being soft, the scoring is still going to be pretty good.

Maybe players might just get punished a little more for like wayward shots, which is sort of what you're looking for. You're looking for at least -- you've got to stand up and hit some good golf shots and you want to be challenged a little bit. I think the setup this week is pretty good.

Q. Last week was 14-under and just inside the top 30. What do you expect this week?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I would say 14-under this week is probably going to have a decent chance. It's all dependent on the weather. Dependent on what sort of wind we get, the direction of the wind, whether the course firms up any more than how it is right now. It's all dependent on the weather like any links golf course.

Q. And ahead of next week at Royal St. George's, given the form you're in at the moment, how key is it you have four good rounds here this week?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I'm looking forward to getting back on the golf course. I was pretty rusty last week in Ireland. I didn't really do any practise the week after the U.S. Open and it sort of showed in my game. So it's been nice to link back up with Pete who is here and worked on some stuff the last couple days. So yeah, it's nice to get four more rounds, and four rounds on, you know,



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somewhat links conditions and sort of seeing the game a little bit that way again. You know, putting off greens and chip-and-runs and that sort of stuff.

Q. You were saying last week this was a very last-minute decision and forced on you by circumstances. How pleased are you that you're actually here now, and what would represent a successful week?

RORY McILROY: I wouldn't say it was forced upon me. It was like, I wanted to play. I made the decision. I'm not here against my will. But just with being over here, it just made sense to play. It made sense to play rather than go down to London for a week and sort of practise down there. I guess I could have got to Wembley tonight and got my Danish top on.

Q. You can still wear it here.

RORY McILROY: That's true. But I think it's important for me to play. As I said, I didn't do much practise the week after the U.S. Open because I knew I was about to spend five of the next six weeks away from the girls. So I wanted to spend as much time with them as I could, and then it was nice. I played last week and there was a couple things that I needed to work on, and it's nice to have Pete here this week to work on them and get another four rounds.

Q. Did the rust manifest itself in your driving, because obviously that was your great weapon and doesn't seem to be right there at the moment.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, that's probably -- that's correct. It's more I think the longer the club gets, the more -- the more exaggerated the move is. You can get away with it with the shorter clubs because they are shorter clubs, but once you get a longer club in your hand, that's where some of the bad habits start to creep in a little bit more.

Yeah, that's something that's been an area of -- that I've worked on over the past couple of days, and it feels pretty -- it feels better. I definitely drove the ball much better yesterday for nine holes and then today in the Pro-Am, as well, so that was encouraging.

Q. You've played lots of golf in challenging conditions in Scotland. You could play eight rounds here in



benign conditions. Do you feel sorry for the people that know the course was firm and fast last week and Mother Nature has taken that away?

RORY McILROY: Yeah it would have been great to play it fast and firm, but again, it's just so out of anyone's control. You can't control what the weather does, and this is a wonderful week to have The Scottish Open and it's actually a wonderful venue. Everything is so easy. I'm staying in the clubhouse this week and the gym's right here and the practise facilities.

It's a great -- with one eye towards next week, as well, it's a great week to spend a week and work on your game and play. I feel bad the weather hasn't cooperated the last couple of editions but I'd say the longer the tournament stays here, if it does stay here, the more chance the course will be the way everyone wants it to be.

Q. How delighted are you to see the fans back here?

RORY McILROY: It's nice. That's one of the -- I guess one of the big things I was looking forward to coming back over and playing on The European Tour was the fact that fans were allowed back in. Sort of got used to it in the States, basically since the start of the year. Fans have been allowed back to sporting events and watch golf tournaments, so it is great that at least there's going to be a few people out here to create a nice atmosphere.

Q. What's the experience been like of working with Pete? How would you judge it? If we went over to the range and asked Pete about it, what do you think he would say?

RORY McILROY: He would probably tell you that I'm (laughter) I think that's the great thing about Pete is he doesn't sugarcoat it. He'll tell me when it's not great so that when he does give me a compliment, I know that it's real. It's been great. It's very -- it's probably stuff I've worked on before but said in a slightly different way, slightly different thoughts.

Good thing about Pete is he's been doing it such a long time and with so many great players, is he knows what works and he knows what doesn't. I've really enjoyed it. I really have. I've enjoyed learning from him. He's got such a great knowledge about not just the golf swing but the game of golf in general, and yeah, it's been a good few months.

Q. You look like you've made real strides forward major-wise at the U.S. Open. Just wonder what you're looking for next?

RORY McILROY: More of the same. I mean, again, you can't -- I mean, all anyone asks of themselves is to give themselves a chance on Sunday. That's it. So the only way you can win is to give yourself a chance, and I gave myself a chance; I was right there on Sunday. Made my best swing of the week probably on the 11th hole and ended up making bogey from it with a bad three-putt.

It's getting there. I think, as well, the thing about majors, you just have to hang around. You don't have to do anything spectacular. You can sort of par the course to death, pick off a few birdies here and there. It's a different style of golf than we're probably used to playing week-in, week-out, and I like that. I like that challenge. I like, I don't know, at the grand old age of 32, I like the fact that it's probably more of a mental challenge than a physical one because I feel like I can use my experience to hang in there.

Q. What do you remember of Darren's win?

RORY McILROY: I remember grinding my ass off for 13 holes on Saturday morning with my rain jacket on in bad conditions and the weather started to clear up on the 14th tee and I took my rain jacket off and proceeded to hit one out-of-bounds, and that was sort of it for me for the tournament.

But obviously it was great to see Darren win. I remember I played a practise round with him early Wednesday morning, and at that point it didn't look like he was anywhere near winning the golf tournament. But that's the great thing about golf. You just never know. I think the big thing with St. George's, though, is you know that you know you might get some unlucky breaks and you're going to get some good breaks and the ball is going to take some different bounces here and there. But if you just pack your patience and understand that it's the same for everyone, and the good and the bad bounces should all level out over 72 holes.

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