

Genesis Scottish Open

Sunday, 16 July, 2023

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



GENESIS
SCOTTISH OPEN 

A Rolex Series Event



CLARE BODEL: Rory, your first win in Scotland, second Rolex Series title, won a co-sanctioned event, DP World Tour and PGA TOUR. How does it feel?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it feels great. I came here this week, we are obviously on the eve of The Open Championship but you know, you're thinking about trying to prepare for that.

But then you know you think about the weight that this tournament carries, being co-sanctioned for Race to Dubai, FedExCup, all the stuff at the end of the year as well, so I feel like I sort of killed two birds with one stone this week and GAVE myself an even bigger lead in The Race to Dubai, got myself up there in FedExCup, and obviously a huge confidence boost going into The Open next week.

I've had my chances over the last couple of months and been knocking on the door. Just haven't quite been able to get it done so hopefully this breaks the seal and we can go on from here.

CLARE BODEL: A nice little stat earlier that you were the first player to win The Scottish Open, The Irish Open and The Open. That's something nice to put on the C.V., isn't it?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, and obviously me being a player from this part of the world, to win those three titles throughout my career, it's a nice thing to have.

National Opens are usually the oldest titles in our game, and I sort of make it a point of pride to -- I've won a few, the two on the other side of the Atlantic, the three over here, and I've won the Australian Open as well.

The national titles I feel are pretty big deals, especially when you look at the trophy and see the list of winners that have gotten their name on them. So it's nice to add my name to this one now.

Q. You had a fantastic back nine, 4-under, especially in those conditions. Can you talk us through that, and

particularly 17 and 18?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, and that's without birdieing the two par 5s, as well. It was one of those days where you try and make the birdies on the downwind holes, and then you just try to make pars on the into-the-wind holes. I had a nice birdie on 11, and then I got lucky with my putt on 12. The wind blew it back into the hole.

And then you know, 14 through 18 there, bonus with a putt on 14. And then those -- I felt like missing that birdie putt on 16 after Bob had posted 14-under, I felt that was really, I think birdieing one of the last two is great achievement.

So once I missed that putt, I was like okay if I can somehow birdie 17 or 18 and get myself into a playoff, that's all I was really hoping for.

But the two iron shots I hit, 5-iron on 17, and then that 2-iron into the last there, they are two of the best iron shots I can remember hitting, especially under the circumstances.

Q. You had to wait to take that putt on 18. What was going through your mind?

RORY McILROY: I was just trying to take the scene in. Everyone around the green -- you know, I get to do this, not for a living, but I get to do this to try to fulfill my boyhood dreams, I guess.

So to be on the green in that environment, and the more that you can try to smell the roses along the way, so that's what I was trying to do. I was just trying to take in the scene and do anything to not think about the putt that I was going to try to hit. I knew what it was. I didn't need to over think it. It was a straight downwind putt. So I just needed to get it started on line, and gravity and the wind and conditions will take care of the rest.

Q. Your first wind in Scotland is always sweet, but to do it the way you did, how special was that?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, for whatever reason, walking on to the 17th tee, the 2013 Australian Open popped into my



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head. I was one behind Adam Scott with two holes to play. We were playing in the same group as each other. I held a great putt on 17 for par to stay one behind playing the last, and then he made a bogey and I made a birdie and I was able to clip him by a shot.

For whatever reason, I think all the experience that you gain -- I mean, I haven't thought about that tournament in probably years but when I got myself into this position today, that's the first thing that popped into my head.

So all those memories and those experiences, they stand by you, and that just give me a good feeling going into those last couple holes to try to do something special.

Q. Bob will be disappointed to come so close, and you played with him here a few years back. What sort of message would you have for him?

RORY McILROY: If he can shoot 64 in a day like today, he can do anything. I mean, that was an unbelievable round of golf. And it's great to see him back in form, as well. Obviously he had the win in Rome last year, and then he sort of went off a little bit but it's nice to see him hitting some form again, especially at an important point of the year when he's looking to try to make that Ryder Cup.

Q. The front nine, with the way it went and the weather was, it seems like would have on easy to mentally lose hope. What did you tell yourself or what did Harry tell you?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, he told me there's still plenty of chances on this back nine. 10, 11, 12, 13 were all playing downwind. 15, was playing downwind as well.

Yeah, he was just trying to keep me as positive as he could. I knew that even because we teed off on two tees, I saw the guys turning that started on 10, and it seemed like there was some better scores on that back nine.

So I still -- I certainly didn't think I was out of it by any means going on to that 10th tee.

Q. Just wonder if you feel like you made a couple of points: Your ability to play in Scotland, and your intention to just get it done.

RORY McILROY: I'd like to think so. I tried to say yesterday that I improved as a wind player, and I feel like I have. Hopefully those 2-iron shots on the last two holes will prove that.

Yeah, you've got to hit great shots but you also have to finish them off with putts, and that's something that I didn't

do at St Andrews last year, and it's something I didn't do in L.A. a few weeks ago.

So to be able to hole those putts coming down the stretch when I needed to, I don't feel like it really proves anything. I don't feel like I need to prove anything in my career, but it's satisfying to know that for me that I can still do it.

Q. The week before your last major win, the 2014 US PGA, you obviously won Bridgestone. You've obviously now won again heading to Hoylake. How much of a boost is it heading down the road?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it is. It's nice to have the validation. The validation; it's great racking up top 5s, top 10s, but it's much nicer heading away with a trophy on Sunday afternoon.

It's a great shot of confidence. Again, going back to that little nugget about the Australian Open in 2013, having something fresh in my memory if I hopefully find myself in a similar position next week where I've got a chance to win with nine holes to go, I can certainly draw on what I did here today; that I can get myself in the mix again.

Q. Plans to travel down tonight?

RORY McILROY: I'll travel down tonight. Get settled in tonight. Yeah, I haven't done any early reconnaissance. I haven't seen the place since 2014. I'll get out there on the course tomorrow and try to figure it out and make sure I'm ready for Thursday.

Q. Your motion, you take advantage of creativity. I saw you practising with Brad Faxon this week. Did you work on this purpose?

RORY McILROY: Not so much that. I think more just it's quite an adjustment going from the greens that we usually put on in America to the greens here. They are much slower, and when they are much slower, you don't have to read as much break into putts and everything like that.

It was just more getting adjusted to that. I knew the one thing over here for me is if I have a tendency with my putter, the putter rises up too quickly and I get it on sort of the bottom half of the blade, so really trying to keep the putter low through impact and trying to get a roll on it and good strike. That's sort of the one thing of my putting that I was thinking about this week.

Q. If you don't mind I ask another question, how happy are you to get back your friend Sergio Garcia?

RORY McILROY: I'd say, yeah, we've talked, which is a

first step. Yeah, there's, you know, there's things that we both think we probably could have done differently, and there's a lot that's went into it. You know, it's good that we're at least talking again. It's a first step. I wouldn't say we are all the way there but we are -- it's a good first step.

Q. You mentioned the tee shot on 17 and the 2-iron on 18. No one knows a good shot like a fellow pro or a caddie. I was just wondering what they said when they saw that up close, what they said to you or if you remember?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, Tom Kim gave me a fist pump after the tee shot on 18. It was nice to show the youngster I still have it in me, I guess.

Again, I haven't really had a chance to really talk to Harry or to see anyone else. But yeah, that 2-iron on 18, that's probably going to be up there with one of the best shots I'll hit in my career.

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