

# Genesis Scottish Open

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North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

## Rory McIlroy

### Press Conference

BRIONY CARLYON: Delighted could be joined by Rory McIlroy.

Last year, it was a remarkable birdie, birdie finish. Can you just take us back to those moments and what you remember of winning?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, you know it was obviously a really windy day, and you know I felt like Bob he played a much tougher back nine than me with everything that was on the line but trying to win your home open and all that.

I made a couple of good putts on the back nine. I didn't make birdie on 16 and felt like that was sort of my opportunity gone. And then to finish two, three like I did. You know, everyone talks about the 2-iron at the last but the 5-iron I hit into 17 was just as good a shot if not a little bit better.

Yeah, to hit two iron shots like that and to hole the putts what I needed to, yeah, it was awesome. Sort of I felt in some ways bad that it came at the expense of Bob but at the same time it was amazing to win a tournament that I had never won before.

Yeah, good memories and good to be back.

**Q. Have you seen the plaque on 18 where you hit the shot from?**

RORY McILROY: Not physically but I've seen it online, yeah. They spelt my name wrong first time around. It's there now thankfully.

**Q. They just took a hammer and chisel a little bit to the "L." Obviously first time we've had a chance to speak to you since Pinehurst. Can you put into words the actions and emotions of that final round, if you can, please?**

RORY McILROY: I think the way I've described Pinehurst on Sunday was like it was a great day until it wasn't. I did things on that Sunday that I haven't been able to do in the



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last couple years. Took control of the golf tournament. Held putts when I needed to. Well, mostly when I needed to. Made birdies. You know, really got myself in there. And then, look, obviously unfortunately to miss those last two putts, or the putt on 16 and obviously the putt on 18.

Yeah, it was a tough day. It was a tough few days after that, obviously. But I think as you get further away from it happening, you start to see the positives and you start to see all the good things that you did throughout the week.

Yeah, there's learnings in there, too, right. I can vividly remember starting to feel a little uncomfortable waiting for my second putt on 16, and you know, the putt on the last, it was a really tricky putt. And I was very aware of where Bryson was off the tee. I knew I had to hit it really soft. If the one back didn't matter, I would have hit it firmer.

But because I was sort of in two minds, I didn't know whether Bryson was going to make a par or not, it was one of those ones where I had to make sure that if the putt didn't go in, that it wasn't going ten feet by which it very easily could have.

Thinking back, yeah, maybe I was a little too aware of where Bryson was and what he was doing but it was the nature of the golf course and how the golf course flowed. After the 14th tee, you're sort of looking at 13 green, and then I had to wait on my tee shot on 15 before he hit, or you know, to let him hit his second shot into 14. Just the way the course flowed, it just made me very aware of what he was doing at the same time. So it sort of got me out of my own little world a little bit.

But no, I mean, when I look back on that day, just like I look back on some of my toughest moments in my career, I'll learn a lot from it and I'll hopefully put that to good use. It's something that's been a bit of a theme throughout my career. I've been able to take those tough moments and turn them into great things not very long after that.

**Q. How difficult were the days that sort of followed there, and what sort of process of reconciliation in your own mind as to what happened, how did that go?**



RORY McILROY: It was okay. I went home on Sunday night and actually spent Monday night, Tuesday and Wednesday in Manhattan, which was sort of planned anyway. Because obviously I was going to go play the Travelers and ended up not doing that.

Went to Manhattan, which was nice. It was nice to sort of blend in with the city a little bit. I walked around. I walked the High Line a couple of times. I made a few phone calls. Sort of was alone with my thoughts for a couple days, which was good. I had some good chats with people close to me, and as you start to think about not just Sunday at Pinehurst but the whole way throughout the week, there was a couple of things that I noticed that I wanted to try to work on over the last few weeks coming into here, and obviously next week at Troon.

They were hard but at the same time, as each day went by, it became easier to focus on the positives and then to think about the future instead of what had just happened.

**Q. And next time when you're in that kind of position at a major on the back nine, who knows, it could be Troon next week, what do you think you would do differently or seek to do differently?**

RORY McILROY: Well, that's the thing. Not a whole lot different. As I said, it was a great day until it wasn't. I think I touched on it a little bit. I think if anything, I'd say my pre-shot routine got a little bit long. Started to look at the target a few more times over the ball.

And then, you know, as I said, like being very aware of what maybe some others were doing on the golf course and not really staying in my own little world for the whole 18 holes.

But really, apart from that, there's not a lot I would do differently.

**Q. A couple of things. You mentioned the bounceback-ability, which probably goes all the way back to 2000 and U.S. Open. Was this one perhaps the hardest to get over, though, and is Troon a shot at redemption, is that how you see it?**

RORY McILROY: I still think about the short missed putt that I missed at Crans-sur-Sierre in 2008 in a playoff. You think about all of them. And I was probably more devastated after that because it was my rookie year on Tour; I hadn't won yet. I remember feeling really bad after that for like a good week.

Yeah, I stewed on what happened at Pinehurst for a couple of days, but then, yeah, thankfully I can go home and look

at what I've achieved in the game and sort of feel okay about myself.

Yeah, look, it was a great opportunity. It passed me by but hopefully when I get that next opportunity, it won't pass me by.

**Q. That point I made about a shot at redemption, is that how you look at it next week?**

RORY McILROY: It's just another opportunity. I'm playing great golf and it's another opportunity to see how I can hopefully handle it better than I handled it a few weeks ago.

**Q. Can you go further on the putt on 18, the trickiness of it?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I just left it on the wrong side of the hole. I got a above the hole. Where the hole was cut was on top of the little slope, and ended up pretty dry and crusty around the hole. And the chip shot just ran out a little bit and got past the hole. So it was -- I hit that putt very, very easy, and obviously just missed on the low side, and it still went a good three or four feet by.

So I was probably playing it, I don't know, like two, two, and a half cups left, whatever it was, three-and-a-half-foot putt. There was a lot of swing to it, especially with how easy I was hitting it. Like I said, if it was match play and the next one didn't matter I would have approached the putt differently.

But knowing that Bryson had hit it left off the tee, I just sort of wanted to make sure that if there was still a chance at a playoff, that it was at least going to be that.

**Q. Bringing you back to today, between the second and third hole today, you stopped and spoke to a young man who was in a wheelchair. 12 months ago, he was a scratch golfer before being struck down, Scott Stewart. Does that make you feel even more appreciative of what you have and a little bit more humble? And secondly, 12 months ago, you broke the Scottish golf fans' heart when you beat Bob, but since then, Bob has been on Ryder Cup success, PGA TOUR card, winning on the PGA TOUR. What do you make of his journey?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so first of all, there's not a day goes by that I don't feel like I'm the luckiest person in the world to get up every morning and be healthy and follow my dream, right. There's videos of me at seven years old saying I want to be the best player in the world and I want to win all the majors. To be able to try to make that little

7-year-old boy proud every day is something that I really don't take for granted. I'm very appreciative of the position that I'm in in life.

It hits you when you meet someone like Scott this morning, absolutely. But I try to be as grateful as possible all the time.

And then with Bob, yeah, I mean, he's had an amazing 12 months. We all know the talent that he's had, and look, it would have been great for him to win The Scottish Open last year but he'll have plenty more chances. You know, he's obviously playing well, so he's got another great chance this week.

But yeah, to make the Ryder Cup Team, to have the week that I had in Rome, you know, to win in Canada with his dad on the bag, it's been a brilliant 12 months for Bob, and you know, everyone on Tour is delighted for him because he's such a good lad and he obviously doesn't forget where he comes from. He gives back to Oban as much as he can. He's a great lad, and I think everyone is really happy to see the success that he's had.

**Q. In the last few weeks as the dust set on Pinehurst, there's been a lot of criticism online from high-profile people, Hank Haney, Smylie Kaufman, etc., of Harry. It strikes me, just my opinion, that he's held to a higher standard than other caddies. What is your take on the criticism and what do you think he brings?**

RORY McILROY: You know, it's certainly unfair. Hank Haney has never been in that position. Smylie has been in that position once, and I love Smylie, and he was out there with us on 18.

But just because Harry is not as vocal or loud with his words as other caddies, it doesn't mean that he doesn't say anything and that he doesn't do anything. I just wish that, you know, these guys that criticise when things don't go my way, they never say anything good when things do go my way.

So where were they when I won Dubai earlier year or Quail Hollow or the two FedExCups that I've won with Harry or the two Ryder Cups or whatever? They are never there to say Harry did such a great job when I win, but they are always there to criticise when we don't win.

At the end of the day, they are not there. They are in the arena. They are not the ones hitting the shots and making the decisions. Someone said to me once, you would never -- if you would never take advice from these people, you would never take their criticisms, either. Certainly wouldn't go to Hank Haney for advice. I love

Smylie, but I think I know what I'm doing, and so does Harry.

**Q. Nobody recognised you on the High Line?**

RORY McILROY: A few people did. But I had my AirPods in, sort of -- you know, but it was nice.

**Q. You mentioned starting to feel a little uncomfortable before the putt on 16. What caused that?**

RORY McILROY: I think I hit such a good putt and looked like halfway down the first putt it looked like it could be a birdie, and it ran a foot by where I thought it was going to finish. Then I marked it, and yeah then Patrick was hitting his putt, and he can take his time. Obviously I'm -- obviously greens are tough. It's the end of a Sunday at the U.S. Open. Like you have to be really deliberate in what you're doing.

I just think I had to wait awhile to hit that second putt. It wasn't as if -- it was just more, you stand there, it's hard not to either start thinking about the future or notice before Bryson's ball is in the fairway or that sort of stuff. But again, that's on me to make sure that I'm in the right head space, and I hit a decent -- like I hit a decent putt on 16, the green grabbed it. I probably read that just right of center. Probably started it a touch left of that. Probably started it straight, maybe a touch left of center, and the green grabbed it and it caught the left edge. Wasn't a terrible putt, but I definitely felt a little bit of uneasiness before I hit it.

**Q. Do you have any regrets about the way you left the round without staying to speak to anyone?**

RORY McILROY: Absolutely not. No. There's nothing that I could have said that was -- not that -- I mean, it would have been good because you guys would have been able to write something about it or have a few quotes from me. No offence; you guys were the left of my worries at that point.

BRIONY CARLYON: Wish you all best of luck this week, Rory. Thanks for your time.

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