

Genesis Scottish Open

Thursday, 11 July, 2024

North Berwick, Scotland

The Renaissance Club

Rory McIlroy

Quick Quotes

Q. 5-under on day one. Does it feel like where you picked up a few weeks ago from the U.S. Open as far as ball-striking goes?

RORY McILROY: I think. So my game has been feeling pretty good in practise over the last ten or so days since I picked the club back up. Obviously the last time I played, I played well. I didn't get the result I wanted but I've still got a lot of confidence in my game.

I went time-out there today, shot a solid score. A couple I would have liked to hole coming in and be a few shots lower but overall great start to the tournament. Yeah, I sort of picked up where I left off.

Q. When you look at the highlights, seemed to be the chip-in on 3. Can you walk us through?

RORY McILROY: Sort of missed it in a good spot on 3 but sort of the nice thing about this course is even when you miss it on the short-side, it seems like you always have some sort of shot to get it close. And there I just needed to hit a little bump and let it pitch on the fringe and run down to the hole, and judged it nicely.

Q. I know you don't want to get ahead of yourself but anything you're working on this week getting ready for Royal Troon?

RORY McILROY: Not really. Just familiarising myself with a links golf again. First time I've played a links course since Hoylake last year, I guess. Getting back into how the wind feels. How the club feels through the turf. All that stuff. So that's why obviously I wanted to play this week. It's a good reintroduction to links golf. But obviously with a great opportunity to win another opportunity as well.

Q. Give us your thoughts on your play today.

RORY McILROY: I think it was a bit of a slow start, sort of up-and-down. I hit a couple of shots over the first few holes that I haven't seen in practise over the last ten days. So a bit of a reminder that golf isn't as easy as sometimes I



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think it is.

But then I really started to feel good. Especially on the front nine, our back nine, I started to hit some good drives, some good iron shots. You know, I give myself plenty of chances on that back nine and actually felt like I left a couple out there, as well. You know, overall, a good start, especially after sort of the scrappy start over the first six or seven holes.

Q. How big a sense of opportunity was there out there today in benign conditions on this course?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it was as gettable as you're going to get this golf course. It's pretty receptive from some of the rain that we've had at the start of the week. You know, it's only about a club wind. So there's not a ton of wind out there.

Yeah, you know, as you can see, there's a lot of low scores and for good reason. Hopefully no more rain over the next few days and the wind can get up a bit and the course can start to play a little bit tougher.

Q. You spoke yesterday about the process of getting over the disappointment of the U.S. Open. You went to Manhattan and melded into the city and were alone with your thoughts. All of us go through these disappointments of highs and lows in your life. Has that been your process in the past to take yourself away?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I've always liked to figure things out myself. I'm not really one to reach out for advice. Not to say that there was a lot of unsolicited advice coming my way but yeah, I've always tried to figure things out myself.

Because then for me, I've always wanted to own it. I've always wanted to own my success and my disappointments, and I think figuring it out yourself and giving yourself that time is a good thing.

Q. Started a little slow but then your back nine got off to a good start. If you go back to last year, how different was the golf course today than it finished up



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a year ago?

RORY McILROY: It was a lot different. The wind, from being a four-club wind last year on Sunday, it was just about a one-club wind out there. There was a little bit of breeze but nothing too testing, and the golf course is pretty receptive. We've had a lot of rain here over the last few days, and you know, it's really as gettable as I've seen it. I think you need to go out there and post a decent number to get yourself right in the tournament.

Q. Is it a good indication of the state of your game? Obviously the disappointment back in June, but to come out here and play well, are you able to forget about it and focus on your game?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, again, I'm not going to let three or four holes cloud my judgment in terms of how good I'm playing. I knew to play the golf that I did the whole way through June, it wasn't just the U.S. Open. I played well at the Canadian Open and at Memorial before that even and PGA and Quail Hollow. My game has been in good shape and it was in good shape coming in here.

It's just a matter of going out there and focusing on the task at hand and not letting your mind wander too much. I felt like I did a good job of that today.

Q. How much of an attraction to life was it to have a scorecard in your back pocket again and in a sense get back on the horse?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it was nice. It was nice to be out there. Great, as well, to be out there with Bob and Viktor, two people I'm really comfortable with and familiar with, and then to have the crowd following us, as well. It was a nice reintroduction to competitive golf and nice to be inside the ropes again for sure.

Q. An excellent start, but could have been better. There were a few that just drifted by, which kind of isn't a downside, in a sense; it speaks to the quality of the approach play.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, two really good chances on 5 and 6 that I let slip by but hit good putts, and then on the 9th hole. I'd be worried if the ball wasn't starting on my line. But I hit three really good putts there. They just didn't happen to go in.

This is the good thing about playing links golf again. You start to realise that the ball doesn't maybe break quite as much as you think it's going to. Those three were good putts. They were just slight misreads. As I progress through the week and start to get more comfortable again

on links greens, that's a great thing for me, not just for this week but obviously looking ahead to next week as well.

Q. One other big news story in golf is the appointment of the new American Ryder Cup Captain. Just wonder what your take is on Keegan Bradley leading the American charge next year.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, definitely I think a surprise for everyone. We had dinner in London on Sunday night with Luke, and he told us then. Yeah, it's an interesting appointment. The youngest captain since Arnold Palmer I think was a playing captain as 34. But he knows Bethpage very well. He went to university in the area. He's obviously very passionate about the Ryder Cup.

Yeah, I mean, it's certainly a departure from what the U.S. have done over the last few years, and you know, time will tell if that's a good thing or not.

Q. What was it like in the room when Luke mentioned it was Keegan Bradley?

RORY McILROY: I think disbelief, probably. I think Keegan was probably in disbelief, at some point, too, but certainly an interesting pick.

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