

Truist Championship

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Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

Quail Hollow Club

Rory McIlroy

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome Rory McIlroy to the interview room here at the 2026 Truist Championship. Four-time Truist Championship winner, obviously a special place for you, Quail Hollow, getting to come back to it. What's it like over the years getting to come back to this place that's been so good to you during your career.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I really feel like this tournament got my, I guess got my career going, especially on the PGA TOUR. Getting my first win on TOUR in 2010. Then it's been a pretty fruitful place since then as well with three other wins. I've gotten to know so many people here really well, the Harrises, all the staff and the club, I really think the community of Charlotte come out to support this event really, really well. So, yeah, this is 16 years I've been coming here, so it's been a fun place, I've had success and it's somewhere I always love coming back to.

THE MODERATOR: It's been three weeks since successfully defending your title at the Masters. What have those last three weeks been like, and how is the mindset coming into this week?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, it's been amazing. Maybe not quite as hectic as last year. I think this win felt a little bit different than the first win at Augusta. It's been really nice to spend time at home. I've done a couple of things, but I certainly haven't, you know, I didn't do the media trip up to New York. It was nice, my parents were in the States, so I didn't have to fly home and see them. It was nice to just get a little bit of down time and chill. Did some fun stuff. Erica and I took a trip to New York, which was nice. Then did the State Dinner at the Whitehouse last Tuesday night, which was an amazing evening. So fit in some fun stuff.

But I gave myself a good 10 days to enjoy myself and then thought it was, you know, I needed to get back on the range and start to practice and get ready for this stretch coming up.

THE MODERATOR: You came to play nine holes this

morning in the pro-am. What's the overall condition of the course looking like this year, especially since last time you were here playing in the PGA and now being back.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, slightly different setup than the PGA last year, and slightly different conditions. It's been very dry here by all accounts, so the greens are very firm. The rough is down a little bit. Sort of more, probably more in keeping with what the golf course was like in 2024, when the tournament was last here. The course is great. The greens visually don't look amazing but they roll really well and they're very firm. I think we're expecting a little bit of rain tonight and into tomorrow, which will probably help a little bit as well.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions, please.

Q. Before we get to your star turn in Devil Wears Prada, a year ago after Augusta you talked about adjusting to what you had done and coming back from that. How does it feel different, I know you're just getting back into the competitive part, but does it already feel different now than maybe what you felt last year?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it does, it feels a lot different. Even winning felt different. I guess, you know, and I've spoke about this a lot, I felt like winning the Grand Slam was like this, was going to be this life-changing thing and in some ways it was, but in other ways I had to remember like, no, I still have a lot of my career left and I want to keep playing and keep competing. So this year was I think winning was validation for all the work that I've put in over the last few years to get myself back to this place where I'm winning majors. I'm excited for the road ahead. I'm excited for this week, I'm excited for Aronimink next week, Shinnecock, Birkdale, you know, like I feel like if anything I'm more motivated after what happened at Augusta this year than I've ever been.

Q. (No Microphone.)

RORY McILROY: I think the way I won, I think, again, the range session on Saturday night was a big turning point for me. To be able to go there with Harry, figure out a couple of things, and figure it out in a way that I didn't have a Trackman, I didn't have a video, I didn't have, I was like, no, I just want to hit a new, get a feel. I carried that feel



into Sunday, and I honestly, reflecting on it, I made the double on 4, but then from the 5th tee until I would say the second shot on 17 I didn't miss a shot. I played, I swung it good, I hit the shots I wanted to hit. I was really proud of that because Saturday was a struggle. So to be able to bounce back and turn it around and then feel and play the way I did on Sunday was, I was really proud of that.

Q. 18th hole here very good finishing hole. You played it a lot. Wondering how you attack that hole and what your prep is before you get into that hole?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it depends on the wind primarily. It usually plays downwind if it's the prevailing wind. I have, over the last few years, taken less than driver. Because if I hit driver it starts to pinch in where I would hit the driver. So I usually hit a 3-wood into the wider part of the fairway. But it's a hard tee shot because it forces you to hit something right to left. There's overhanging trees on the left. I would say for me, my, I would say when I have trouble on the left I'm most comfortable hitting it up the side of the trouble and moving it away from it. But the 18th hole here doesn't really allow to you do that too much, so it can be a pretty uncomfortable tee shot at times. And then if you do get your tee shot away, you're just really trying to hit it in a that middle of the green and if you can hole a 30-footer for birdie, great. If not, 4 is always a good score.

Q. Has there ever been a time on that hole when you have felt uncomfortable that really sticks out?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I would say 2021 when I would be here, needing, I think I just needed a 5 to win. But again you're on that, you're on the tee box and you know if you hit it in the water then 5's, you're going to struggle to make 5. But, yeah, as the tournament goes on and you're there Saturday evening or Sunday evening, it starts to, you start to think about it a little bit more.

Q. I notice that you had a new 3-wood in the bag this week. I talked to you in the past about fairways and I know you mentioned them being very personal because of the different shots you're hitting with it. Curious about the new one and maybe what made you pull the trigger?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so I had been using the 4D 3-wood at the start of the season. I noticed that it just had a little bit of a left by as in it. So I went back to an old Qi10 for a while. But that wasn't, it really wasn't spinning enough. It's more like a mini driver than a 3-wood. It sort of spins like 2,700, it's pretty fast. It could be a good club for like Memorial, for example. But I felt like I needed a 3-wood that just spun a little bit more. So the TaylorMade guys were down working with me last week because I

needed to get into a new set of irons too. So I got a fresh set of irons. So they brought a couple of 3-wood options along and I landed on this one. It doesn't have that left by as I was seeing with the old 4D 3-wood. And it's got a nice consistent spin rate sort of like 3,200, which is what I like to see.

Q. Getting to see your family on the green at 18, getting a second Green Jacket, it's cool seeing Poppy grow up. What is that like, dad life-wise? Is she impressed at all, or what is that like being able to actually her to appreciate these experiences you're having?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it is. It's obviously, it's incredible to have them be there and be a part of all this. Yeah, I think for Poppy it sort of seems normal for her now to just go into Butler Cabin at the end of the day and have a grilled cheese and talk with the chairman and like it's, yeah (laughing). But it was amazing to have everyone there. No, she's still like -- when I'm -- you know, we were flying back on the Monday afterwards and she always has a tennis lesson on Monday afternoon, and I thought okay, maybe today we can bin the tennis lesson. And she's like, No I, I want to play tennis. And I'm like, Sure, let's go, let's do it. So as soon as we get home she's the one that rules the roost, but it was awesome and it was so nice to have that time with everyone afterwards as well and really enjoy it.

Q. Generally we're hearing you serenaded for your birthday, so happy belated birthday because it was a couple days ago. This is place that obviously is near and dear to your heart. You talked about the uncomfortable nature of the tee shot at 18. Are there other shots on this golf course where you have found yourself, 1 through 17, where you have to really knuckle down to make sure you make a good swing to put it where you want it?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, there's a lot of holes. There's a lot of tee shots. Tee shot on 3. Tee shot on 7. Even like tee shot on 12, trying to hit that little cut down there, down the hill. 14, 17, I mean, yeah, there's a reason that this is one of the toughest golf courses on TOUR. It's a demanding golf course and you just, the thing that I've always liked about this place, it's like a pure execution test. If you can step up and you can execute and you can hit the shots, I feel like this course will always reward you for that. There's no -- you know, some courses with slopes and hills and that you can get away with hitting bad shots there. I don't think you can get away with hitting bad shots here.

Q. You've won four times here. Is there one thing



about any of the four wins that you think, man, I wish I could have done that better? Because it seems like you're always striving for perfection, but it's so illusive. But is there anything like, man, I wish I could do this better or that better and it would be even more enjoyable?

RORY McILROY: In 2015 I holed a putt on 16 to go I think it was 11-under for the day. And I felt like I had a really good chance to shoot 59. Then I stepped up on 17 and didn't hit a very good shot. I sort of always rue that. I just feel like it halted the momentum a little bit. But you don't get many chances to do that, and I feel like I didn't lean into it enough. But, no, I mean a win a he's a win and I've had some, some of my best days of my career have been on this golf course.

Q. You did a great job in the second Devil Wears Prada movie, we hope to see more of you. But while you're on the green here, coming back to Charlotte, what is that experience like for you? You mentioned it earlier, getting back to a place where you've been before, but what does that welcome feel like when you see these fans, when they come out, they see you, and you know that you're elevating the Queen City and we're excited that you're here?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it feels, like I feel like I've gotten more out of this golf tournament than I've given back to it in a way. Because we do get incredible support every time we come here. It's not just me, I think every player in this field would feel the same way. The atmosphere of this tournament is what makes it stand apart from some of the others on TOUR. Yeah, it's amazing how the community rallies behind this event. It is nice to come back to the same place for so many years and you see familiar faces and so, yeah, as I said, it's always nice coming back here.

THE MODERATOR: All right, Rory, thank you for the time. Best of luck this week.

RORY McILROY: Thank you.

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