

U.S. Open Championship 2022

Friday, June 17, 2022

Brookline, Massachusetts, USA

The Country Club

Rory McIlroy

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Rory McIlroy, 1-under 69. Pretty stacked leaderboard here. Obviously a good two days for you. Put us in your mindset right now.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, after 36 holes in a major championship, that's all you want to do is put yourself right in the mix going into the weekend. For a little part of the day there, it seemed like I was going to be a few more behind, but I dug deep and played the last eight holes really, really well.

That was the goal. After I bogeyed 10, I just wanted to try to shoot under par. I had some chances coming up. Just played a really clean eight holes, which was pleasing. Hit fairways, hit greens, gave myself chances. Got myself right back in the tournament.

Q. Was that as good a double bogey putt as you've ever holed?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, you don't want to try to be making 30-footers for 6s, but I got it in in the least amount of strokes possible on that hole after what happened.

Yeah, I made two bad swings today. I made a bad swing on the second shot on 3, and I made a bad swing on the tee shot on 10 and limited the damage as much as I could. Those two holes cost me three shots.

But I stayed patient, and I knew I was going to give myself chances if I just hit the ball the way I have been hitting it. Today was a really good example of just having a good attitude.

Q. The thing is that thing at the side of 3, that could have totally got away from you at that point, couldn't it?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, you're only 2-over for the day. It wasn't disastrous. I knew I had the fifth hole coming up, the short par-4 coming up, and then I had the 8th hole, which is playing a very short par-5 today. I knew I had a couple of chances to get it back to even par, and then I three-putted 6.

Yeah, I knew I was going to have chances, so I didn't panic. I didn't do anything stupid. I didn't force anything. I was rewarded with that patience by playing a really good back nine.

Q. You showed off some pretty good speed on the 17th hole running up to the green.

RORY McILROY: I've got more than that.

Q. Talk about that decision to run up there. That was pretty fun.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, well, Austin, Xander's caddie said, do you mind if I go up and mark your ball? I said, stay with him, I'll go and do it.

Yeah, Xander is a pretty good wedge player, so if that ball was in his way, happy to go up and mark it for him, and he hit a great shot after that to a couple of feet and made birdie.

Q. You're one shot back. Obviously, a stacked leaderboard but right in the mix. How do you feel about your position heading into the weekend?

RORY McILROY: I feel good. I was trying to play my way into the final group and then I was told in scoring that the final group tees off at 3:45 tomorrow. It's, like, maybe I don't want to be in the final group. (Laughing.) Seems very late.

But yeah, once I got -- I was trying to make birdie there on 18 to try to get to 5, but I'm really happy with my position. I played a good round of golf yesterday. I came back well today after a tough start, and yeah, right in the mix. Couldn't be any happier.

Q. What do you expect from the golf course this weekend?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's breezy. Obviously some of that rain that was forecasted didn't materialize. It's getting -- it's still sort of receptive out there. It's not too fiery, but I



would expect just over the weekend for it to get a little faster and a little fierier. You have to be pretty precise already, but maybe just that little bit more precise with everything.

Q. How much more fun is it to be in contention with so many big-name players at the top of the leaderboard?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, it's why we play. I sort of said it after Canada last week when I was with JT and Tony.

You want to go up against the best to try to bring the best out of yourself. And to see Collin and Jon and Scottie and Sam up there and whoever else, that's what major championship golf is all about. That's what competition is all about.

I certainly don't want it to be easy. I want guys to go out and shoot 65 so I have to go and shoot 64. That's competition, and that's at the heart of this game. I'm excited to be in that mix going into the weekend.

Q. It often seems like your fans especially maybe more often than other players' kind of ride the emotional waves with you, good and bad. I wonder, why do you think it is that people seem to have kind of a very emotional attachment to the ebbs and flows of your rounds and you chasing this major frankly?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I don't know. I've been out here a long time. Maybe they feel like they've watched me grow up and they've sort of been on that journey with me.

I think I play quite an emotive brand of golf, if there is such a thing.

I've always liked having crowds. I like the interaction. I enjoy that part of it. I'm certainly not one to keep my head down and sort of look straight in front of me, tunnel vision. I like looking around. I like seeing people out there. Maybe that's part of it.

Q. Obviously nobody else at the top of the leaderboard has won four majors like you have. On the other hand, it's been nearly eight years since you won No. 4. Does the positive thought still overwhelm that negative reality or do they sort of balance each other out?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think I have to go out with the mindset this week that I'm going to try to win my first again. I think that's sort of the -- I'm playing as good a golf as I've played in a long time. I have a lot of experience. Yes, I've won major championships and other big events, but I don't

think -- just because I've done that, it doesn't mean that I'll hit better golf shots or I'll hit better putts.

I'm in a good place. I'm really happy with where my game is at, and I think that's the most important thing.

Q. How do you think that emotive style of play helps you out here at Brookline?

RORY McILROY: Probably doesn't. I don't know. I mean, I guess it does. I think I ride waves of momentum pretty easily. Certainly whenever you get on the crest of a wave and you try to ride it as long as you can, and I've gotten a little bit better at trying not to ride the other ones downwardly. I think if you can get -- and you can, there's a lot of this golf course, I think there's a nice flow to it that you can get on a little bit of a run and start to make some birdies, and if I do encounter that this week, I feel like I'm pretty good at riding those sort of waves of momentum through the course of a round.

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