

U.S. Open Championship 2024

Friday, June 14, 2024

Village of Pinehurst, North Carolina, USA

Pinehurst Resort & C.C. (Course No. 2)

Rory McIlroy

Flash Interview



THE MODERATOR: Rory McIlroy, 2-over 72, 3-under for the championship. First, just give an opening statement about how things went today.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, obviously not quite as well as yesterday, but I feel like the golf course plays a little more difficult, even though we were off in the morning. Some of the hole locations were definitely a little tougher. Sort of had to have your wits about you. I putted it off one green there on 17.

Yeah, overall I felt like I did a pretty good job at keeping some of the mistakes off the scorecard. I wish I had converted a couple more of the chances. Hit the ball pretty well. I think only missed one fairway. So I had plenty of opportunities.

Yeah, wasn't quite as good with the putter today. Still overall in a great position going into the weekend.

Q. Can you talk about the 5th hole a little bit, how that helped your round as far as the score is concerned.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, that back left hole location on 5 is pretty treacherous. If you miss it left there at all, obviously you saw what Xander and Scottie did. After sealing their two attempts, I was pretty happy with mine just to get it over the other side of the green and get it up-and-down for 5.

Yeah, it's tough. You're hitting off a lie with the ball above your feet. It's hard for that. And the winds a touch off the right as well. It's hard to not let that ball go left on you with your second shot.

I'd say there's going to be a lot of guys down in that left sandy area today.

Q. How would you say this golf course challenges you differently than your run-of-the-mill Tour course?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it just requires a lot more thought. Even though I hit a great drive up the 8th hole, I had 151 adjusted to the hole. I'm trying to land it 146. I can't land it

144 because it's not going to get up there. I can't land it 148 because it's going to go over the back of the green.

You just need to have a lot of precision. I feel like for the most part I've done that well this week. I've got the ball pin-high quite a lot, which is really important. I'm not trying to land the ball pin-high. You're trying to hit it to a number with a wedge, maybe five short of that, and then with a mid-iron you're trying to land it 30 feet short of the pin to try to get it pin-high.

Just a little more thought, a little more consideration to everything that you're doing. Very conservative strategy off the tee. And because most of us are playing conservative off the tee, with irons you can aim down one side of the fairway or the other to try to give yourself better angles to these pins.

Q. Is it clear early on it's going to be hard for somebody to run away, to get that 6- or 8- or 9-under? Is that in your mind at all?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, I was 2-over pretty early. My goal going into that second nine was if I could get it back to even for the day, I would have been pretty happy. Got that birdie on 3. I was trying to claw one back there. Ultimately I gave one back again.

Yeah, with the way the golf course is and the way some of those hole locations are, I don't see anyone running away with it today, building up too much of a lead.

That's certainly what Martin did a few years ago here. It will be interesting to see how it all pans out this afternoon.

Q. 15 had a really tough pin position today.

RORY McILROY: Yeah.

Q. How hard was that playing for you guys? Can you talk about how you had to adjust your strategy for the hole location?

RORY McILROY: It's funny, I feel like Xander and my shots, we both sort of landed it probably the exact same



distance. But his was a little more aggressive and a little more right towards the pin so it stayed on the ledge. Mine was a little further left where the slope is a little steeper. Mine came back down. He's got a birdie putt from 10 feet, and I'm trying to do well to save par.

As I said, you just have to be so precise. If you're going left of the hole there, you have to land it at least pin-high, if not a little bit past it. But that's the great thing about this golf course. If you take a shot on and you pull it off, it rewards you. Xander got that reward on that 15th hole today, and I didn't.

Q. You said yesterday you didn't like watching before you went out. Could you explain why. Do you like watching after you finish?

RORY McILROY: I don't like seeing where other guys are hitting it. I particularly don't like when I can watch people hit putts on greens because then, whenever I have a similar putt on the golf course, I'm going off the memory of what I think I saw on TV instead of seeing it with my own eyes. I'd rather just not have that option at all.

But yeah, I mean, this afternoon I'll probably tune in a little bit and watch. But yeah, before I go out to play, I've learned the hard way at times that I don't need to be watching on the TV.

Thank you.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports