

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW
February 22, 2019

RORY McILROY (-9)



Q. 63, 1 under today. How are you feeling?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it's funny, I had breakfast with a few of the boys that played later yesterday and they said it was going to be hard to hole putts in the afternoon, and they were right. These poa greens, with a bit of traffic on them they just get a little bumpy and it's just hard to trust your lines.

I had a couple go the opposite way on me today, I missed a couple short ones. But overall, I stayed patient. After I made the double on nine, I sort of righted the ship and made a lot of pars and made one birdie on the way in. So it could have been worse, it could have been better, but still in a good position going into the weekend.

Q. What are you going to do about the sixth hole? That's a hole that's cost you the last couple of days. It looked like a great shot you hit in there today. Do you feel like the par 5s are going to be key to you over the weekend?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I played the par 5s terribly today. I played them in 1 over. Yeah, I mean, I hit two great shots into 6. I came up a yard short and came back in the water. So I ended up making two good putts for 6s on that hole the last two days. But yeah, I need to play the par 5s better. I need to take advantage of the easier holes; the first hole, for example, the drivable par 4s. If you can take advantage of those holes, this golf course is a lot easier.

Q. And after that double bogey on 9, we were talking yesterday about your attitude and how pleased you are with it. Inevitably it's hard when you have the forward momentum like that. How pleased were you with the way you played on the back of it?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, didn't like the four-footer I left for myself on 10 after the display on 9, so it was nice to see that one go in. I holed another good one for par on 11 and then, yeah, I sort of righted the ship. Again, I didn't take advantage of the short 12, but I birdied 14, which is a tough hole. So I just kept plugging away. I didn't get down on myself, and that's been something that I have been trying to work on the last few months.

Q. Rory, second round 70 here, obviously fantastic start. Tell us how you put it up to the rest of the round.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, great start obviously, 3 under through five holes. And yeah, just a bit of a wobble at the end of the front nine. Hit two good shots into the sixth hole, made

bogey, just came up a yard short. And then, yeah, I just had a bit of a -- I hit a good first putt on 9, but I had a decent second putt to sort of cut the high side. And then the third putt did the opposite of what I thought it was going to do.

But I righted the ship after that. I played a pretty steady back nine and didn't drop any shots after that, so I'm pleased with that.

Q. I think you were 5 under for the sixth hole all week last time you played here. She hasn't been a friend to you this week. Tell us about that second shot because I think you were just like a foot short.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I felt it was right on line. I thought I had more than enough club. The lie was a little bit of an upslope, and then with the pin slightly back into the wind, it just caught it enough to where I didn't cover that water there. But if I can get myself back to even par for that hole over the next two days, I'll be pretty happy.

Q. Saw Rickie Fowler get penalized today because he dropped his ball from shoulder height. It looks like you might have done the same thing, but maybe you and Harry had a bit of dialogue there at No. 6?

RORY McILROY: As soon as I realized I dropped it from shoulder high, I went, "I'll redrop that," and then so I didn't -- it's so easy to do. It's still early in the season, and the rules are new and I can see how that can happen.

Q. You're leading the stats for greens in regulation, so I guess that's just one that you want to keep trending and keep giving yourself chances.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, especially playing late in the day, if the greens are the same tomorrow and Sunday. They got tough to hole putts on out there. You see everyone missing short ones. And yeah, the more greens you can hit, the better.

Q. Rory, you talked a lot about patience. When things go a little bit awry early in the round, (inaudible) a solid round. Do you take anything from that, patience?

RORY McILROY: Definitely. I think my patience was rewarded with the birdie on 14. It was probably one of the toughest holes of the day. I could have birdied 15, but I didn't let it bother me. I've got this big thing that I'm trying to respond to things rather than react to things, so I feel like I responded well today to some of the little hiccups I had.

Q. Just a follow-up, on 6, was it --

RORY McILROY: Straightaway I knew, "Oh, no, I'll drop that again." Go down to the knee. I heard Rickie got penalized for -- it's early in the season. I can definitely see how it happens. Say Joe's going and getting the yardage and doesn't see that Rickie's -- you know, these things happen. It's unfortunate, but we're all just trying to get used to them.

Q. How do you (inaudible) weekend, or how does it compare to --

RORY McILROY: The only time it matters when you're leading is after the 72nd hole. So much golf to play. This tournament hasn't even started yet, so I'm in a good position. I played pretty well over the first couple days. Just going to try to play similarly over the weekend and hopefully take advantage of the par 5s and some of the shorter par 4s and we'll see where that puts me at the end of the week.

Q. What changed from yesterday to today, like what aspect of your game (inaudible)?

RORY McILROY: I feel like I did most things pretty well today. Maybe wasn't quite as good on the greens, but I think even that hour and a half difference teeing off at 11:30 compared to nearly 1:00, it makes a difference, just that extra traffic out there. The greens later in the day, they get a little more bumpy. So I think a lot of guys struggled to hole putts this afternoon out there. But apart from that, I feel like I played pretty well. I drove it well, hit some good iron shots, maybe just didn't take advantage of the opportunities like I did yesterday.