

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
February 23, 2019

RORY McILROY (-12)



Q. On the 18th green there, I feel as though there was a really low one in you tomorrow. Are you feeling the same thing? This thing is there for you to attack?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, to attack, for sure. Obviously, four shots behind DJ, it's going to be a tall order to overcome. I was happy with how I played the last 10 holes, being one over through the first eight and then playing the last 10 in four under was nice, I gave myself plenty of chances. It was just end of the day, there was a lot of traffic on these greens. It's hard to hole putts, and putts are sort of doing some different things. But yeah, I need to get off to a better start tomorrow than I did today. If I can do that, hopefully I will be right back in it.

Q. Exactly. We're saying the golf course is beat up a little, Rory, and these greens are getting really fast, hard to handle over three or four feet. Do you want them to firm up even more?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, I think that would suit me. I think it would suit the rest of the field as well. Obviously, Dustin has got a bit of a lead. Yeah, I think the firmer and the harder, the better tomorrow. It will be a real challenge. You really have to think around here. And you got to drive it well. Even the fairways are getting firm, so that the fairways are playing narrower now. Yeah, I think the harder the better for the chasing pack tomorrow.

Q. 64?

RORY McILROY: That would be nice.

Q. Talk about the round today. Battling in there when DJ is playing the way he played all week, too.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, for sure. I didn't -- I came back well after the bogey on 1, and just had a little bobble again around the middle of the front nine. But I played the last 10 holes really well. I played them in 4 under par, which I needed to do just to keep myself in touch. DJ is playing very well, he seems to be very comfortable on this golf course. He won here in '17, I think he played pretty well last year as well. So yeah, he's going to be very tough to beat. Tomorrow I'm going to have to go out there and probably shoot something similar to what I shot the first day to have a chance.

Q. But you're in range. Four shots is in range, isn't it?

RORY McILROY: It's in range. You can see how things turn so quickly out there. After the

8th hole today, I was six shots behind. And after the 10th green, I was only two behind. So, it does change very quickly. And especially you can put yourself in some tricky positions out there. So, just got to go out there and try to play a good round of golf and see where that leaves me at the end of the day.

Q. Can you talk about sort of you have emotions on 10, things went so quickly? Did you almost feel like it was a mulligan?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, Doug Ferguson was just off the left of the green and I said, "That's golf." That's just, that's the way it is. DJ was cruising for a few holes, and he gets caught up on the right side there a little bit and might make three, and all of a sudden you go from 6 behind on the ninth tee to 2 behind on the 11th tee. It can change that quickly, and that's something I'm going to have to just keep reminding myself tomorrow with a bit of a deficit.

Q. Rory, a lot of ebb and flow if you look at that scorecard out there. How would you describe that third round?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I hung in there. I battled. It wasn't -- probably didn't hit it as well as the first couple days, but I hung in there, especially after the eighth hole. Played the last 10 holes in 4 under par and at least keep myself within some sort of touch of DJ is nice. But the course is getting really difficult out there. It's getting really bouncy. It's hard to -- the fairways are playing more narrow. There's some reactions on the greens that are a little -- sort of throwing people a little bit. So it's going to be tricky tomorrow if it stays dry like this and the course will get even firmer.

Q. Do you walk off of 18 saying what you just said, that you didn't have the stuff you had the first two days, but you still were able to put a 3-under round together, encouraged or discouraged?

RORY McILROY: Encouraged. I played the par 5s better today, I played those in 2 under par, which I needed to. I stayed patient. Being six shots off the lead after eight holes today, it was hard to stay patient, but I feel like my patience was rewarded. I made some good birdies coming in. And I'm still 4 behind. It's going to be tough, especially against DJ, who is arguably the best player in the world. So I'm going to have to go out there and just play a good round of golf and hopefully that's good enough. But if not, then that's the way it goes.

Q. 18 holes left. Can you afford to be patient tomorrow against DJ?

RORY McILROY: I think you have to, the way the golf course is playing. I don't think you can be too aggressive. Obviously you've got your chances, the short par 4s and the par 5s, but if you put yourself out of position at all on this golf course, you can see how quickly things can change. DJ hits it a little right on 10 and he makes double. So it's easy to do that around here. So it's going to have to be a blend of aggression and patience.

