

**FINAL ROUND INTERVIEW**  
**February 24, 2019**



**RORY McILROY (-16)**

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**RORY McILROY:** It was good. Some weeks you play well and someone just plays better. That's what DJ did this week. Whenever you drive it like he does and you're No. 1 in putting, it's going to be pretty hard to beat that. So I played well, a little disappointed with how I started, but fought back on the back nine, shot a good score in the end. When DJ's got a four-shot lead and goes out and shoots, whatever he did, 5 under par, he's not going to lose.

**Q. Absolutely. And he gets a good break, obviously with the drop he gets on 5. And we go to of 6. The hole hasn't been good to you so far this week. We're just going to show you this, Rory. What's your feeling about the ruling when you look at it now?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, I mean --

**Q. Because when we were watching in real time, obviously our question is whether or not that's a legitimate way to (inaudible) the ball. Did you feel it was?**

**RORY McILROY:** I mean, I could have played it that way. I could see where he was coming from as well. If I was trying to play it that way, he was saying that I could basically play it to where that guy is in the white hat, which I guess is understandable. These are the sort of slight margins I thought I could maybe get a drop. It wasn't really going to make a difference anyway, I was going to have a long third shot anyway. But yeah, like one of those things.

**Q. And one of the reasons you didn't call for a second ruling is you just accepted it?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, I just accepted it. It's fine. I played it left-handed and tried to do my best from there.

**Q. In terms of the positivity from this week going forward, that's the first time -- remarkably, with everything you've done in your career, the first time you've had four top 5s in a row on the PGA TOUR. How excited are you about where your game is? How important is it for you to turn one of those into a win very shortly?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, yeah. Next start I'm defending at Bay Hill, so there's some good vibes there. My game's been good, it's been really solid. You know, first tournament of the year, Xander goes out and shoots 11 under in the final round and beats us all. At Torrey Pines, Rosy just outplayed everyone else. Last week I felt like I had a little bit of a chance with those final few holes to go and then again this week. So my game's right there, I'm really happy with everything. I've just got to stay patient, look at the positives and just keep persisting and putting myself in positions, and sooner or later hopefully it will go my way.

**Q. Rory, you said yesterday after your round that, considering the way Dustin was playing, it would be difficult to catch him today, but you still put an impressive number up today. How would you rate your performance this entire week?**

**RORY McILROY:** I played good. I mean, if someone told me this week I would have went out there and shot 16 under par for the tournament, I think that's been good enough the last couple years to win the tournament, so I probably would have taken it. Some weeks a guy just plays better than you, and that's exactly what happened this week. DJ's got a four-shot lead going out today and he shoots 5 under par, you're not getting beaten. He was so impressive for the weekend. When you can drive the ball like that and then hole the putts he did -- I think he might be definitely in the top three strokes gained putting. I don't know if he's up there No. 1, but he was very impressive all around this week and he definitely deserved to win.

**Q. Look at what you've done to start the year. Four consecutive top-5s now. How proud are you of that consistency, and are you somewhat frustrated that you've been playing so well and you haven't got a victory?**

**RORY McILROY:** No, I'm not frustrated, because it seems like I can only do what I can do and I can only control me. I've played well. Xander went out and shot 61 in Hawaii and beat us all. Rosy and Adam sort of separated themselves from the field at Torrey. I maybe had a little bit of a chance last Sunday in L.A. because it was so difficult. And then this week. I've played well. I've done what I've wanted to do and needed to do. I think I'm 56 under par for my first four events of the year. So the game's good. It's just about staying patient, and hopefully one of these weeks it will fall my way.

**Q. Are you happy with this week?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, I'm happy. I did everything I wanted to do. If anything, I didn't play the front nine particularly well yesterday or today, but I bounced back, played some good stuff coming in.

Dustin had a four-shot lead starting out. When you have a four-shot lead and shoot 5 under par, no one's catching you. It was sort of like there was two different golf tournaments going on and I won the second one. DJ was just a little bit above everyone else this week.

**Q. With that being said, you're going for it early. You're trying to press him and make something happen, aren't you?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, obviously. But at the same time, this course is tricky and you can't press too much. I made a good birdie on 2, a good par on 3, and then I sort of struggled. The 6th hole got me again, another bogey there. I played that three over for the week.

I can't complain, I've had a good week. I've again seen some really positive signs in my

game going forward. The last four starts have been good. I'm a combined 56 under par for the last four starts. It's right there. It's just a matter of hopefully not running into a guy like DJ.

**Q. Incredible back nine. Going back a little bit, the front nine, the 6th hole has been the source of a bit of frustration this week. Was there any frustration after the conversation with the rules official?**

**RORY McILROY:** No, not really. I mean, I could definitely see where Mike was coming from. I was taking a stance that was hitting it one way, and my foot was on it, but I could sort of see his point as well. That's why I didn't call for a second opinion. I just went, "You know what, fine." It wasn't going to make much of a difference anyway. I was looking left, and I didn't have much of a shot from there, either. Played it left-handed. And it wasn't my best hole this week, but the 17 others were pretty good, so I'll take something from that.

**Q. Back nine was incredible, six birdies from 7 holes. Did you have one eye over on DJ and just thinking "What do I have to do?"**

**RORY McILROY:** Not really. Whenever I didn't make birdie on 10, Harry said to me, "Let's just make sure we finish second on our own, let's try to consolidate that." I knew at that point that I didn't really have a chance, DJ was playing too well. We had some -- we had par 5s coming up, and it just wasn't -- I was just too far behind. I just consolidated my second place, and that was all I could do.

**Q. Clearly, there was some parts of this course, 6 to 9, that you weren't firing on all cylinders, but given what you scored this week, you would have had enough, 16-under, to win this tournament last year. Does that help you?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah. That's the thing. The last two years, it would have been good enough, so at least I know my game's -- there's just one guy who played a little bit better than everyone else this week, and that's -- you have to accept that and move on. I have to take the positives from my week, and there's plenty of them to take.

**Q. Did you have any grievance with what he did?**

**RORY McILROY:** Not really. Look, I can't control him or the rules official. I don't know if it was Mike that gave the drop with DJ as well. Yeah, look, if he's -- felt that it was reasonable for DJ to take that drop and it wasn't reasonable for me, then so be it. That's why we have refs out here. I could see where he was coming from as well. Even if I did take a drop there, I don't think it would have really given me any benefit. I was sort of going to be going that way into the trees, and I still had a difficult shot.

**RORY McILROY:** When you've got a -- you've got a four-shot lead, you go out and shoot 5 under par, you're not going to get beaten.

**Q. When you have someone who drives as well as Dustin and he leads the field in putting, which I think he did this week do you just say, "Too good"?**

**RORY McILROY:** No contest. Especially here. His drives are going 380 down the middle of the fairway and he's holing most of the putts he looks at.

I think I played pretty well this week. And maybe other years, it might have been better and I might have been able to win. You just -- sometimes guys play better than you, and that's totally fine.

**Q. Do you feel like if you just keep putting yourself in that final mix on Sunday and be patient, it's going to happen?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, for sure. It is going to happen. I keep putting myself in this position. I'm playing some of the most consistent golf I've played in my career. I've never had four top-fives in a row on the PGA Tour. I'm right there, right where I need to be.

**Q. Can you compare this to -- only thing I can think of is you at Kiawah, the way you just overpowered that course and shut everyone down. Is that a fair comparison?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, I guess so. Something a little more recent, Quail Hollow in 15, I sort of shot that low Saturday and sort of had a very comfortable back nine. Yeah, yeah, it was definitely like that. He was in cruise control the entire way.

**Q. Was it fun to go out there around the back nine together?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, yeah. I felt like I was standing still. I was making birdies and going nowhere. He just played great this week. Hats off to him. He's arguably the best player in the world. And he's got two wins already this year, and he has been one of the best players for a long time. It's nice to play with him. I always feel comfortable in that group. It's always -- you wouldn't think he's trying to win his 20th PGA TOUR event. He just looks like he's playing another round of golf at the Bear's Club at home.