

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**January 28, 2021**



**RORY McILROY ( -4)**

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**Q. Rory, the game still travels.**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, I did well, I got off to a great start, 4 under through nine. A little disappointed I didn't pick up a couple more on the way in, especially with the two par 5s, not picking up any shots there. Yeah, I think anytime you shoot 68 on the South Course here you've got to be pretty happy.

Yeah, it's a good start. We don't know what the weather's going to be like tomorrow, so it was nice to get a good one in and play on the slightly easier golf course in the worse conditions tomorrow. I'm pretty happy with the start.

**Q. And to that point, with your ball-striking, you drove it beautifully, hit some good iron shots. That carrying over to where it could be windier and wet, it's a good thing to lean on?**

**RORY McILROY:** It is, it is a good thing. I'm really happy with how I drove the ball today, hit some good iron shots, and I think as well that going from Bermuda greens last week in Abu Dhabi straight to poa here, it's a bit of an adjustment. So to get on those bent greens on the North tomorrow, I may find that a little easier.

**Q. Rory, TV picked you up I think it was on 14, you doubled over a little bit. Are you okay?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, Todd asked me that. Yeah, no, nothing. I mean, I think it was a long wait and I was probably just stretching out my back or my hamstrings or something. I was fine, yeah, totally fine.

**Q. When you drove it as well as you did especially on the front nine, how much confidence does that give you specifically on this --**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, it does, it gives me a lot of confidence. You know, especially with how I drove it parts of last week, it wasn't very good, it was a little guidey at times. First tournament back out, maybe a little unsure of what I'm doing. I made a decision today that I'm just going to fully commit to every swing I make off the tee, and it worked, I hit some great tee shots, took advantage of some of them. Didn't take advantage of some others on the back nine, but I was happy with how I hit it out there.

**Q. Just further on that, I think on 17 green, less than one percent over the last 10 years on that course hit 17 or more greens and only one person hit all 18. Everything**

**was firing just off the tee?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, I'm hitting it good. I think sometimes, it's sort of weird to say, but I almost have better performances with like green in reg when they're smaller greens because you can just be very comfortable hitting to the middles of greens all the time and not feeling like you're having to take on pins. Like 16 today, the par 3's a prime example. The pin's tucked way over on the left side, it's a 4-iron from 230, just very comfortable hitting it at the two TV towers at the back right center of the green and taking your 30-footer. I think sometimes having smaller greens it can make it easier to hit more greens, if that makes sense, just because you don't feel you have to chase pins as much.

**Q. Stops you being your more aggressive self?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, a little bit, which is sometimes a good thing.

**Q. A change of subject, but talking to Rickie Fowler about trying to play through a swing change.**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah.

**Q. You know about adjusting swings. How difficult is that challenge to take it to the golf course?**

**RORY McILROY:** It's so tough. I think the best thing for me that I've sort of tried to do whenever I'm trying to make some tweaks is you try your hardest and you try your best on the range. Every shot you commit to trying to make the swing that you're working towards, but when you get out on the golf course, you have to forget about it. Just have to.

People say play golf or play golf swing. It's very hard to score and do the right things out on the course when you're constantly just thinking about your technique, because technique doesn't matter out there. That's not what the game's about. The game is about getting it up and down and managing it and scoring. At the end of the day, all that matters is the number at the end of that scorecard, and sometimes it doesn't really matter how it looks.

What I've tried to do and what I've learned to do over the years is just completely forget about it. Maybe at max one swing thought, but that's it. But be very diligent and commit to doing what you need to do on the range and making those tweaks and those improvements, but just try to forget about it on the course.