

**ROUND 1 INTERVIEW**  
**May 5, 2022**

**RORY McILROY (-3)**



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**Q. So, I'm a local guy. It's been a while since the PGA has been here. Pretty cool to be here, and you've been a big supporter of this course.**

**RORY McILROY:** Not of this course. This is the first time I've ever been here. But yeah, I've obviously got some good memories from this area, winning the U.S. Open across the street a few years ago. Yeah, I love this part of the world, I like the area. I love playing golf in the Northeast, it's probably my favorite style of golf. Yeah, it's nice to be back. I went over to Congressional yesterday and that rekindled some nice memories. As I said, this style of golf just sort of suits me and seem to play well around here.

**Q. A lot of pros kind of dissed this course back in the old Booz Allen days, but it's been rebuilt. How does it feel out there? How was it for you?**

**RORY McILROY:** I think it's a very good golf course. I think it's underrated, but it's underrated because of all the other great golf courses around here. Obviously Congressional and you've got clubs like Burning Tree and a bunch of others that are around this area. I think it just gets lost in all of the other golf courses that are around here, but it's very, very underrated. It's a wonderful golf course. I think they've done a really good job. Obviously I didn't play before the redesign, but it's a really good course.

**Q. The next time PGA is due back here is like 2031. Would you support the PGA looking at this area to be here more frequently?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah. I mean, at the end of the day it's not just up to the PGA Tour, it's up to can they find a sponsor that wants to put the dollars into an event in this area, is this a market that companies are interested in. So I'm sure the PGA Tour would love to bring an event to this area every year, but unfortunately it's not just as simple as that. There's certainly wonderful golf courses and venues that could host PGA Tour events every year if they wanted to.

**Q. Rory, when you look at this round today, do you say I made seven birdies and I'm in good position or do you think maybe you left some shots out there with a couple mistakes, couple bogeys?**

**RORY McILROY:** I think first week back after three weeks off, there's maybe going to be a couple of mistakes in there. The three-putt on 17 was an unforced error. I mean, 11's a tough hole, I got a bit of a flyer from the semi rough and made bogey, but you sort of accept that and deal with that. Then I should have made 5 on No. 6. I hit it in the water, but got a drop up there and so I probably -- I left a couple out there. The three-putt there, if I hadn't

made five. I'm still pretty happy with 67. It could have been a 65 or a 64, but it's still a good start.

**Q. How important was it to back up the double bogey with birdies?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, that was a nice bounce back to birdie both of those holes coming back. I said to myself walking off the green, if I could just get back to 3 under for the day by the end of the day after that, I would be pretty happy, and obviously I did that within the next two holes. I had some chances coming in, but yeah, happy with the day. And over the course of a tournament you're going to have -- you're going to think about shots that you could have held onto, but I think at the end of the week it all sort of evens out. I can't be too disappointed.

**Q. What was going through your head after you make a double? Do you kind of forget about it or does that come naturally for you?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, just reset. What did I have, five or six holes, five holes left. I think I said just play the remaining holes in 2 under par; if you can do that, it will still be a good day.

**Q. You played with Francesco. He blitzed this place a few years ago, I think he won by 8, went on to win The Open that summer, was playing great, great golf.**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah.

**Q. Is there something about how fleeting that is, how hard to hold that feeling? You can't just do it for years at a time and you have to take advantage of those stretches?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, there's I think there's times as a golfer where everything just sort of matches up. Physically you're feeling really good, mentally you're in a good space, your confidence is high and yeah, when you go through periods like that, you have to take advantage of them. There's always things in golf that are working against you. You can feel like you're right on your game but you're uncomfortable to left pins, but every so often there's times when everything clicks and that was Francesco's time in 2018. I was on the wrong end of it, I finished second to him at the Open that year. But yeah, and you've seen Jason Day in 2015.

**Q. Jordan.**

**RORY McILROY:** You see DJ go on that run in 2020.

**Q. Jordan.**

**RORY McILROY:** You see Brooks. Yeah, Jordan. It's fleeting until your name's Tiger Woods and then it's not so fleeting.

**Q. Is there something to admire in how he ground that out today, hitting that tee shot down the gully and still --**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, and he three-putted that hole, too. Yeah, he showed some grit out there and hung in and ended up shooting even par in the end?

**Q. One under.**

**RORY McILROY:** Oh, yeah, he finished with a birdie at the last, which is a great score. Yeah, he did really well after that.

**Q. Rory, do you feel like you got the good end of the draw with the weather coming in and how do you plan to kill the time until whenever you're out here again?**

**RORY McILROY:** I don't know. I actually thought looking at the weather forecast at the start of the week, I thought the late-early draw might be the more favorable draw, but we had perfect conditions out there today. I'm not going to complain about that.

I'm not going to do much. I'm going to get a little bit of treatment. I think my wife's due to land in an hour or two. Yeah, just chill out and maybe try to find somewhere nice for dinner and get ready for the rain tomorrow.

**Q. Treatment on anything in particular?**

**RORY McILROY:** No, just little niggles and aches and pains. I'm a year older now, so just got to make sure I take care of some things.

**Q. You are 33 now.**

**RORY McILROY:** I know.

**Q. I heard. Okay. So a couple weeks from a major, how important is it for you to be in good form heading to a major and how much of this week -- I know the course is tough enough where you have to concentrate just on the course, but how much are you thinking about just winning here and playing well here and how much are you preparing for the PGA?**

**RORY McILROY:** I've always found it very difficult to think about anything but the tournament that you're playing in and the week that you're at because that's all -- I mean, for me, that's all I can do. All I'm in control of is what I'm doing right now. I've never seen Southern Hills before, so I don't really know what to expect there. So this is its own week and its own tournament and I'm just focused on that.