

POST-ROUND INTERVIEW
May 4, 2023

RORY McILROY (-3)



Q. What was it like -- I guess birthday wishes all over the course out there, people singing happy birthday, what was that like for you?

RORY McILROY: It was very nice. I think this is my 11th birthday I'm celebrating in Charlotte. I'm sort of getting used to it. Yeah, look, it's really nice. It's not nice to have to wake up at 4:30 a.m. on your birthday, but at the end -- it's just another day. I feel just as good now as I did at 24, so with that I still feel like I've got a lot of good years left in me. It's nice to be out there and everyone wishing you, sort of wishing you a good day.

Q. As much as this golf course has changed over the years, you played it pretty well right from the very beginning. Have you had a hard time adjusting at all to the changes or has it actually made it better for you?

RORY McILROY: It's probably made it a little better. The golf course has become a little bigger, a little longer. There's one less par 5, which probably isn't great for me, but then there's a couple really hard par 4s put in there. I think it suited me both ways.

And I've always had a level of comfort on this golf course, whether it was back in the sort of 2011-2012 era or sort of post-PGA in 2017. If you look at all the results, I certainly excel here in May rather than when we played it in August and it was full of bermuda, I struggled with that a little bit. When it's like this and overseeded, I feel like it's -- that's sort of the right in my wheelhouse.

Q. And the news yesterday that Ian and Lee and Sergio had resigned their memberships, as it applies to the Ryder Cup, do you have any thoughts on what that might mean going forward because they won't be able to be captains or --

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, I think it's a shame, right? I think it's a shame that you've got the highest points score ever in the Ryder Cup and two guys that when they look back on their career, that's probably going to be at least a big chunk of their legacy is the roles that they have played in the Ryder Cup for Europe. For those three guys to not captain Europe one day, it's a shame.

But as the DP World Tour said in their statement, at the end of the day that was their choice and they knew that these were potentially going to be the consequences of those choices and of those actions and here we are. Yeah, it's certainly a shame.

Q. Rory, you talked Tuesday night about getting that reset. How did it feel to kind of get back out here? I know you usually take three weeks between --



RORY McILROY: It was nice. I felt quite comfortable out there. It was a nice pairing for me as well playing with Jason Day, who I've known for a long time and played a lot of golf with on Tour, and then with Fitz as well, we see a lot of each other down at home in Jupiter. It was really comfortable pairing, it was just really nice to be out there again.

Q. And making top-10 nine out of 11 times here and three wins, what is it about this course?

RORY McILROY: I feel relaxed here. I think if you come back to the site of your first win on Tour, and I've gotten to know the Harris really well and it's just a level of comfort at this golf course and at this club that I probably don't have any other venue on Tour. That's a big part of the reason.

Q. After the three weeks off, is there any sense of relief when you start, you know, 3 under par and right in it?

RORY McILROY: It was nice to get off to a good start, yeah. Nice to feel like I played well. I didn't want to spend my birthday afternoon grinding on the range, so it was nice to play OK.

Q. Were you just hoping on 7 that you could play it from there?

RORY McILROY: There's no white stakes, so I wanted to ask a question. I felt like I sort of knew the answer, but I just wanted to get it verified.

Q. Just one more on the birthday side. You got a card given to you out there, ran over to the ropes to pick it up. Is that a first for you, a fan bringing something and you going over to get it?

RORY McILROY: Oh, so that was -- the two people that gave me those cards were my pro-am partners yesterday, Madeline and Kai from The First Tee, so it was nice of them to write a couple little notes.

