

PRE-TOURNAMENT PRESS CONFERENCE
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RORY McILROY



JOHN BUSH: Rory, thanks for joining us, a three-time Wells Fargo Championship winner. I know you're happy to be back at Quail Hollow. If we can get some comments, please.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, always good to be back at Quail, one of my -- not just one of my favorite stops on Tour, but one of my favorite cities in America. I've had so many great memories here from over the years, first win on Tour and obviously winning here a few times, and I guess the support that I've had from this community and the support that this tournament's had from this community over the years, it's always been great to experience that. So yeah, great to be back. Looking forward to trying to get my fourth one here.

Q. Rory, what did winning the last time out do for you?

RORY McILROY: I think it freed me up a little bit. It's a different win, you're doing it with a partner and you're only having to hit half the shots on a Sunday to get it done. I think it did a world of good for both of us, for Shane and I, just in terms of setting us up for the rest of the season, giving us some confidence knowing that we could get the job done whenever we needed to.

Yeah, I've had a pretty slow start to the season, especially over here in the States. I played well in Dubai those first couple weeks. I felt like I needed something like that to get me going and hopefully that's the case.

Q. Rory, with the U.S. Open just a couple of weeks away at Pinehurst, I'm sure you played there in '14.

RORY McILROY: I did, yeah.

Q. Obviously a past champion of that event. What does it mean, first off, to have your name on that trophy and when you look at what it took at Pinehurst last time and what it looks like now?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, Martin Kaymer didn't give us much of a chance last time, he sort of ran away with it.

I love the -- I love what they've done with Pinehurst in terms of making it -- it's not a traditional U.S. Open setup the way you think of it with long rough. It's fairways run off into those waste areas and the greens are amazing. I like that they've made the greens bermudagrass now instead of the bent that they had last time. I actually -- someone told me that. I think it will play hopefully firm and fast and the way it should. I like that the U.S. Open



started to go back to some of those traditional venues. I loved LACC last year, I thought they did a great job with that course and that setup and I'm expecting something similar at Pinehurst.

Q. (Inaudible)

RORY McILROY: Yeah, yeah, I won a U.S. Open at Congressional that was pretty soft and pretty -- the type of golf that you would need to play at Pinehurst to win this year is going to be very different. Look, I'm super honored that I've got my name on that trophy, but I'd love to get my name on it again and do it a little bit of a different way. I think that would sort of be a feather in my cap that I maybe don't have.

Q. Going back to Valhalla next week, what do you remember about the last few minutes of trying to finish in the dark in what looked like a gangsome out there?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I'd say I'm a pretty, you know, nonconfrontational person. I'm not a huge fan of conflict, but when push comes to shove, I will. That was one of those times when I needed to sort of assert my will on a situation. I think if I wasn't as, I guess, as pushy as I was, I would have had to sleep on that lead and on that tee shot overnight, I just didn't want to do that. I think the guys up ahead were pretty unhappy with how it all unfolded. I got the result that I was looking for in the end and that's all that matters (Laughs.)

Q. Rory, since PLAYERS and before that you've been trying to, you know, put some things together with your swing and your iron play and things like that. Does the Zurich win sort of indicate that you've got all that ironed out or because you were only hitting half the shots do we know yet?

RORY McILROY: It feels good. The Sunday at Zurich, I don't kind of remember a time when I've driven the ball that good. I drove it really well on Sunday and put Shane in good positions and that was probably a good reason why we did so well.

Iron play really feels like it's coming around. That was the end of a four-week stretch for me, so I took a few days off when I got back home, hit balls for the first time Sunday. Sometimes to take a bit of a break and just think about it rather than actually doing it can help as well. I got here Monday pretty early and have done some good practice. Yeah, I don't know if it's this place and I just feel good here, but it feels like it's all starting to come around, which is great to see.

Q. Can you tell us where things stand with the board and what your conversations have been, if any, and where it's going?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, there's been a lot of conversations. Sort of reminded me partly why I didn't.

So yeah, I think it just, it got pretty complicated and pretty messy and I think with the way it



happened, I think it opened up some old wounds and scar tissue from things that have happened before.

So yeah, I think -- and it was, I think there was -- there was a subset of people on the board that were maybe uncomfortable with me coming back on for some reason. Yeah, I think that the best, I think the best course of action is if, you know, there's some people on there that aren't comfortable with me coming back on, then I think Webb just stays on and sees out his term, and I think he's gotten to a place where he's comfortable with doing that and I just sort of keep doing what I'm doing.

So yeah, I put my hand up to help and it was -- I wouldn't say it was rejected, it was a complicated process to get through to put me back on there. So that's all fine, no hard feelings and we'll all move on.

Q. You've expressed your thoughts on this several times, which I don't know if patience is the right word, but you're not happy where we're at where it's taken this long to get anywhere. Can you still affect change from the outside and what do you think the holdup is?

RORY McILROY: So in terms of I would say I'm impatient because I think we've got this window of opportunity to get it done, because both sides from a business perspective I wouldn't say need to get it done, but it makes sense.

And I just think -- I sort of liken it to like when Northern Ireland went through the peace process in the '90s and the Good Friday Agreement, neither side was happy. Catholics weren't happy, Protestants weren't happy, but it brought peace and then you just sort of learn to live with whatever has been negotiated, right? That was in 1998 or whatever it was and 20, 25, 30 years ahead, my generation doesn't know any different. It's just this is what it's always been like and we've never known anything but peace.

That's sort of how I -- it's my little I guess way of trying to think about it and trying to make both sides see that there could be a compromise here.

Yeah, it's probably not going to feel great for either side, but if it's a place where the game of golf starts to thrive again and we can all get back together, then I think that's ultimately a really good thing.

Q. What would you say is an issue that -- you said something that, you know, we might not like, one side might not like but we might have to live with it. What would that be? What are we talking about?

RORY McILROY: It could be if we go to more of a global schedule, do the American players that are used to playing all their golf in America want to travel outside of the States 12 times a year to play tournament golf, you know? That's a consideration.



There's the fact that if we all sort of come back together, there's only -- I think from the LIV contingent there's only seven players over there that have status, still have status or eligibility here. But would it be palatable to the rest of the membership if they come back with -- after seeing out their contract and they've financially got ahead by potentially hundreds of millions of dollars over the people that stayed, that's -- that's a consideration. I don't think it's a huge consideration because, you know, it's -- again, like if you're just thinking big picture and what's good for the game of golf and what's good for the Tom Kims of the world in 10 or 15 years' time and they're still playing professional golf, you want to set it up in a way where those younger guys have all the same opportunities if not more than the opportunities that we had at that time.

So this is -- it's not really about the here and now. It is a little bit, but it's also about how does this thing look 10, 15, 20 years down the line.

Q. Given the sort of difficulty of trying to reinsert yourself, are you any more or less optimistic that something will get done sooner rather than later?

RORY McILROY: I'm still optimistic. I think Webb staying on is a really good thing. I think he's got a really balanced voice in all of this and I think he sees the bigger picture, which is great.

My fear was if Webb stepped off and it wasn't me that was going in his place, what could potentially happen. Yeah, I'm really happy that Webb has made that decision to stay on and serve out the rest of his term.

Q. Rory, what is it that makes you feel kind of driven to or called to serve on the board? What is it that's going to drive you to do that?

RORY McILROY: I would say that golf and the PGA TOUR has been so good to me over the years, I just feel like it's my obligation or duty to try to give back and try to set the next generation of players up like we were set up by the previous generation. So Jack, Arnie, the guys that really helped build the PGA TOUR and helped it thrive, and Tiger obviously, to get it to where it is today, I think there's a responsibility with every generation to try to leave the Tour, leave the place that you're playing in a bit of a better spot than it was before. That's what it's about.

