



---

**Q. Rory, welcome back. Second start this season on the PGA TOUR but you've had a couple starts in Dubai. Just what's your form like in your mind right now?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, I think I'm just sort of working through that first little bit of the year where you're trying to shake a little bit of rust off and you're trying to sort of find your footing a little bit and sort of where your game is.

Felt like I learned quite a bit about my game last week, played well for a lot of it. Obviously made some big numbers which kept me from being right in contention on Sunday, but I feel like there's enough good in there to be encouraged going into this week.

**Q. What gives you more confidence, making a bunch of birdies or not making a bunch of big numbers?**

**RORY McILROY:** I think making the birdies probably. I think it's -- it depends. Like there's more opportunities to make big numbers last week than there is this week. There's not hazards, there's not water. Obviously it presents a different challenge in itself, this golf course, but I think the fact that I'm hitting a lot of good shots and hitting it close and converting a lot of putts, that has to give me confidence for not just this week but going forward.

**Q. Do you feel a bigger change at 4 or 18?**

**RORY McILROY:** I don't think 4 plays any differently, you're just hitting a slightly longer club. I actually think it's a horrible change.

And 18, yeah, 18 played downwind today and I hit driver, 8-iron. So certainly it's a bigger hole than it was, so 18's probably the better change, yeah.

**Q. Did you say 8-iron?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah.

**Q. Tiger talked yesterday about this course in August and how it could play different and maybe that being something that the Tour explores. What makes this course great as is and what would make it maybe (inaudible) if it was played at a different time of the year?**

**RORY McILROY:** I think you're looking at the condition of the course being -- you know, it



would play -- like this week it doesn't matter if you hit it in the fairway or not. It's actually a benefit sometimes if you do hit it in the rough because the ball's not going to come spinning back on you. So if you do get it in August where the greens are firm, there's more of a consideration of strategy off the tee especially and it starts to make the guys think a little. Bit, it certainly becomes a much more strategic golf course in that way.

Yeah, I mean, same as Pebble last week as well. We mightn't be able to play that in August because of the car show and everything else that goes on at that time of the year there, but even if you moved it a little bit later in the year there just to have the opportunity to have better weather and firmer conditions, that would be a good thing.

**Q. Why do you dislike the fourth hole, the change?**

**RORY McILROY:** Well, like 15 percent of the field hit the green last time when it was played at its original yardage at 230.

Like if you want it to be a 275-yard par-3, you have to change the apron leading up onto the green. It can't be kikuyu, it has to be another type of grass that can help you run it onto the green because again, in the right conditions, you try to fly that ball on the green with a 3-iron, it's going to land -- it's going to finish up on the fifth tee box. That's sort of what I mean by why it's not a great change.

**Q. It's pretty rare to see a blade putter out there these days. What was your kind of final straw five years ago when you sort of made the switch?**

**RORY McILROY:** Yeah, so I started with the Spider seven years ago, 2019, Kapalua. The only time I played Kapalua. The only time I probably ever will play Kapalua.

It's just more consistent. You know, I've made enough bad strokes with the Spider where the ball still went in the hole from inside six feet that, yeah, it's a lot more forgiving.

I still, I practice with a blade at home because I think when you practice with a blade a little bit and then you go back to the Spider, it feels just that little bit easier. And obviously it's great to look at and it feels good. But I don't think there's any surprise why a lot of guys are not just switching to mallets and Spiders but have done really well since. Obviously look at Scottie, look at Tommy Fleetwood last year, you look at the trajectory of their putting stats, mine as well, it's definitely a big help.

**Q. Did you make a visit to Augusta with your dad in the offseason or is that coming up?**

**RORY McILROY:** That's coming up. I'm going to go up there and play with the chairman next week actually, yeah.

**Q. So you have not been since?**



**RORY McILROY:** I have.

**Q. Oh, you did go?**

**RORY McILROY:** I have, yeah.

**Q. What was that like? Was it emotional at all going in there, being back?**

**RORY McILROY:** No. It was cool to get up to the champions locker room and see my nameplate alongside the other two champions that I share a locker with.

Yeah, it was somewhat nostalgic. I wouldn't say it was emotional but definitely there was nice memories. Yeah, different feels the first time staying on site without having to need a member there. There's a lot of perks you get with being a champion.

**Q. Was it just one round?**

**RORY McILROY:** It wasn't even a round. I was doing some -- I was doing some filming up there.

**Q. So you didn't really see the course much?**

**RORY McILROY:** I was out on the course and was hitting some shots, but the course isn't real different. I mean they've moved -- they haven't moved the tee box of 17 back, they've moved the plate where it was played from back 10 yards to make it 10 yards longer. But apart from that, the course is pretty much the same.

**Q. Are you going with your dad though, too?**

**RORY McILROY:** And the chairman.

**Q. Rory, this is the 100th playing of this tournament at Riviera. Why do you think this course has stood the test of time?**

**RORY McILROY:** I think the green complexes are a big part of it. Yeah, we haven't been here in a year obviously and I just, I don't know why I was surprised but some of the movement and some of how much break you have to play on a lot of the putts out here, it just, I don't know why I didn't remember but it's like wow, this is --

So the greens provide a challenge in themselves. Then you get a little bit of wind and it starts to swirl in this valley a bit and it starts to play pretty tricky.

**Q. Do you recall a favorite memory or moment in the events that you played here?**



**RORY McILROY:** I played with Adam the year that he won. We were playing in the final group or the second to final group. It was nice to be in contention here and have a chance to win. It was great, Adam holed a putt from over the back of the green. Yeah, that was probably my favorite memory.

