

ROUND 2 INTERVIEW
August 3, 2018

RORY McILROY (-8)



Q. Rory, relatively eventful day for the last few holes. How did you turn this one into a 67 at 8 under par halfway through?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it was eventful, an adventure to say the least. You know, I was 1 under standing on the 17th tee and I think if I had to finish 1 under, it would have felt like the worst I could have shot today.

So to get those two birdies on the last two holes is obviously very nice and get a couple closer to the lead. I just felt with some of the drives I hit on the back nine and where I was leaving it, I should have been giving myself chances for birdies and not having to scramble for par.

Wedge play, you know, the wedge -- in terms of like direction, they were pretty good, but my distance just wasn't -- I didn't match it up. I hit it way down there on the 8th hole and left myself 30 feet. I hit it way down there on 13, left myself 30 feet. It just, it wasn't -- yeah, I just -- I flew the green on 10 after hitting a good drive. There were three holes that I should have had birdie chances and I played them in 1 over.

Just a little bit of work on that maybe this evening, but I'm still in with a good chance. I'm only 3 behind heading into the weekend and I'm in a good position.

Q. The bunker play was pretty good at 17, although you were in trouble the entire hole until you holed it out of the sand.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I got away with the tee shot. I was aiming up the right side trying to hit a draw and I ended up cutting one, just got a little bit ahead of it. I was fortunate that I had a shot to the green.

I was probably a little greedy with the second shot trying to go straight at the pin and hit it in the bunker. But it was a good lie, it was on the upslope, it had everything I needed to play it aggressively and try to hole it and it was nice to see it drop.

Q. When you birdied the last two holes (inaudible)?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, hopefully I'm standing here on Sunday -- not standing, sitting over there telling you it was really important. But yeah, as I said, I felt like 1 under would have been the worst I shot today, so to birdie those last two holes and get in with a 67 is nice.

Q. You took a real deep breath even after that ball went in the hole on 17 and you looked like you were a little frustrated out there. What's it like to be under par on the day but knowing that, okay, I still got a lot of work to do?

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, I think, you know, I was frustrated because of what I just mentioned. You know, hitting good tee shots and not taking advantage of them. Even after that, you know, after that holed bunker shot I was saying to myself, I shouldn't need to hole bunker shots to make birdies out here. So I was still -- but I rode my luck. I hit a tee shot on 18 that clipped a limb and came back in the fairway and I made birdie from it. But it was just, it was nice to see a couple of good wedge shots the last three holes and at least I can take something from that into the next couple days.

Q. What was the difference in the course and what are you expecting for the next two?

RORY McILROY: We were looking at the leaderboard all afternoon. It seemed like the guys in the afternoon, no one made a big move. I think the wind got up a little bit and when the wind does pick up here, it does swirl in these trees and it makes club selection quite tricky. It puts just a little bit of doubt in your mind. So I think that's why we didn't see anyone go as low as this morning. The greens were getting a little chewed up just because they're soft as well.

You know, it is what it is. The guys that played -- you know, had the course the way they wanted it this morning will have to play it tomorrow afternoon and it will be a little bit different.

Q. Do you see it firming up?

RORY McILROY: A tiny bit. You know, my drives are rolling out a little bit, but I mean, a couple more days like this it might, but it's still humid and there's still moisture in the air.

Q. One of them rolled out 380 yards, by the way.

RORY McILROY: I must have carried it 370.

Q. What are you going to do, Rory, to improve this approach shot? Are you going to leave it dead by the hole or --

RORY McILROY: I'll try. Yeah, I've just got to work on my flight. The lower you flight your wedges, the easier it is to control your distance, so just work on my trajectory a little bit.

Q. -- between you're driving it so well and your wedge game's a little bit off, is that easier to fix than maybe if you weren't driving it as well?

RORY McILROY: I think so, yeah, because at least I'm disappointed with pars instead of, you know, if you're driving it in the rough and you're scrambling for pars all the time, you're

sort of happy that you're just sort of -- yeah, I definitely -- I'd rather have it this way, I think it's an easier fix.

Q. Is there a part of you that's pleased to be back in the States playing golf after so many weeks of links golf?

RORY McILROY: Yeah. Look, it was only two weeks of links golf and I think I needed that week at the Irish Open to recalibrate and be like, okay, I actually have to play a little bit differently here.

But yeah, look, this is my -- I love coming over here and playing this type of golf. It suits my ball flight and it suits -- I see shots, but it doesn't mean that I don't enjoy -- I sort of feel like I've played well over there and played links golf well the last few years. But I just -- it's nice to take full swings again. It feels like over there you're just hitting little half shots the whole time and playing it along the ground. Here, you can take a whack at it.

Q. Are you anywhere near how you were in '14 when you won The Open, here and the PGA?

RORY McILROY: I'm close. I'm not quite in control of my -- I'm not swinging it as good as I was back then and I'm working on trying to get it back to there. But, you know, I think as the years go on, I'm more experienced and, you know, put myself -- even if I'm not playing my best, I can still manage it around and get myself in there. I'm probably as, you know, just as good if not better in terms of being a tournament player, if that makes sense, and managing my game. You know, I feel like I'm close to being as good as I was in '14.

Q. I don't know if you saw, but you're going to play with Tiger and JT in the first two rounds of the PGA.

RORY McILROY: Nice.

Q. So you didn't see it?

RORY McILROY: I didn't see it, no. Tell you what I did see after I spoke to you all yesterday: Phil Mickelson's commercial. How about that? That was unbelievable.

Q. What's your best dance move? He says his is the worm, so what's yours?

RORY McILROY: Well, I mean it's -- you actually wouldn't believe it and then you would see it and be like, oh, he's actually pretty good.

But no, that's good. I mean, it's cool to be a part of those big groups. I played with Tiger a couple times this year, so it will be cool.

Q. Rory, do you appreciate how Phil -- most of us protect our ego. Him doing that

commercial is basically just saying, I'm going to open myself to ridicule.

RORY McILROY: No, it's not even that. Like we were saying last night, like what are his kids' friends going to say when they go back to school? It's like, ohhhh. But anyway, Phil's Phil and we love him for it and it's great.