

ROUND 3 INTERVIEW
February 27, 2021

RORY McILROY (-11)



Q. (In progress) when you have more than one double bogey on the card for the week, but is there an exception this week given that it seems like anybody can be afflicted at any time?

RORY McILROY: I think so. It seems like it's one of these courses where it can give you -- it gives up a lot of birdies and some eagles and stuff, but it can bite you very quickly without really -- without really doing much wrong. You look what happened to Viktor on the ninth hole last night. It can -- yeah, it's -- even if you hit decent tee shots into some of these bunkers and it seems like every time the ball just goes up against the lip and you can't really do much from there.

Yeah, it's one of these places where you just have to stay patient and know that you're going to have chances, and feel like this week I've been riding the rollercoaster a little bit, but it felt a little better today.

Q. What's a good spot to be tomorrow? How many strokes do you think given all that?

RORY McILROY: I mean, after I made birdie on 7 and 8, I got to whatever it was for the day, or 6 under for the tournament, I said to Harry, let's get to 10 by the end of the day and let's see where that leaves us. I shot one better than that. I didn't expect the lead to be what it is at, but I don't know, I think if you're within three or four, you still feel like you've got a reasonable chance.

Q. Lastly, what club did you hit that professional pull on 13?

RORY McILROY: 7-iron.

Q. Rory, you were a little pessimistic at the start of the week, I guess. How do you feel through this point?

RORY McILROY: Still somewhat pessimistic. It's okay, it's not -- nowhere near what I feel like I can play. I feel like I'm sort of piecing it around. Yeah, I'm getting it around, put it that way. I don't feel like I'm flushing it by any means, but it's a work in progress and I'm seeing some good signs, which I guess is encouraging.

Q. What kind of signs?

RORY McILROY: Some better tee shots, some -- what I've been working on on the range.

Some wedge shots have been good actually, wedge shots have been better, not as many pulls with those. It sort of seems like if I can smooth the transition out, I can come down on the right path instead of some of the shots, like that 7-iron on 13 aiming at the TV tower, it's uphill and you're sort of going after it. As soon as I go after one, that right shoulder just wants to get that way, the club gets out in front of me and I can hit that pull. Smoothing out that transition a little bit.

And the wedges have been good this week, but because you're not going after them so much. So it's just trying to -- even that tee shot on the last, I'm just trying to take it back so slowly just to get it back because the more I can get it back on the right way and the right path, the more it's going to come down on the right path. So there are encouraging signs. Actually, the putting was pretty good again today.

Q. Eight or nine months now everyone's been dealing with this, but are you still able to see Michael as much as you want?

RORY McILROY: I've seen him a little bit more. So I saw him, he came out to Abu Dhabi and then he came out the week before Riv there a couple weeks ago. That's what I was talking about standing hitting balls all day but feeling so unprepared to play because I hadn't played golf. You'd think after being out here 13 or 14 years you'd learn, but still do the same things. It's been good. And again, just trying to piece together what he's telling me and what we're trying to do. Hard because there's -- when do you take a week off? And you take a week off, you want to work on this stuff, but then you're right back into playing again. So to get that time to actually really focus on it is sort of tough. Again, I'd love to just go and immerse myself in it for like two or three weeks and get it done, but with the schedule, it just isn't going to work like that and it's just going to be a process over the next few months to tease it back into the place I want it to get to.

Q. Does it feel right on the range, just a matter of getting it to the course, or you're not quite there?

RORY McILROY: No, I'm still not even there yet on the range. I'm there with I can hit a 7-iron 150 yards and get it in the right positions and that's good, but then it's hitting that 7-iron with speed and the way you want to, that's where it's still taking a little bit of time.

Q. (Question about his coach.)

RORY McILROY: Yeah, so it was probably, I saw him maybe the week maybe Mexico. No, it would have been the week before going to L.A. last year, then I saw him again the week before the Memorial, whenever that was played in July. So it's like six months nearly.

Q. That's the last time?

RORY McILROY: And then I've -- that was the longest time. I've actually seen him quite a bit since that.