

# RBC Canadian Open

Press Conference

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

## Rory McIlroy

JACK RYAN: We welcome Rory McIlroy here at the RBC Canadian Open, making his first start in the event. Won THE PLAYERS Championship earlier this season.

Rory, if we could just get an opening comment as you begin to make your debut.

RORY McILROY: Yeah, excited to be here. I've had one experience of Canada before. I came to Toronto the week after the PGA Championship in 2015 for a few days, but that was really it. You know, I wanted to play this week because obviously it's the week before the U.S. Open, and I thought playing my way into that would be ideal, but also, I've heard a lot of great things about Hamilton. I remember watching a little bit back in 2012, and then I've spoken to Brad Faxon a little bit, and he had a chance here back in maybe '03, and he really raved about the golf course.

Yeah, I'm excited to be here. I just saw the front nine for the first time today. It's a very strategic golf course. You've got to put it in play off the tee, and I'm definitely going to have to drive it better this week than I did last week.

I'm excited to be here. Had a good few days already and looking forward to a good week.

### **Q. Do you think it's the perfect place to get prepared for next week and Pebble Beach?**

RORY McILROY: Definitely. I mean, even just playing the front nine there this morning, you know, there's a variety of different tee shots that you need to hit, different clubs. The putting surfaces, the greens are going to be very similar, poa-type of grass.

The rough's pretty thick. You know, if you miss it in the rough, you're doing well to get it up by the green, and then you know, if you do miss greens, it's going to be pretty similar in terms of the lies that you get.

Obviously this isn't just a preparation week. This is a very prestigious tournament, one of the oldest tournaments in the world that I would dearly love to be able to add my name to. I'm fully focused on this week, but knowing that if I play well here, this week, and have good control of my ball and my distance control, that that will serve me well going into next week, also.



### **Q. What's the difference between playing well, knowing you're playing well, and finishing high, what's the satisfaction level?**

RORY McILROY: I mean, completely different satisfaction level. There's been a lot of instances this year, where I've played well and finished high, and it's -- you know, you check a lot of boxes and you've played well, but to play well and finish the thing off, that was -- it was nice to do that at THE PLAYERS. Need to go birdie two of the last four holes there to win; I think it's the satisfaction of just, you know, hitting the right shots at the right times and pulling it off when you need to. I think there's a certain satisfaction in that.

But, you have to realize that these high finishes means that your game is in good shape, and it's just a matter of staying patient and getting yourself in those positions, and sooner or later, it will be, not your turn, because I feel like that means that the onus isn't on you; it is up to you, your responsibility to finish it off and hit the shots.

But the more times you can put yourself in that position, the more comfortable you're going to be at the end of those tournaments.

### **Q. When you look back at what Tiger did winning at Pebble by 15, what goes through your mind?**

RORY McILROY: It's just so dominant. He probably led the field in every single statistical category. I'm sure he was up there in distance and driving accuracy. I think Pebble, 2000, he never drove the ball better than he did that year, long and straight. He had unbelievable distance control with his irons and he was holing putts. He did everything he needed to do.

You know, golf can feel pretty easy when it's like that. I've, maybe not to that same level, I've played tournaments and played well where the back nine has been comfortable and you know, you've been able to sort of let it sink in. But you know, to win by 15, it's remarkable.

I don't know if we'll ever see a performance as dominant as that again.

### **Q. Just wondering if you can compare your time at the Raptors game a couple nights to go to any other sporting event you've been to, and did you**

**have a good time?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I had a great time. A shame about the result obviously, but hopefully they Nick one on the road here I know they come back here, it will be 2-2. It was a great atmosphere, it was. I've been lucky enough to get to a couple other NBA Finals games. But they were in Miami, so it's a different fan base and it's, you know -- it's funny, you go to an NBA Finals game in Miami, there's empty seats in the first quarter and they are not turning up until halftime.

It was really loud on Sunday night. It was really cool to be there and be a part of and experience. As well, I've always had an appreciation for other athletes and it's one of my favorite things to do is to go and watch other sporting events and see how other athletes handle their situations and pressures.

I love going to boxing fights for that reason. I love going to other sporting events, and just that appreciation of how athletic those guys are and how fast they are. I mean, they make that court look so small in terms of how fast they get up and down.

Yeah, it was a great experience. As I said, it wasn't the result that a lot of people were hoping for, but I'll be following it closely tonight.

**Q. You had mentioned previously when it was first announced you would be playing in this tournament, that you were maybe going to check out Niagara Falls and other sites in the area. Aside from the Raptors game, have you taken in any of the local sites?**

RORY McILROY: Not really. I ventured out to the Whole Foods at Oakville a couple days ago, that was about it. Got my supplies.

Not really. It's been a couple early starts. I'm playing early tomorrow. So maybe, if I'm feeling up for it, I might venture down to Niagara and check it out, if I feel like I've got the energy.

**Q. You've ripped off a ton of Top 10s before the win at THE PLAYERS. What's it like to go from that to the stretches where you've won a couple starts or three starts in a row?**

RORY McILROY: I think as I just alluded to, just hitting the right shots at the right time, or, you know, maybe a little bit more separation from the field those first couple of rounds, where you've got a little bit of a cushion going into the weekend.

But you know, it seems like I shot 12-under for the first two days at THE PLAYERS and felt like that was a really good effort, and I was tied for the lead with Tommy.

You know, the fields are so deep nowadays that even your really good golf is very hard. That's why I was alluding to the fact that Tiger winning by 15, that might be something we only ever see once in our lifetime.

Yeah, the jump is just -- you know, consistently playing well, getting yourself into position, and, you know, just handling that situation better and hitting a good shot at the right time or holing a putt at the right time and that's the difference.