

**June 19, 2011**



An Interview With:

## **RORY McILROY**

**BETH MURRISON:** It is my great honor to introduce the 111th U.S. Open champion, Rory McIlroy, who put the finishing touches on an amazing four days of golf at Congressional Country Club today with a 4th round, 2-under 69, for a four-day total of 268 and an 8-stroke victory.

Rory, have you had any time in the last hour or so to let it sink in that you're the U.S. Open champion?

**RORY McILROY:** Not really. Obviously I have a lot of commitments, photos and interviews and everything. But it will probably take a little bit of time to sink in. But just to sit here, knowing that I've just won that trophy and following in the footsteps of one of my best friends, Graeme McDowell, last year at Pebble, you know, it's a great feeling. And I got my first Major Championship out of the way quite early on in my career, especially after what's happened the last couple of months. It feels great. And just looking forward to putting myself in the picture for hopefully many more.

**BETH MURRISON:** Before we turn it over to questions, we would like to list some of the records that Rory has broken this week. There are quite a few. We'd like to list some of the highlights. At 22, he's become the youngest U.S. Open champion since Bob Jones in 1923, which is worth noting. Most notably of all the records, he broke the overall 72-hole scoring record of 272, he bested it by four strokes. It was most recently set by 2003 by Jim Furyk at Olympia Fields. This is the fifth time it's been done. His 16-under par broke the record for most strokes under par for 72 holes. Previously that was 12-under by Tiger in 2000 at Pebble Beach. He again lowered the

record for the most strokes under par at any point in the championship.

With his birdie on the first hole, he became the first to reach 15-under in a U.S. Open, topping the day old mark of 14-under. Three holes later with a birdie on No. 4, he got to 16 under. And on No. 10, with an incredible birdie that was quite close to a hole-in-one, he made it to 17 under.

He also became the 6th champion in U.S. Open history, to lead from start to finish without any ties. He became the 4th winner to record all four rounds under par, and the third to claim the championship with four rounds all in the 60s. In the four rounds here at Congressional, he made a remarkable simple 3 bogeys and 1 double bogey.

In addition, and this is another note-worthy stat for people who like that sort of thing, he hit 62 of 72 greens in regulation, 86 percent. And that's a U.S. Open record for as long as the USGA has been keeping such marks.

Rory, phenomenal golf out there. You said that you knew that you had the game to play here and you felt good about it. Was there any point during the week that you said, yep, I think this might be the week?

**RORY McILROY:** I think yesterday was a big day for me to get over that, playing in the last group, going out with the lead. To play such solid golf, that gave me a lot of confidence going into today. And knowing that I could handle it and to go out there and to basically, from the get-go, birdie the first hole. And then to play such solid golf after that, it felt good all week.

Even when I got here last week to do my practice rounds and everything, I felt like this golf course was well suited to me. The conditions helped, as well, you know. It was soft. With my high ball flight, I was able to stop it on the greens. When you hit the fairways like I was able to this week, you're going to give yourself a lot of opportunities for birdies.

**Q. Could you talk about the 10th hole and that shot and how cool it was with that theater and everything and the reaction you got at that moment?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, it was -- I thought that was probably the biggest point in the round because Yang had just stuck it in there close. So to follow that shot up with mine was pretty cool. To get the ovation coming on to the green, it was nice. And I was very happy to play the 10th and the 11th hole at 1-under par today, because they were two holes that you had the possibility of making a big number on. And to play those at 1-under par was big for me.

After I got past the 11th, I sort of knew I would have had to have done something really, really stupid to not win.

**Q. You said outside that you were trying to emulate Tiger. What were you trying to emulate and why, exactly?**

RORY McILROY: Just growing up and watching him, watching him dominate at the Masters at '97, watching him dominate at Pebble in 2000 and St. Andrews. And just trying to go out there with the same intensity that he has, and the same -- no lead is big enough. That's all I was trying to do. I was trying to go bogey-free today, which didn't work for me. I missed the putt at 12, which I was quite annoyed at.

I don't know if he went bogey-free at Pebble on the last day. I'm not too sure. I was trying to go out and trying to make no mistakes, and really not give anyone a chance to catch me.

**Q. You mentioned at the beginning that you were glad to get your first major out of the way. Even though you haven't played in that many, were you already starting to sense a little bit of pressure as each one goes by? With so much hype about your game and the ability to win Majors, did you feel that pressure already, especially being close a few times?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, definitely. The Open last year, you know, you shoot a bad second round, it's okay. And I thought nearly getting myself into the playoff at Whistling Straits was a great experience.

But then I felt like coming back to Augusta this year, I felt like that was a great opportunity to get my first major and it obviously didn't quite work out. But to come back straightaway at the U.S. Open, straight after and to win, that is -- it was

nice. And as I said, to get one out of the way early, you can always call yourself a Major champion. And hopefully in the not so distant future I'll be able to call myself a multiple major champion.

**Q. How much of it is joy winning and how much is relief given how much you've been through and all the build up in your career?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, there's a lot of joy, and especially with this victory, there's quite a bit of relief, as well. More joy, though. I knew going out today that I was very comfortable. I knew most of the field were going to have a hard time to catch up to the score that I was on. So, yeah, obviously just very happy to win the U.S. Open and to win it in a bit of style, as well, is always nice.

**Q. Congratulations on playing the 10th hole a little better than the last time around.**

RORY McILROY: Five shots better. Thanks.

**Q. When she's reading through those stats and listing all those names and Nicklaus and Woods and all of those guys and 12 records, does it just make your head spin at this age? I'm trying to kind of describe and put this into context, here, and was hoping you could help out a little.**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, you know, again, I come back -- I think the course did me a few favors this week with the condition of it. If this golf course was firm and hard, I don't think anyone could have got to 16-under par.

To have the lowest four-round total, the most amount of strokes under par, they're all really nice records. I said this on Friday after I came out and everyone was talking about the lowest 36 hole, the lowest this, the lowest that, I said it's nice, but I'll be able to enjoy it a little bit more if I have the trophy on Sunday and it's worked out that way.

**Q. Congratulations. Talking about Tiger, as you kind of slowly built this dominance this week at this tournament there's been a lot of talk already comparing you to Tiger and projecting what you could do. Do you feel like that's a little premature? And secondly, do you wonder if he was back home**

### **in Florida watching this?**

RORY McILROY: I think it's -- when you win a Major quite early in your career, everyone is going to draw comparisons, it's natural. But I don't know, I know he doesn't watch that much golf on TV. Maybe he saw a couple of shots here and there. But it would just be nice obviously for him to be healthy again and get his knee and his Achilles in shape and be back out on the golf course, because he does bring a little something extra to tournaments. He's Tiger Woods. I'm just happy to be sitting here with the trophy that has his name on it.

**Q. After Augusta, a lot was written about a mental scars and all that kind of business. I wonder did you see any of that, and if you did have any mental scars, how were you able to get over them so quickly, if there was a key moment or key thought or somebody said something?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I don't know. I mean, I felt like I got over the Masters pretty quickly. I kept telling you guys that and I don't know if you believed me or not. But here you go (laughter) nice to prove some people wrong.

But, no, I don't know, I was very honest with myself and I knew what I needed to do differently. And that was the thing. I had a clear picture in my mind of what I needed to do and where my focus needed to be when I got myself in that position again. And luckily enough for me, I was able to get in that position, you know, the major right after Augusta. To be able to finish it off the way I did, you know, it just tells me that I learned from it and I've moved on and now I've got this, I can go ahead and concentrate on getting some more.

**Q. For more than a hundred years, the Irish golfers with one exception have watched the rest of the world pick up Major Championship trophies. Four years, two U.S. Opens, two Open championships and one PGA, somebody or something deserves credit for what's going on there. Where does this all start? Where does this renaissance in Irish golf start?**

RORY McILROY: I think it starts with the people. I think golf is very accessible back home. There's obviously a lot of great golf courses. And a big help to me growing up was the Golfing Union of Ireland and the help that they gave me

throughout my junior career and amateur career, enabling me to go and play in different places in the world, learn about different conditions, different cultures, which really prepared me for coming out on Tour.

To see obviously what Pdraig did in '07 and '08, winning three Majors in a pretty short space of time, seeing Graeme win this trophy last year, and then me, Irish golf is obviously in a very healthy state at the moment.

**Q. Pdraig and Graeme were both talking about how people have been talking about you for so long back home, about it being maybe your destiny to win a Major championship one day and you had a lot of expectations on you since you were a junior. Has that put any pressure on you? And are you surprised you fulfilled those expectations so quickly?**

RORY McILROY: If you had asked me when I turned pro when I was 18, do you think you'd win a Major by the time you're 22, I would have said no. I would have liked to have been an established player on the European Tour, maybe a couple of wins. But to contend in the majors how I have so early, I don't really know what I can put it down to, if it's just hard work and practice or if I feel like I just have a little bit more focus or intensity for major weeks, I'm not too sure. I'm surprised that I've done it so early. But it's great. It's a great thing for me. I can always call myself a Major champion now and I can go ahead and focus on, as I said, trying to get some more.

**Q. Some good news, the bar at Hollywood Golf Club is still open and still serving?**

RORY McILROY: With everything going on my account as well, probably.

**Q. Coming from Northern Ireland, we're proud of what -- what will it mean to bring the trophy back home to friends and what you find associated with when you get home later this week?**

RORY McILROY: I haven't really thought about it. It will be good. I'm looking forward to getting home and seeing all my friends and family and having a good time with them for a few days. This is -- you lose a lot more in golf than you win. So when you do win, you have to enjoy it. I'm

going to go back home and enjoy it with my friends and enjoy it with my family and, yeah, I love being from Northern Ireland. I tell everyone how great it is. For me, it's the best place on earth. I'm obviously biased, but I love it back there and I love the people. It's great that I get so much support from back home.

**Q. Speaking of family, how much does it mean that your dad was here to celebrate this monumental victory with you?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, he's been a big help to me all week, just having breakfast with him. I feel like with my dad I can share things with him that maybe I couldn't do with a friend or something like that. So just to sit with him and talk about how I'm feeling and how I'm going to approach the day, he's always so positive. So to have those positive thoughts in your head from him, it's nice to go out on the golf course and think about what he said. He's been a huge help to me, not just this week, obviously, but my entire life. If it wasn't for my mom and dad sacrificing so much, I probably wouldn't be sitting up here right now.

**Q. Along those lines, what did you say to each other when you first saw him afterwards? Was the first time you saw him during the round before you tapped in at 18?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I was looking for him. I knew he was going to be somewhere close after I hit my second shot and was walking down the 18th fairway, I was looking for him over on the left side somewhere. I just spotted him before I hit my first putt. And then when I put it up to whatever it was, a foot or whatever, I looked to him and gave him a little smile, a little grin. I think I might have said Happy Father's Day, I think that might have been the first thing. But, yeah, he's obviously going to be proud of me and everything. It's just great to have him here.

**Q. Do you look forward to the day when Tiger is a hundred percent healthy and you can kind of test yourself against one of the best ever?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I mean, it would be great to -- I've watched Tiger over the last 15 years. It would be great. When I was growing up, I always had putts to win Tiger Woods in the Masters or U.S. Open. So it would be great to be able to get in contention one day, whether it be a Major or just a regular event and go down the

stretch with him because I've never really had that experience before.

As I said, hopefully he can get healthy and can get back playing good golf, because the game of golf is a better place with him playing well.

**Q. Congratulations.**

RORY McILROY: Thank you.

**Q. If you've had expectations on you up until now, they're only now going to grow, now that you've won one. When you hear people saying, here's the next Tiger Woods, or Jack Nicklaus's record is in danger, how difficult is that for you, and how do you think about it? How do you absorb that?**

RORY McILROY: I don't think you can think about it. It's only people saying these things. It's not -- it's nice that people say that he could be this or he could be that or he could win 20 major championships, but at the end of the day I've won one. I obviously want to add to that tally. But you can't let what other people think of you, influence what you have to do. You have to just go out there, work hard, believe in yourself. As long as you believe in yourself and believe that you're doing the right things, that's all you can really do.

**Q. Do you remember when you first thought or when you were first told you could be a Major champion one day?**

RORY McILROY: No. I think the first time that I realized it for myself was about this time last year, when Graeme won at Pebble, and then Louis won at St. Andrews. And then Martin won at Whistling Straits, and then I got myself in a good position at the Masters, and then obviously now. I think when Graeme won last year, it made me realize that winning a Major championship was achievable, attainable. To see a great friend like that win a Major, it only inspires you. It inspires you to go out and emulate them. And funny enough, I was able to do that this week.

**Q. It's Father's Day. I have a 22-year-old son. He works in the golf business, as well, but can you talk about something that nobody ever talks about? You just won a million and a half dollars?**

RORY McILROY: Thank you. Where's the check? I'm just happy with this trophy. It's nice, we play for a lot of money, week in, week

without. We're very fortunate that we can do that. But the thing about these major championships is the history, the prestige, and just to be able to add your name to a list like Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, Tom Watson, Arnold Palmer, you know, that's the most satisfying thing about it.

**Q. Well done, mate. You mentioned challenging Tiger. What about the young stars around the world in golf that are coming up, and specifically talk about Jason Day and a potential rivalry going forward?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, definitely, Jason has played fantastically the last three Majors. He had a chance at Whistling Straits. Finished second at Augusta. Finished second again here this week. I said to him on the 18th green during the prize ceremony that he's very close.

I first played with Jason when I was 16 years old down in Melbourne at the Australian Masters at a practice round. He was very impressive back then. You know, it seems like he's been around, especially if you're from Australia, you've probably been hearing about Jason Day for a long time. He's only a year older than me. So he's got a lot of time on his hands. And to be doing what he's doing so early is fantastic. I'm sure he'll put himself in positions to win major championships. I'm sure one day that he'll breakthrough, as well.

**Q. Coming from Ireland, growing up as a kid did you ever think that by age 22 you'd be sitting here on this stage in America as the U.S. Open champion?**

RORY McILROY: You know, I never really thought about it. All I wanted to do was play golf when I was growing up. I wanted to become the best that I could be. I probably said back then, I want to try to become the best in the world. In some ways I'm on my way to trying to do that. But, no, to sit here at 22 years old as a major champion, it's a very nice feeling, and I'm sure it will take a little bit of time to sink in. It's just fantastic. I never really -- I've never thought about it that much. I've always dreamt about one day being a Major champion, but to actually sit here and to be able to call yourself one is very nice.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

RORY McILROY: I've got an early start in the morning, so not too many drinks. I'm sure there will be a few. But I definitely want to drink

something out of that thing before the end of the night.

**Q. You've just won an away match. You've had a lot of support, did it surprise you and what does it feel like?**

RORY McILROY: It feels like a home match. The support I got out there today was absolutely incredible, for a foreigner to come over and play in front of these U.S. crowds. I think every cloud has a silver lining, and I think what happened at Augusta was a great thing for me in terms of support. A lot of people, I feel like, when I came back to the States to play at Charlotte, you know, the support for me there was fantastic. It's just been incredible the way people have supported me and cheered for me the whole week. It's nice. And to be able to have that when you come over here and feel like you're one of their own is probably going to be pretty important in the next few years.

**Q. Your swing has been described as the best in golf. Can you give us any idea as to how it evolved or are you conscious of that at all?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I've been working with the same coach, Michael Bannon for, I don't know, 15 years, maybe, something like that, 16 years. So we -- at this moment in time, we know where we want my golf swing to be. And we know the positions that it needs to be in for me to hit good shots. It's been a long process. A lot of the early days was fundamentals, getting a good grip, good setup, good alignment, everything like that, building the base of the swing. And then from there, at an early age I used to be very upright, my left arm used to be very, very high at the top.

And then I remember at about 13 or 14, I was getting a very flat swing, so I was just trying to find a happy medium in there. And it feels as we've got to the point now -- probably felt when I was 16, was I don't feel like my swing has changed that much since then until now. I find a few adjustments here and there.

**Q. Curious about what went on between you and your caddie, JP Fitzgerald today. Yesterday you talked about focusing, how aware are you, and how much attention did you -- the spectators, the raucous crowd, the theater that was going on, were you able to**

**focus in today, as well?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, that was another thing that I learned from Augusta. I didn't speak to JP enough over that last day. I feel like even if it's not about golf, having a conversation about something completely different is probably the best thing for me because it takes my mind off it and it takes me getting too involved in what I'm doing. To have him there and have him talk about what he did last night or just anything like that, it takes your mind off what you're doing for a couple of minutes. And it's nice to have that. So that was a huge thing for me that I learned at Augusta. I need to keep talking to JP and just have conversations going down the fairways. And it seemed to work out for me this week.

**Q. Congratulations. Going back a couple of weeks to, I think, The Memorial, you had the opportunity to sit down with Jack Nicklaus. And he gave you some good advice, I read it in the paper the other day. And it was about finishing. You've shown a lot of comfort and confidence out there this week, can you attribute any of the advice you received from Mr. Nicklaus to that comfort and confidence that we all saw?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, definitely. Again, he's very, very big into not making mistakes. And that was one of my big goals today was to go out there and not to have a blemish on my card, I ended up making two bogeys. It's nice, you sit down with the most successful player that's ever lived and for him to say that he expects big things from you, that you should embrace the pressure, those are great things to hear from someone like him. To be able to come out this week and after what he said to me and put a little bit of that into practice so early is a nice feeling. I feel as if I have a good relationship with Jack. His little bit of advice along the way has definitely helped me.

**Q. Congratulations.**

RORY McILROY: Thank you.

**Q. You looked extremely comfortable on the greens this week. It was something Graeme mentioned comparing you with Tiger Woods, as has been done recently, that maybe the only little weakness, perhaps, would be the putter. Could you talk a little bit about the work you've done with Dave Stockton? It seems to have made a big difference between you since**

**the Masters, especially The Memorial, holed all the crucial putts?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, you know, again, the work that I've done with Dave Stockton has been more about how to approach a putt, not focusing on technique so much, more like green reading, your routine, and everything like that. And people often said to me we think you're too quick on the greens. But he thought the opposite. You're taking too much time, why are you taking three practice strokes, don't take any practice strokes anymore. See the target, where I want to hit it, and just go with it. If I have any sort of technical thing in my thought, in my stroke, it would just be to keep the back of my left hand going towards the target, and that's all we really worked on. It seemed to work.

I have to give a big thank you to Paul Hurrion as well who helped me on the greens. Without the knowledge and the understanding he has given to me about my putting, about my stroke, and about -- it's a very scientific thing, you know, with him. But if I didn't have that knowledge, then I probably wouldn't be able to putt as well as I am now.

**Q. Have you had your fill of leading Majors this season or might you have something left for St. Georges?**

RORY McILROY: I hope I have a little bit left in me. There's two more left. I said after Augusta, there's three more Majors left, I'll try and go out and win one of them. I've done that. There's two more Majors left. I'm going to try my best and go out and put myself in a great position to win them, also.

**Q. Kind of a three-part question. What did you hit at 10? Did you think it was going in? Would you compare or contrast what you felt on the 10th at Augusta with what you felt on the 10th today?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I hit a 6-iron. I knew when it hit the top of the slope that it was going to come down pretty close to the hole. I never really thought about it going in.

Yeah, walking off the 10th green today and walking off the 10th green at Augusta was a little different, definitely.

**Q. On the tee?**

RORY McILROY: On the tee? I think I

had -- I had an 8-shot lead at that point. I had a 1-shot -- I had a 4-shot lead that was down to a 1-shot lead at Augusta. I was definitely a little more comfortable on the 10th tee today.

**Q. Graeme said he left you a note in your locker this morning. Could you share what the gist of that was?**

RORY McILROY: First thing he said to me, what golf course are you playing this week? And then he just said that I've been playing great and just keep it going. But I saw that note just when I was putting my golf shoes on to go out to the range today. It meant a lot. I had a note from his caddie, Ken, as well. So it was nice to see those just before I went out to play.

**Q. What are the hopes of having another Twitter photo of Charl, this time with that trophy in the picture?**

RORY McILROY: If he wants one, he can have one. It will be nice that he can wear his green jacket and I can hold this. Maybe. I don't know what he's up to. But, yeah, we'll try.

**Q. Congratulations.**

RORY McILROY: Thank you.

**Q. Just a follow-up to an earlier question. We can officially begin talk of a Rory slam, I guess, since you've won the U.S. Open. Can you give a little thought about what it would mean to win the next three Majors in a row, which would include sweet redemption in the Masters next year?**

RORY McILROY: Yeah, I think that's a long way away. I'm going to take three weeks off, I think, get myself ready for The Open Championship. Give myself a great chance to prepare well for that and hopefully give myself a good chance to win that. And I can't really look much further ahead than that. It's great, as I said, to get this first major in the bag and hopefully I can get a few more. If it might not be this year, then that's fine. But I've got plenty more years to get a few more. So I'm happy with this at the minute, and if I can add to that this year then that's great.

**Q. Looked like you had beautiful rhythm with all 14 clubs, putter and driver, especially. But really all the clubs. Do you have a mantra in your head for rhythm that maybe we could steal from you?**

RORY McILROY: Not really. When you're swinging well and you're that comfortable, everything just seems quite rhythmical anyway, even the way you walk and just your whole thought process, everything just seems to go quite well. But, no, nothing, really. I didn't really have a swing thought this week. I was just seeing the target and hitting it. It was just one of those weeks where everything was on and it worked out the right way.

BETH MURRISON: Rory, thank you so much for all the time you spent with us this week, your excellent play on the golf course was matched by your patience and graciousness in here, and it's very much appreciated.

RORY McILROY: Thank you guys.

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