

Rory McIlroy Opens Masters Title Defense Strong - Intermediate - EN

Sports

English

Article

Rory McIlroy began his Masters title defense with several loose tee shots, including one near a spectator's seat and another into the trees. Even so, he stayed patient and trusted his swing would improve. That calm approach paid off with a 5-under 67, his best opening round at Augusta National in 15 years, leaving him tied for the lead with Sam Burns.

McIlroy said being the defending champion changed his mindset. Wearing the green jacket gave him freedom and confidence, even when his game was not perfect. He joked that it was easier to swing without fear when he knew he could return to the Champions Locker Room and put on the jacket at the end of the day.

Burns matched the lead by dominating the par 5 holes with three birdies and an eagle. Scottie Scheffler, the world's top-ranked player, opened with a 70 in tougher afternoon conditions. Patrick Reed also stayed near the top after two eagles on the front nine, though the fast greens later sent one of his shots all the way into the pond by the 16th hole.

The course was already dry, firm and fast, and players knew the conditions could become even tougher if no rain arrives. Only five players broke 70, and only 16 finished under par. McIlroy said he still felt nerves in his 18th Masters appearance, but his 67 was better than he had hoped for.

Vocabulary Words List

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| title defense | trying to win again after winning before |
| tee shots | the first shots on a hole |
| spectator's seat | a chair used by someone watching |
| share the lead | to be tied for first place |
| defending champion | the player who won the event last year |
| green jacket | the prize jacket for the Masters winner |
| patient | able to stay calm and wait |
| freedom | the feeling of being less worried |
| opening round | the first round of the tournament |
| Augusta National | the course that hosts the Masters |
| Champions Locker Room | the special room for Masters champions |
| birdies | holes finished one stroke under par |
| eagle | a score of two under par on one hole |
| par 5 holes | holes expected to take five shots |
| world's top-ranked player | the player ranked number one |
| afternoon conditions | weather and course conditions later in the day |
| front nine | the first nine holes |
| fast greens | greens where the ball rolls quickly |
| pond | a small body of water |
| dry | without much moisture |
| firm | hard, not soft |

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| under par | better than the course standard |
| nerves | feelings of pressure |
| lead | the top position |
| bogey | one stroke over par |
| Masters appearance | a time playing in the Masters |
| swing | the motion used to hit the ball |
| confidence | belief in your ability |
| score | the number of strokes taken |
| conditions | the state of the course and weather |

Fill In The Blanks Listening Practice

Rory McIlroy began his Masters _____ with several loose _____, including one near a _____ and another into the trees. Even so, he stayed patient and trusted his swing would improve. That calm approach paid off with a 5-under 67, his best opening round at Augusta National in 15 years, leaving him tied for the lead with Sam Burns.

McIlroy said being the _____ changed his mindset. Wearing the _____ gave him _____ and confidence, even when his game was not perfect. He joked that it was easier to swing without fear when he knew he could return to the Champions Locker Room and put on the jacket at the end of the day.

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Vocabulary Retention Quiz

1. How did McIlroy react after several bad tee shots?
2. Why did he say the green jacket changed his mindset?
3. How did Sam Burns build his strong round?
4. What happened to one of Patrick Reed's shots near the 16th hole?
5. Why were players worried about the next three days at Augusta?

Discussion Questions

How much can confidence change an athlete's performance?

Do tough course conditions make sports more exciting to watch? Why?

Why do defending champions often face different pressure from other players?

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German (Intermediate)