



Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland hugs his caddie J.P. Fitzgerald after winning the 94th PGA Championship at the Ocean Course on August 12, 2012 in Kiawah Island, South Carolina. Photo by Andrew Redington/Getty Images

Rory puts on another record setting show at Kiawah



PGA

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The precocious talent of Rory McIlroy roared back to prominence over the weekend at Kiawah Island's Ocean Course, becoming the youngest player to win the PGA Championship since the championship first converted to stroke play in 1958.

The 22 year old blitzed the field by an 8 stroke margin as he did in winning the U.S. Open at Congressional in 2011, claiming his 2nd Major and setting a new record for the widest margin of victory in a PGA Championship, eclipsing Jack Nicklaus' seven stroke victory in 1980 at Oak Hill.

Although the margin of victory was once again gargantuan, the manner of this victory was far different to the 'wire to wire' performance in Washington. McIlroy only took a firm grip on the outright lead after completing his third round of the weather interrupted event and was immediately under threat from a fellow Brit in the opening nine holes of the final round.

Englishman Ian Poulter threw 5 straight birdies at the Northern Irishman's 4 stroke lead and further birdies at 11 and 12 brought him to within 2 strokes of the lead at one point. Alas, three consecutive bogies took the wind from his sails and with a final hole bogey, he limped into a tie for 3rd with Sweden's Carl Pettersson, defending champion Keegan Bradley and countryman Justin Rose at 4 under par.

Unheralded Brit David Lynn upstaged his higher profile Englishmen by edging into outright second position at 5 under par after

consecutive weekend rounds of 68. The 38 year old was playing in only his second career major after finishing back in the pack at the 2003 Open Championship at Sandwich.

Lynn told the assembled media that he couldn't place this result ahead of his first and to date only victory, the 2004 KLM Open on the European Tour, but he was chuffed to learn he has now qualified not only for a return next year, but will also be invited to The Masters next April.

Early front runners Tiger Woods and Adam Scott, who was looking to stage his own 'Rory-like' comeback from the disappointment of Lytham, suffered at the hands of Saturday's weather delay and could only finish in a tie for 11th at 2 under par. Scott in particular was on fire before the delay but could not get it going again on Sunday and will need to bide his time for a possible date with redemption next April at Augusta.

McIlroy capped off his latest world domination by ramming home a final hole 20 ft putt for birdie for a bogey-free round of six under par 66 to finish at 13 under par for the championship. Victory brought tremendous elation and no doubt, a touch of relief for the Northern Irishman who by his own admission has been a disappointment in the Majors since his astonishing U.S. Open win.

"To sit up here and see this trophy and call myself a multiple Major Champion, I know I've talked about it in the past, and not many people have done it, and yeah, I'm very privileged to join such an elite list of names," he said.

His form in the 2012 season had been turbulent at best, a runner up at the World Golf Championship Accenture Matchplay at Dove Mountain and a victory over Tiger Woods at The Honda Classic, the highs; a series of missed cuts including in his U.S. Open defence at Olympic, the lows. However, McIlroy

'found something' in tying for 5th at the Bridgestone Invitational the previous week and again, his form reversal was aided by the counsel of former PGA Champion and the U.S. Ryder Cup winning captain at Kiawah in 1991, Dave Stockton.

"Yeah, anywhere Dave's done well, I seem to do well. He's won at Congressional and obviously was The Ryder Cup captain here. Anywhere he's had success, I've had success too, which has been pretty cool." McIlroy said.

"You know, we had a chat last week in Akron and he just said to me, 'You know, just go out and play with a smile on your face. Enjoy it. This is what you've always wanted to do since you were a little boy. There's no point in getting frustrated out there or getting upset. Just go out and enjoy it.'"

"That's the attitude that I had for the last couple weeks, and it definitely helped."

When he puts together such pure ball striking and silky putting performances like this, McIlroy looks every inch the undisputed No. 1 player in the world. In fact, is there anyone in the world of golf who can get near him when in this mood? It's a rhetorical question but the PGA win will also mean an 'official' return to the World No. 1 position over Luke Donald and former No. 1 Tiger Woods, who is the only other

player in the field with an inkling of how McIlroy must be feeling after such a display.

"Yeah, it's nice. To win my second major and get to world No. 1 all in the same day is very special. It's something that wasn't completely on my mind today. I just wanted to go out and try and win this. But you know, it's a great bonus on top of an already great day." McIlroy said.

"It's been great to win my first major last year and to back that up with another one this year; I can't ask for any more. I just want to keep working hard, keep practicing, and hopefully there's a few more of these in my closet when my career finishes."

Comparisons with the Woods' record will be inevitable if he can keep putting superlative performances like this together more often than not. McIlroy now has the same number of major wins at the same age as Woods and has achieved multiple Major status in only his 17th Major appearance. With 4 other Top 10 finishes in Majors, he has already compiled a Major 'career' that would be the envy of most players - at only 22 years of age.

South Carolina's first ever staging of a Major will remain vivid in the memory, for the glorious setting and stern test of golf that Kiawah provided and the glorious nature of victory by one of the 'Uber' stars of the game.

Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland celebrates after putting on the 18th green during the Final Round of the 94th PGA Championship at the Ocean Course on August 12, 2012 in Kiawah Island, South Carolina. Photo by Andrew Redington/Getty Images

