

Monday, 10th of September 2012

An Open Letter from Rory McIlroy

Having just won three out of my last four tournaments, including a second Major Championship, I was hoping that my success on the golf course would be the more popular topic of golfing conversation today! However, the issue of my cultural identity has re-emerged, and with it, the matter of my national allegiance ahead of the Rio Olympics in 2016.

I am in an extremely sensitive and difficult position and I conveyed as much in a recent newspaper interview. I am a proud product of Irish golf and the Golfing Union of Ireland and am hugely honoured to have come from very rich Irish sporting roots, winning Irish Boys, Youths and Amateur titles and playing for Ireland at all levels. I am also a proud Ulsterman who grew up in Northern Ireland, which is part of the United Kingdom. That is my background and always will be.

I receive huge support from both Irish and British sports fans alike and it is greatly appreciated. Likewise, I feel like I have a great affinity with American sports fans. I play most of my golf in the US nowadays and I am incredibly proud to have won both the US Open and the US PGA Championship in the last two years. As an international sportsman, I am very lucky to be supported by people all over the world, many of who treat me as one of their own, no matter what their nationality, or indeed mine. This is the way sport should be.

Since turning professional at 18, I have travelled the world playing the game that I love and consider myself a global player. As the World No.1 right now, I wish to be a positive role model and a sportsperson that people respect, and enjoy watching. I feel very fortunate to be in a position to play the sport that I love professionally and to have enjoyed the success that has come my way.

I wish to clarify that I have absolutely not made a decision regarding my participation in the next Olympics. On a personal level, playing in the Olympics would be a huge honour. However, the Games in Rio are still four years away and I certainly won't be making any decisions with regards to participating any time soon.

The Olympics will be great for the growth of golf on a global scale, but my focus right now is on being the best player I can be, trying to win Major Championships and contributing to what will hopefully be a victorious European side at the forthcoming Ryder Cup Matches against the USA.

Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for the amazing support that I receive around the world every time I play. It is hugely appreciated...

Rory