Tearful McIlroy claims record-tying 8th European tour title

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Altaf Qadri/AP Photo

Rory McIlroy of Northern Ireland, center, holds the Race to Dubai trophy during the World Tour Golf Championship in Dubai, United Arab Emirates on Sunday, Nov. 15.

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Rory McIlroy flew to the Middle East two weeks ago in a quest to make more golfing history and with the parting words of his hospital-bound father, Gerry, providing extra motivation.

"Rors, go and win me the Race to Dubai."

As usual, the son delivered.

McIlroy added another significant achievement to his bulging resumé Sunday, capturing the season-long Race to Dubai title on the European tour for a record-tying eighth time on what proved to be a dramatic and emotional finale to the World Tour Championship that was won easily by Tyrrell Hatton.

McIlroy finished second — five shots behind Hatton — but, crucially, one place ahead of Eugenio Chacarra in his tense duel with the rising star from Spain.

That meant McIlroy gained enough points — a measly 125.07, to be precise — to leapfrog Chacarra in the Race to Dubai standings and join Colin Montgomerie atop the all-time list of winners of the award, previously called the "Order of Merit."

With the title wrapped up, McIlroy made a video call to his family and was heard saying, "Stress, stress, stress." He was referring to the final round on the Earth course but could easily have been talking about the last few months, during which Gerry underwent a double-lung transplant in Cleveland, Ohio.

"I spent nine days in the ICU with him while he was recovering," McIlroy said of the aftermath of an operation he said was "a success." "You know, if things were not looking as good as they were, I probably wouldn't have felt comfortable travelling or being too far away."

McIlroy wept as he talked about how his father, who took extra jobs to help finance his son's promising junior golf career, would be proud.

"This one," McIlroy said, "is for him."

Hatton started Sunday with a one-shot lead and extended it in shooting 6-under 66 to finish on 15-under par and become the second straight former LIV Golf player to win a big event on the European tour, after Jon Rahm in Abu Dhabi last week.

"I will definitely enjoy Christmas now," said Hatton, who will be back on the European tour for good for the 2027 season after the demise of LIV.

The drama played out elsewhere Sunday.

In a turbulent final round in which Chacarra played one group behind McIlroy, the pair regularly exchanged places in the top two spots of the projected standings. At one point, when Chacarra birdied the par-5 14th, there was only 0.10 of a point between him and McIlroy.

McIlroy won out, shooting a bogey-free 67 that ultimately left him in outright second place and was memorable for a 128-yard approach to tap-in range for a birdie at No. 16.

Chacarra needed to eagle the par-5 18th — or get some unlikely help from a couple of players finishing their rounds after him — but neither scenario transpired. He shot 69 and tied for third, dropping him to second place in the Race to Dubai standings by the smallest of margins.

Chacarra and McIlroy shared an embrace outside the scorer's hut, with the 26-year-old Spaniard telling his rival he was a "deserved winner."

He said he was proud of the way he took the fight to McIlroy on his first appearance at the World Tour Championship and in his first full season on the European tour.

"I just came (up) short," the 26-year-old Chacarra said. "That's the beauty of golf.

"Obviously, when you play with the best in the world ... he's played here 14, 15 times, you knew it was going to be tough, and he had a better day than I did."

McIlroy has now claimed the season-long title for the last five years, as well as in 2012, '14 and '15, and targeted getting to "double figures."

With the likes of Rahm and Hatton back on the tour, it promises to get harder next year. Chacarra might provide a big obstacle in future, too.

"It's cliché to say, 'Oh, he's a fiery Spaniard,' but he is," McIlroy said. "That's sort of who he is, and he plays with his heart on his sleeve and you can see the emotions that he feels out there.

"I always view these things in the lens of the Ryder Cup, and he's certainly going to be an asset for Europe in the future, for sure."

THREE FORMER LIV PLAYERS AMONG 10 TO GET PGA TOUR CARDS

A consolation for Chacarra in his breakthrough year was becoming one of 10 players to secure places on next season's PGA Tour that were available to European tour members not otherwise exempt.

Three of them — including Chacarra — were formerly on the LIV circuit. The others are Patrick Reed and Bernd Wiesberger.

Players typically are banned by the PGA Tour for one year dating to their last LIV appearance. Reed chose in January not to renew his LIV deal and was eligible to return to the PGA Tour for the FedEx Cup Fall, but opted instead to try to win the Race to Dubai title. He was tied for 31st on Sunday and finished fourth in the season-long points standings.

Wiesberger returned to the European tour in 2024 after playing two seasons at LIV.

Also getting a card for the PGA Tour were South Africans Casey Jarvis and Jayden Schaper, Daniel Hillier of New Zealand, Jakob Skov Olesen of Denmark, Oliver Lindell of Finland, and English players Andy Sullivan and Joe Dean.

Just six years ago, Dean was delivering groceries during the COVID-19 pandemic. He kept doing it for nearly four years to help fund his golf career when he didn't have a card, and now he is heading across the Atlantic.



Matthias Schrader/AP Photo

Detroit Lions wide receiver Amon-Ra St. Brown (14) runs through to score a touchdown during an NFL football game against New England Patriots in Munich, Germany on Sunday, Nov. 15.

St. Brown, Gibbs score twice each as Lions rout Patriots 35-10

BY KEN MAGUIRE
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MUNICH — Amon-Ra St. Brown wore lederhosen, carried a German flag onto the field, and then went out and scored two touchdowns.

Talk about a homecoming.

The German-speaking St. Brown, whose mother is from Leverkusen, said it's been a trip he'll "never forget."

St. Brown caught two touchdown passes and Jahmyr Gibbs ran for 153 yards and two scores in a 35-10 win over the New England Patriots, who lost quarterback Drake Maye to an ankle injury on their opening drive Sunday.

"Being in Germany, number one, was a blessing, it's been amazing," St. Brown said. "But being able to win like that — with the guys, my teammates in front of the fans here in Germany, it's like a dream come true."

The Lions (7-2) have won five straight games but also lost edge rusher Aidan Hutchinson, who appeared to hurt his knee while celebrating the sack that knocked Maye out of the game.

"Nothing new — we'll know more when we get back in the States," Lions coach Dan Campbell said. "Anytime you lose a player like that and you don't know the entirety of it ... it hurts a little bit."

Jared Goff threw three touchdown passes, along with two interceptions, completing 20 of 31 passes for 303 yards.

St. Brown caught a 56-yard touchdown pass in the first quarter to give Detroit a 7-3 lead. And his 28-yard TD reception — after teammates pushed him over the goal line in a scrum with Patriots defenders — made it 28-3 in the third quarter.

St. Brown, who wore lederhosen for his arrival to the stadium, charged onto the field carrying a German flag. St. Brown and his two brothers spent many summers in their childhood visiting the country.



Nell Redmond/AP Photo

South Carolina guard Jerzy Robinson (9) pushes the ball upcourt ahead of Southern California guard Juju Watkins, left during the first half of an NCAA college basketball game in Greenville, S.C. on Sunday, Nov. 15.

Johnson, Edwards lead No. 1 South Carolina past No. 3 USC 89-85

BY STEVE REED
ASSOCIATED PRESS

GREENVILLE, S.C. — Tessa Johnson scored a career-high 28 points, Joyce Edwards added 20 points and 10 rebounds and No. 1 South Carolina held on to beat No. 3 USC 89-85 Sunday in a game billed as the battle for the "The Real SC."

Chloe Kitts chipped in with 15 points and 12 rebounds for her third straight double-double for South Carolina (4-0), which shot 55% from the field while holding USC to 42%.

JuJu Watkins was 8 of 12 from the field for 25 points for USC (3-1), while Saniyah Hall added 17 points and nine rebounds. Kennedy Smith had 15 points.

The Gamecocks led by 12 with less than four minutes left, but USC came storming back on 3s from Jazzy Davidson and Watkins to cut the lead to two with 42 seconds left.

After a South Carolina turnover, Watkins was blocked by Jordan Lee on a fastbreak drive to the basket.

The ball initially ruled was ruled out on Lee, but after USC called timeout to set up an inbounds play, South Carolina coach Dawn Staley had an opportunity to look at the play and challenged. The call was overturned and the ball was awarded to the Gamecocks with 15 seconds left.

USC fouled Johnson and she made both free throws with 13 seconds left to make it a two-possession game to help seal the game.

USC had entered the game having scored more than 100 points in each of its previous three games.

The Trojans came out fast USC jumped out to a 13-5 lead early behind 8 points from Smith.

South Carolina would battle back, using a 9-0 run to build a 49-45 halftime lead behind Johnson, who had 17 points in the first half on 6-of-7 shooting from the field, including 3 of 3 from beyond the arc.

They never trailed again.

The game was played at the Bon Secours Wellness Arena, considered the home away from home for the Gamecocks. South Carolina is 23-3 alltime at the arena and had a 19-game win streak here before losing to Texas in the Southeastern Conference title game last season.

SPECIAL GUEST

Washington Commanders quarterback Jayden Daniels, a USC fan, had a front row seat for the event.

JAMES

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when seldom-used 7-foot-6 center Tacko Fall checked into the game. James immediately went to work picking apart the Pacers and scored eight straight points to give them an 82-73 lead.

Fall was a factor.

Signed ahead of training camp for backcourt depth, Fall almost immediately strained his left hip and missed the preseason. Coach Nick Nurse said ahead of Sunday's game he still thought the fan-favorite Fall could help the Sixers, but that he had "see him out there, some form," and that "I might just have to take that leap."

Fall helped in that pivotal third quarter stretch for James. Fall grabbed an offensive rebound that led to a possession where James would sink two from the free-throw line. James then added a near-uncontested driving layup because of a perfect screen from Fall. James added a 20-footer and a dunk during the run.

Fall grabbed two offensive rebounds in 3 minutes. His final stat line with no points in 5 minutes might be easy to overlook — unlike the towering Fall — but he had a major impact in pushing the Sixers to 11-3.

Joel Embiid sat out for the Sixers in the first set of back-to-back games. A two-time NBA scoring champion, Embiid should return to the lineup Monday at Brooklyn. James is another veteran who generally does not play in back-to-back games and seemed poised to take his turn sitting out against the Nets.

James took a hard foul when he drove the lane against Oubre in the first quarter. James clutched his left wrist for a moment but appeared to show no ill-effects the rest of the game.

UP NEXT

Pacers host Houston on Wednesday.

76ers play Monday night at Brooklyn.

KWC

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different ages, experience levels and backgrounds, FUJI BJJ events help foster camaraderie among athletes and strengthen connections throughout the Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu community. The Owensboro Fall Championship adds a new Kentucky destination to the organization's recurring competition schedule."

Daunhauer said the event "introduces a nationally active Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu tournament organization to the local sports scene while creating another opportunity for sports tourism in the region."

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