

McIlroy takes Federer advice to avoid golf boredom



AFP | London, United Kingdom

Rory McIlroy has revealed advice from tennis legend Roger Federer is providing the inspiration for his battle to avoid becoming bored of golf. McIlroy became the newest member of golf's career Grand Slam club after his victory in the Masters earlier this year. The Northern Ireland star's fulfilment of his bid to win each of golf's major prizes has left him pondering what can motivate the rest of his career. After speaking to 20-time Grand Slam winner Federer towards the end of his career, McIlroy believes the answer is to play only the tournaments that he has a special feeling for, regardless of their size and status.

With that in mind, the 36-year-old will play in India for the first time this year, and also plans to feature in Australia.

The world number two was criticised last month for skipping the first FedEx Cup event on the PGA Tour.

But McIlroy wanted to take a break before a busy September that began with him winning last week's Irish Open and has now taken him to Went-



Switzerland's Roger Federer and his spouse Mirka Federer

worth for the BMW PGA Championship before the Ryder Cup in New York.

"I want to go and play in different places in the world and experience things that I haven't

experienced before, to be able to do things for the first time 18 years into a career," he told reporters on Tuesday.

"I had a chat with Roger Federer, I don't know, a few

years ago sort of at the end of his career and he was saying he wanted to go and play a lot of the places he could never play in his career, some of the smaller events, just because a lot of

people had never seen him play tennis before.

"I think as time goes on and I get to this stage of my career, I get excited about doing that sort of thing.

"I don't want to name a tournament but you're going back to the same place, the same thing 15, 20 years in a row, it can get a little bit monotonous and a little bit tedious.

"I want to play in the locations that I love to go to, and I want to play the majors and the Ryder Cup. That's it."

McIlroy is not thinking about the end of his competitive career, but the five-time major winner acknowledges his priorities have shifted and he is no longer beholden to the weekly trudge around the golf circuit.

"I don't want to be grinding out here at 50 years of age. I'll turn up and play the majors and have a nice time but whenever I'm done, I'm done, whenever that is," he said.

"That's certainly not right now, but I'm certainly closer to that point now than I was in 2007 when I turned pro.

"I'll obviously do my bit to make sure I keep my membership on certain tours but I'm going to play where I want to play."

Bahrain U23 exit Asian Cup qualifiers

Last-gasp Qatar turnaround breaks Abdulmajeed's side

● Bahrain needed four-goal win

● Qatar tops Group H with nine points

● India second, thrashing Brunei not enough

● Brunei concede 29 goals in group

Hussain Almaskati
TDT/Manama

Bahrain's U23 side needed a four-goal win over Qatar to top Group H of the AFC U23 Asian Cup 2026 qualifiers and reach the finals. Instead, they lost 2-1 at the Abdullah bin Khalifa Stadium in Doha, conceding twice in stoppage time. Abdulrahman Sami Al Khayyat had given Bahrain the lead in the 71st minute with a header after some fine build-up from Mahmood AlBannai. Bahrain's fortunes then took a turn as Qatar mounted a late comeback. Substitute Ayoub Mohamed was sent off for Qatar, but they still went on to win a penalty and Jassem Al Sharshani made no mistake from the spot.

The result confirmed Bahrain's elimination from the qualifiers.

Bahrain coach Ali Abdulma-



Last-gasp Qatar turnaround breaks Abdulmajeed's side

jeed fielded Abdullah Ali Fried in goal, with Mahmood AlBannai, Sayed Mahmood AlMoosawi, Bader Al Asam, Isa Abdulla, Khalid Khalaf, Salman Yunes, Hashim Khulaifat, Mohammed AlShaikhani, Saud Mohsin, and Abdulla Obaidali completing the starting XI.

Qatar, led by Portuguese coach Llidio Vale, lined up with Amir Hassan in goal, supported by Saifelddeen Hassan, Alhashimi Alhussain, Hassan Al Gharieb, Abdulaziz Mohammed, Mubarak Shanan, Mohammed Khaled, Jassem Al Sharshani,

Nabil Irfan, Marwan Brimil, and Anas Abdulsalam.

Group H recap

Bahrain opened the qualifiers with a 2-0 defeat to India, before bouncing back with a 10-0 win over Brunei. Their hopes of topping the group were dashed in the 2-1 loss to Qatar. Qatar finished first with a perfect record, thrashing Brunei 13-0, India 2-1, and Bahrain 2-1. India ended second with six points after beating Bahrain 2-0, losing 2-1 to Qatar, and beating Brunei 6-0 – though it could have been

even more.

While the four best second-placed teams (from 11 groups) also qualified, India finished the campaign at number five among the group runner-ups, meaning their emphatic win over Brunei was not enough. Brunei lost all three matches, conceding 29 goals across the group stage.

The AFC U23 Asian Cup 2026 finals will feature 16 teams: 11 group winners, the four best second-placed teams from the qualifiers, plus host Saudi Arabia.

Nottingham Forest sack boss Nuno Espirito Santo

London, United Kingdom

Head coach Nuno Espirito Santo was sacked by Nottingham Forest early yesterday after 21 months in charge at the Premier League club.

"The club thanks Nuno for his contribution during a very successful era," said a club statement released just after midnight.

Nuno becomes the first Premier League manager to lose his job this season, two weeks after admitting his relationship with club owner Evangelos Marinakis had deteriorated.

"Nottingham Forest Football Club confirms that, following recent circumstances, Nuno Espirito Santo has today been relieved of his duties as head coach," said the club.

The 51-year-old took charge in December 2023 after Steve Cooper was sacked and went on to save them from relegation.

Last season the club finished seventh in the Premier League, their highest since 1994/95.

That secured their first European berth in 30 years, with a Europa League place handed to Forest instead of their initial Conference League

spot, after Crystal Palace's demotion for breaching UEFA's multi-club ownership rules.

"The club thanks Nuno for his contribution during a very successful era at the City Ground, in particular his role in the 2024/25 season, which will forever be remembered fondly in the history of the club," said the statement.

"As someone who played a pivotal role in our success last season, he will always hold a special place in our journey."

Forest sit 10th in the Premier League after three games this season and were beaten 3-0 by West Ham in Nuno's last game in charge.

British media reported that talks had begun to appoint a successor quickly, with former Tottenham Hotspur manager Ange Postecoglou said to be among the candidates.

The former Tottenham manager Nuno had been critical of Forest's transfer activity since the end of last season, with a new sporting director reportedly taking a more hands-on role in signings.

