

# The Ryder Cup

Wednesday, September 22, 2021

Kohler, Wisconsin, USA

Whistling Straits

## Ian Poulter

Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** Good morning, and welcome back to the 43rd Ryder Cup at Whistling Straits. Ian, welcome to what is now your seventh career Ryder Cup. Let's assume for a moment that it's wonderful to win a Ryder Cup no matter where you are, but perhaps you could -- Rory alluded to this yesterday. What's the difference between winning a road Ryder Cup as opposed to winning one for you back in Europe?

**IAN POULTER:** I guess it's a lot more difficult, and it doesn't happen that often, even though we've had the upper hand of that. I guess it's just more enjoyable.

Course setup is obviously this week heavily weighed in the U.S. as opposed to how we set things up back in Europe, so I guess everything is stacked against us. When you have that, when you can go in as underdogs, when you can turn the tide and actually come out victorious, it means a little bit more.

**Q. When you're captain in 2025 will you be having press conferences at 7:30?**

**IAN POULTER:** Nope. (Laughter.)

**Q. Would you describe winning on the road akin to Arsenal to winning away at Chelsea, Man United?**

**IAN POULTER:** Anywhere at the minute.

**Q. Well, you won two in a row.**

**IAN POULTER:** Yeah, 100 percent.

**Q. Is it enjoyable, that kind of feeling if you win on the road?**

**IAN POULTER:** It's a great buzz. You only have to look around and all the grandstands are red. Everything that you look at, the fans, 98 percent are obviously going to be U.S. fans this week. It's difficult from start to finish. It's hard. It's not easy to play away from home.

As much as we feel comfortable as a team, to know we're underdogs, to know that, we have to play extra special this week to get the job done. It feels pretty rewarding at the end of the week if we can get it done.

**Q. Have you seen any European fans dotted around the course so far this week?**

**IAN POULTER:** I can't say -- there's only been a few, but the U.S. fans have been brilliant to far. They really have. They're wishing me well. Not too well, but they're wishing me well, which is quite nice. That hasn't always been the case, but so far so good.

**Q. Everyone talks about that first tee, the most nerve-racking place, but I'm curious, in the path to the first tee, where do the nerves set in? Once you're on the tee? When you're walking to the tee? When you're warming up? When do the nerves actually hit?**

**IAN POULTER:** When the alarm goes in the morning. You know it's coming. It's been building all week. It's exciting. You know, it's a big tee box. I don't know how many thousand fans we got round there this week. It's probably a little less than it was in Paris, but nevertheless it's a loud environment. It's a nervy atmosphere to be in.

Seriously, it's great fun. It really is, from the moment you kind of walk out your tunnel to getting that tee peg and attempting to put the ball on the tee, it's a pretty fun ride.

**Q. You mentioned the difficulty. Rory was saying if you win again this week, it would probably top Medinah. Could you ever imagine anything topping Medinah, and how often do you still draw from those memories?**

**IAN POULTER:** Yeah, I mean, we'll see how the week pans out to see if or how kind of you want to place the event. I think for us to know it's going to be -- it's going to be difficult. We don't have the full home support that we would normally have.

I'm hoping we have some form of sing songs out there for us lot to entertain everyone, but yeah, it's always hard to



turn around and say one is going to trump another one and however the makeup of that is going to be. I just think if we can come out on top Sunday night, it will be a pretty special one.

**Q. Do you still draw on those memories? Do you think back to it very often?**

**IAN POULTER:** Always. I'm always looking on the highlight reel. It's pretty hard when you're pretty social media busy and there's often highlights of all the good things you've kind of done through the years, and obviously Medinah is one of those.

It's good to get those positive vibes, a bit of confidence, and enjoy watching the celebrations that we had and the kind of golf that we played on Saturday and Sunday.

**Q. Following on from that, Rory also said that last time it was in America, he sort of lost control a bit of his emotions and sort of had to warm the last day. Is that something you're conscious of or is it the opposite with you, you want to let your emotions get out there in terms of the crowd and stuff?**

**IAN POULTER:** I think you just have to let it happen naturally. I don't think it's something you can plan for how you react on the golf course. I think you've seen through the years players that you see no emotion, all of a sudden start to show emotion.

I don't think that's something that you'll sit at home and go, Right, if I hole the putt on the first I'm going to fist pump this. I think it happens naturally. I think we all have a lot of pressure, a lot of buildup, a lot of intensity during the start of this week, and I mean, it just naturally flows out.

Naturally we don't fist pump on the first green of a regular week, right, but you have the opportunity to kind of let some of that energy out this week, and that's why I think we see so much of it done, and it makes for great TV.

**Q. I'm just curious how important you think driving distance is going to be this week. It's something that the Americans have talked a lot about being a big advantage in their favor. I'm curious your thoughts.**

**IAN POULTER:** We'll see. I don't really know. I'm not a guy that sits down and tries to work out if Bryson is going to be 120 yards in front and how that looks on paper, right.

Yeah, I mean, generally through the team they're going to hit it further than we are. The wind is going to change on us on Friday, so certain holes that we've already played are going to play a little bit different.

There's a blend between long irons and short irons dependent on that wind direction. We've got some short par-4s that if the given wind allows, then some of those are going to be reachable.

What we have got around these greens is rough and bunkers that are pretty deep. The rough, the lies you get around the greens, you can't predict it. You can miss a green by three feet and have an unplayable lie. You can miss the green by five yards and you have a kind of nice lie.

I think that is kind of the unknown at the minute, and if you're going to start to leak a few here and there, it's going to be difficult.

Strategy is going to be really interesting this week of how that plays out.

**Q. Do you get any sense at all whether your passion and success in these matches annoy the people you're beating?**

**IAN POULTER:** I'm sure I've annoyed plenty. I mean, my percentage has been really nice, for me, and not for the guys I've played against, so I'm sure that's been pretty frustrating to be on the receiving end of that.

**Q. Feel good?**

**IAN POULTER:** It feels nice. I enjoy holing putts and winning matches. It's been a great ride. I'm never going to apologize for it. It's how match play should be played.

**Q. There's been a lot of anecdotes over the years about how sometimes the sting of losing can hurt more than the joy of winning. Do you agree with that, and do you have any strong memories of '08, which I think is your only losing team you've been on?**

**IAN POULTER:** Yeah, that was miserable. Even though I think I picked up four points that week, it meant nothing. To have a personal kind of individual week, which this is not individual at all, it means nothing. You'd rather -- to go 4-0 and lose is pretty depressing. You'd rather go 0-4 and win.

If that played itself out this week, I'd still be pretty happy on Sunday night if I was to play it out that way.

**Q. '08 was the only one you lost, but in 2012 you had the experience of falling behind before the Sunday. What feels different from a team perspective when you're out there and you just keep falling behind and**

**the Americans are winning? How is it a different vibe, and is it kind of a helpless feeling in any way?**

**IAN POULTER:** I wouldn't say it's a helpless feeling because you always have to believe that you have the ability to turn the match around. Momentum has been key in every Ryder Cup I've ever played. It's all about holding that level of momentum for the longest period you possibly can, and that's hard to play against sometimes when you can see somebody has got that kind of run of form and the color stays the way it does for a long period of time. You have to kind of break that.

There's only been a few instances where it's been that way and you've wanted to break it, so you always have to tell yourself that it can happen, it's going to happen, and you've got to make it happen sometimes.

**Q. Kind of a core question for you: You put on some of your best shows, play some of your best golf at the Ryder Cup. Why?**

**IAN POULTER:** I hate losing. You see the guy, you know -- when you play match play, you know what you have to do when you tee up on the first hole. You can control a match. You can dictate a match. You can play certain shots to try and put your opponent under pressure.

You can't do that in stroke play really unless it comes down to the back nine and the group you're in you're actually clear of the rest of the field.

It's just a fun game of chess, to be honest, to enjoy what that means, that you're under pressure right from the get-go. It just doesn't happen in stroke play. It's kind of like you plod your way into the tournament, but it's back nine Sunday mentality every single time you tee it up.

**Q. Sort of a similar question. Sergio yesterday was talking about sort of having the ability to flip a switch regardless of what form you're in coming into the week. You clearly have that same ability. The ability to sort of convert that energy or whatever the good feeling is you have around this event into actually executing shots; how does that process happen for you?**

**IAN POULTER:** I've never really sat down to try and evaluate how that happens and why that happens. It's just a very simple form of golf. You never play what-if game. You don't ever look at options around the green to say, here's the right place to miss, here's the wrong place to miss. It's single-minded focus on your target. It's really simplified.

The more simple it is, the easier it is for my brain to understand and aggressively go at those targets.

Again, stroke play you're plodding into position. This isn't the case here. You can't expect a par to win a hole. You have to expect to try and birdie every single hole to have a chance of winning or even halving the hole.

It's a nice way to play golf to be aggressive to targets.

**THE MODERATOR:** Ian, thank you so much for finding us and your time. Have a great day.

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