

# The Ryder Cup

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Whistling Straits

## Patrick Cantlay

Press Conference



**THE MODERATOR:** Good morning. Welcome back to the 43rd Ryder Cup here at Whistling Straits. We are joined by Patrick Cantlay. Welcome to what is your first Ryder Cup. Amazingly consistent year, especially the back half of it -- actually the whole thing. I think we've got 15 straight rounds in the 60s. What's been the key ingredient for you to have this consistency and be in peak form or really near peak form for so long.

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** Yeah, I think I played well -- I've played really well this summer. I think it's weird because my prep and my process have been pretty similar all year, but the results really have started to show the last little stretch. Being here today, that's a good stretch to play some of the best golf of the year.

That being said, this week is a totally different week than an individual tournament. I'm really excited to get that going because I'm sure it will be an experience unlike any other, and the only thing close I've had is Presidents Cup and Walker Cup.

**Q. Given it's a different week, which we all know, how does that become different for you as a golfer, as it relates to your game?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** I think process stays the same. I'm still trying to learn the golf course and prep as best I can and play the best possible golf I can. But priorities obviously are different. I could go 0-4 this week, and if the U.S. Team wins it's a raving success and I'll be elated. I could go 4-0 this week, and if the team loses it will be a bad week.

That's just so different than a regular golf week, and that's what makes it so special, is that you're playing for something bigger than just yourself.

**Q. If I can follow up on what you talked about in the last month or so of playing in the present, how difficult is it to stay in the present when you've got all this going on around you?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** Definitely more difficult I would say. I think in a weird way, almost -- you just have to let yourself experience all that because if I see somebody in a match that's ahead of me or behind me, a guy in front of me make a putt, I'm going to be pumped up, going to be excited, because I have an invested stake in what's going on up there and it's something larger than me.

That's different than most of the golf that I've played my whole life.

I think maybe in this one case, accepting that reality as opposed to trying to fight it off is probably more helpful because I won't be able to avoid it.

Embracing that part of this week I think is great, and I think that's why people are so excited to watch this tournament.

**Q. Maybe it's the same thing; so you are a person who has a philosophy of life, philosophy of life very distinctive. How do you add that to the team experience for the whole week, and what parts do you enjoy more and what parts do you not enjoy that much?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** I think bonding with the guys is really cool and having them on your side. I think golf misses that so much because we're all individuals and we almost bond with our own like team unit. We'll travel with our teams. So that's where that bonding takes place on a regular week.

This week I'm having dinner with DJ or Daniel Berger or whatever it would be. Having those guys on your side for a common goal lets everybody's guard down a little bit, so I think they can be more of themselves with less protectiveness. Like I don't want you to know what I'm thinking or know my insecurities or whatever it would be.

So this week is great for just seeing those people with their guard down because we see them all the time, but we don't necessarily have a real conversation with them or say how are you feeling or how is your family or whatever it may be because we're all so busy doing our own things.

That's what I noticed in Presidents Cup, and really one of the best things personally for me about Presidents Cup other than the golf was just being able to be forced to spend time with Xander, and he's become one of my best friends through that experience.

If we were at a regular tournament, there's no way I would have spent the time or gone out of my way to invest in a relationship with one of the other guys that I was playing against.

But now that he's on my team and it might help me in my golf to get along with this guy, I realize that I really liked him as a person and we've become great friends. That would be probably the best thing about weeks like this.

**Q. Do you feel as things get more real in a Ryder Cup that you like that?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** I'm not sure. I'm not sure. More real. I think you see what people are like with their guard down so they act more real when they feel like they're in that safe team room environment, because a normal week I imagine -- this is just maybe through my own self experiences, I'm going to block everyone out except my team. That's a very human thing to do.

This week your team is a much larger unit, and it includes DJ and it includes Collin Morikawa. But like on a normal week, I'm like blocking those guys out, don't get in my stuff. This week, I have my guard down. We're in the team room and we can all be ourselves because they're part of our team.

It's a human thing.

Seeing guys like that who I don't have a lot of experience being with on a real level, they're more real with me because we're all on the same team.

**Q. Foursomes is a game you're not going to play a lot as an American, I would think --**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** How much foursomes do you play?

**Q. Once, I've played it once. Just wonder what you find the most challenging of the format, and when you and Xander went 2-0 in Australia with that format, what worked so well with you two?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** I was talking about it the other night. There's a weird thing about foursomes in that you only hit half the shots, so personally it feels like every shot you hit is more important because it is -- usually you would be hitting double the shots, so personally it would feel like

-- every shot I hit is two times what it's normally worth for the outcome of that match compared singles.

Best ball in a way, it's less. It could be half or it could be even less than half of a singles match.

I think that pressure or that feeling, while I haven't heard it expressed in that way, is a real thing that people feel, which makes them feel uncomfortable in foursomes.

I think getting -- you saw it with Seve and Olazábal; I guarantee you they didn't say sorry for hitting a bad shot, right, because they were such good friends and they had done it so many times.

So I think foursomes is a lot more emotional in that way, and the fact that Xander and I are really good friends, and so I know he's trying as hard as he possibly can, and if he hits a bad shot, it's just -- that's golf.

Because it's so much more emotional, I think -- and the pressure really is more in that format. It really helps to gel with your partner.

**Q. When you said earlier about you went 0-4 and the team won, you'd still be happy --**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** Elated.

**Q. The fact that you referenced 0-4 and 4-0, does that mean you're not going to play five times, or was that --**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** Oh, that's very arbitrary. I could play one time, I could play five times, whatever Strick wants. I am here to do the best I can and contribute in the best way possible, but I don't know what the slated plan is.

**Q. Did Australia take away any of the angst you might have felt if this was the first time you had ever done this in a team setting?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** Maybe, but I wouldn't know.

**Q. Format -- it's the same style, obviously. It's a little different than the Presidents Cup.**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** I assume it's very good experience for something like this. But from what I've heard from everybody, the experience this week is like the Presidents Cup on steroids, and so I'm expecting that.

**Q. I just wondered if you could tell me what it means to you to represent your country.**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** Well, I think that's the whole point,



and I think that's one of the best parts of this is that I know for the most part, whether -- if someone is a USA fan, if someone really doesn't like me, they're still rooting for me to win my match.

So that's like one of the best parts about this format, this team golf, this event.

Consequently, someone on the other side of the pond may like me and they are rooting so hard against me. So it makes the stakes feel much larger.

Playing on the biggest stages in golf is exactly why I've prepped and practiced my whole life, and it's one of the great joys I have in my life and it's what I look forward to. When you can get everyone amped up and make it feel like it really matters, that's the best.

It's an honor to represent the United States, and hopefully we can give all the fans something to cheer for.

**Q. Are you a patriotic person?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** For sure. I think there's something really cool about America and about the United States where you could be from anywhere and you could be anyone and there's an underlying feeling of we are still all Americans, and we're still all -- we may disagree with this, that or the other, but we're all American. We're all patriots and we all want the best for this country.

Being just a small part of that is an honor, and I'm very excited to represent the country because I do have a sense of that, that at the end of the day I could disagree with someone on almost everything, but we still want what's the best for our country, and I think that's an amazing thing about being an American.

**Q. The adrenaline of someone playing well that's your partner or the adrenaline that you have when you hit a nice shot, are they the same?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** Sorry, can you ask that again?

**Q. Yeah. The adrenaline that you feel when your partner hits a good shot or does something good versus the adrenaline you have when you hit a good shot, are they the same?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** No but yes. I feel just as invested or darned near just as invested on Xander's shots in a foursomes match, and I'm just thinking about how I was in Presidents Cup compared to when I'm hitting a shot. And yet maybe not -- just a little less because I can't control it. But it still feels like my ball that's flying through the air

because I know I've got to hit it next.

**Q. Also on the foursomes side, do you feel like it's more important when you play with somebody that you know well or is a friend versus someone that's completely out of left field that you didn't even think you'd play with and you don't really know?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** Yeah, I think it's very helpful to know your partner in that format especially. Less so in best ball, but for the comments I made earlier, I think it definitely helps to gel with your partner. That format feels more emotional. When you are playing and you hit a bad shot, you don't want any sense of, oh, I wonder what my playing partner is thinking about the terrible shot I just hit.

Because inevitably someone is going to hit a bad shot. If you're realistic about it you know that going in, and it's no big deal.

**Q. How would you describe Steve Stricker's style as a captain, and is there an element of it that stands out or something he's done that you think embodies it?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** I think he is excellent at being a workman type leader. So instantly he's someone that you respect because he's going to put in the work to help prepare the team as best as possible. Really that's all you can want out of a captain. He's a hundred percent invested, and he's not a rah-rah big ego guy.

I think that's something that the guys on the team instantly respect in that he knows the most important thing he can do is setting up the 12 guys he has on his team for success. So he doesn't make it about him.

You know, to have a leader like that who really wants the best for the team is something, like I said, you can respect and admire.

Getting to know him a little more through this process has only made me admire and respect him more, and I think he's doing a great job.

**Q. What clicked at the Presidents Cup with you and Xander, and can you pinpoint when you felt like we're going to be real good friends and a little bit on the celebration in Napa.**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** So I don't think any of us would have -- either of us would have gone out of their way to be friends with each other, but then spending that time together, we realized that we really got along with each other. I think he's incredibly smart, and I think he's incredibly conscientious. He is someone that probably

brings out the best in me. He's more positive, and he has a way of being more light as opposed to me being serious.

Yet he's very quiet and reserved, so we kind of have that bond, and yet he balances me out a little bit.

Taking like the trip to Napa was very natural. It was like, I'd really like to spend time with Xander and Maya. That's kind of how that came about. I also feel like with as heavily invested as I get into golf and as focused as I get, it's really helpful for me to have things that I look forward to.

And so before the stretch of the Playoffs where I knew I was going to be playing lots of golf tournaments and be on the road for a number of weeks, I thought, man, I need something to look forward to and asked if he wanted to go to Napa, and he said that sounded great, and we had an unbelievable time.

**Q. I'm going to ask you this just as an observer and a relatively knowledgeable golfer. Why do you think Europe keeps winning this thing?**

**PATRICK CANTLAY:** So I've read a few gin books. Let's see if I get it right. If you play enough gin hands a one or two percent difference in skill translates to almost an assured win over many, many, many hands of gin.

But you could have a big difference between somebody, maybe a 60 to 40 percent skill level difference, and gin is still chancy enough to where you could play ten hands and lose six or seven of the hands than someone that's much worse than you skill-wise.

Really there's only two -- these matches are only played every two years, and golf is very chancy. So would it surprise you if the U.S. went on a similar run to what Europe has been on for the next 20 years. Wouldn't surprise me. You go to Vegas and you play roulette and the chances are 50/50 but skewed toward the house a little, it could hit red six times in a row, but that's not abnormal. You flip a quarter it would be weird if the quarter flipped tails, heads, tails heads, tails heads. Then you would think something trippy was going on.

I try to take a very long-term view on things like that. Who knows. The captains are different every year. The players are different every year. The venues are different every year. The weather is different every year.

You're really going to ask a question like that and think you're going to get the right answer? I don't have the answers to that. This is my first one.

**THE MODERATOR:** Thank you, Patrick. Have a terrific

stay, and play well.

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