

# The Presidents Cup

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Charlotte, North Carolina

Quail Hollow Club

## Trevor Immelman

International Team Captain

Press Conference



LAURA VESCOVI: Trevor, good morning. You are the International Team Captain for the 2022 Presidents Cup at the Quail Hollow Club and you have an exciting announcement this morning to state your six picks for the team, so I'll turn it over to you without further ado to make this exciting announcement.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Thanks so much, Laura.

It is definitely an exciting day. It's been a long road up until this point with the COVID delay and a few other things. Really happy that we're getting close to that time now we can see the event approaching really quickly inside of a couple of weeks.

Nice for us to have this morning, and just to thank everybody that's joined from all over the world. Thanks for taking the time to join in and hear who our picks are going to be.

I won't delay it any further. I'll go ahead and mention the six players that I ended up picking as my captain's selections. It's been a tough process to figure out what our options were, how we wanted to go about it and fill the rest of our team out, but we are extremely happy and excited with where we're at.

I won't keep you guys any longer. Here are the six names in no particular order: K.H. Lee, Taylor Pendrith, Sebastian Muñoz, Christiaan Bezuidenhout, Si Woo Kim, and Cameron Davis.

Those are the six that will be joining the six automatic qualifiers. We have already had a two-day trip to Quail Hollow right after the TOUR Championship, which was an amazing experience for all of us to spend a little time together and get an early look at the golf course.

A few of these guys are still going to be competing in the next couple weeks, whether it be at the BMW at Wentworth this week or at Fortinet in Napa after that, before the Presidents Cup, but everybody is extremely excited to

have this opportunity. Huge opportunity for us to go up against an extremely tough American team.

Thanks so much for listening.

**Q. Quite exciting to see a South African in your pick in Christiaan Bezuidenhout, a guy that's gone quietly about his business over the last several years, cool, calm and collected, and such an exciting prospect for South African golf, so you must be delighted to have him in your team.**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, for sure. Been following Christiaan's progress closely over the last couple years and really have been impressed with his consistency and his demeanor.

The other thing that I really love about his game since he has started playing more here in the U.S. is his putting. It really is a weapon. He's been in the top six in the strokes gained stat in the last few seasons out on the PGA TOUR, and that for me is extremely impressive when you consider that a lot of these golf courses he's playing for the first time, so he doesn't have all that much experience on the green complexes, but yet still he ranks very highly in that putting statistic, which I think is extremely important in 18-hole match play when, to be honest, it's a sprint out there. You've got to get off to a good start and make a lot of birdies.

The other thing with Christiaan is with the adversity that he's faced in his life when he was a kid and everything he went through, he's got a certain amount of toughness about him deep down. It's not in an arrogant way. It's something that really is a tangible that I think gives him a huge advantage.

He's absolutely somebody that I wanted on our team.

**Q. I've got two questions. The first is what distinguished Taylor Pendrith to make it as a captain's selection? And then as a follow-up to that, Adam Hadwin and Mackenzie Hughes were also Canadians high in the standings, and I'm curious how did Taylor distinguish himself versus those two?**



TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, great questions. Taylor really in the last couple months burst on to the scene, quite honestly. We've been doing team gatherings and get-togethers for almost a couple years now, and he was always a part of those, invited to all of those at some of those that he could make, and so he was in the general squad. I had a squad of about 25 players over the last couple years that would be together at all of our events.

You know, after that injury, after THE PLAYERS, he had such a nice finish at THE PLAYERS earlier this season where I believe he was tied for 13th and then had that freak rib injury, had to sit out for close to four months, and so he sort of disappeared off of our radar a little bit because we weren't quite sure how he was going to come back.

But turns out, when he came back, he played some unbelievable golf, and he played six events since the comeback, in the top 13 five of those six events, highlighted by that T2 at the Rocket Mortgage.

A player that we think is in great form right now, and his game matches up extremely well with what we know about Quail Hollow where we're having this Presidents Cup. He's one of the longest hitters on Tour, top 10 in driving distance this season, so we think we can use that to our advantage.

The other two guys, Mac Hughes and Adam Hadwin, they were on the short list for sure, two guys that I have a great amount of respect for. Hadwin has played a couple Presidents Cups, so he had that as a little bit of an edge in our decision-making process. Mac Hughes also a great putter, lives in Charlotte, so those were his advantages.

But at the end of the day, we had to try and find a way to blend different things together, whether it be through team chemistry, whether it be through matchups with the golf course and how we believe the golf course is going to be set up.

This is what we went with. We feel like Taylor's distance off of the tee and the fact that he's one of the best drivers of the ball really does give him a huge advantage.

**Q. I'm here in Colombia and it's really exciting to be here early in the morning that we're having another Colombian on the team. We already have a vice captain in Camilo Villegas. I wanted to hear your thoughts on having a new Latino and a Colombian in your team, what it's going to be like in the team?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, extremely exciting for us.

Thanks so much for joining in from down in Colombia. Camilo, as you know, is a good friend of mine and a golfing hero down there in Colombia. He really was excited that Sebastian was going to be on the team. He was absolutely in his corner throughout the whole decision-making process.

But I've been fortunate enough to get to know Sebastian well over the last few years. Great young guy. One of the things that I really like about his game in this match play format is he has the ability to shoot very low scores. He shot 60 twice in the last season out on the PGA TOUR, and he's one of those players that when he gets a little bit of momentum going, he knows that he can keep making birdies.

I think that, like I touched on earlier, in that 18-hole sprint in match play, if you can run into a player that's hot like that, it really can be an advantage. That's the on-the-course stuff. Very, very solid ball striker so we think we can rely on him in any format, whether it be the foursomes or the four-ball.

And then off the golf course, anybody who's spent any time around him, he's very cool, he's very calm, relaxed, not too wound up at all. I think he's going to be a nice four, calm, stabilizing presence in the locker room, and we can't wait to have him there.

**Q. You mentioned team chemistry when you were talking about Taylor Pendrith, and just wondering, can we assume that you will be playing Taylor Pendrith a lot with Corey Connors who have a long history together, both in university and right here in Ontario?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: It absolutely is an option. I know exactly how close they are, that they were roommates in college, that Taylor actually spent some time living with Corey down in West Palm Beach over the last couple years, so they're great friends and have awesome camaraderie.

But over the last three or four years, one of the hurdles that our team has finally started to overcome is we're at a point now to where we don't have to match people of the same nationality to get the best out of them. We've got the squad atmosphere over the last four or five years. Players are extremely comfortable being with each other, hanging around each other. We have found ways to bridge the communication gaps in certain instances.

Really I have every option available to me. I don't have to try and match two Canadians together and Koreans together and such.

Whilst it is an option, I would not hang your hat on it.



**Q. I'm wondering how fluid your picks had to be during this process and how many times you had to change things and move them around a little bit, and how much of a part did analytics play in your selections?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: As you can imagine, extremely fluid. It was a pretty -- what's the right word I'm looking for? There were some anxious times in there for sure, not quite knowing exactly where we were going to be, trying to gather as much information as I could from all sorts of different players that were making decisions with what they wanted to do.

So we had to be fluid. We had to be agile. We had to be nimble.

I think we were. I think we did a great job doing that. We did a great job communicating with all the players involved exactly where we were at, and the options we had at our disposal and the possibilities of things coming down the pipe.

I think the fact that we were so well-prepared over the last couple years with our back-room stuff and with everybody that was involved, we could make those moves quickly, but it still was pretty frustrating at times.

Glad it's all over right now. A couple weeks ago was definitely tough.

But the thing that excites me the most is I know now particularly after our trip, when all these guys came together as one, I know now that we have 12 players that are hungry, and we have 12 players that wanted to be there, so we go from here.

We understand exactly the mountain that we have in front of us: Possibly the best American team ever assembled if you look at them on paper with their accomplishments and what their World Rankings are. But hey, when you're a little kid growing up outside of the U.S. and you dream of playing on the PGA TOUR, you dream of playing in major championships at the highest level. This is everything you've ever dreamed of is having an opportunity to play against the best on their home soil, and that's what we're going to have here in a couple weeks.

I'm extremely proud of my team. They've all worked their butts off to get to this point. They thoroughly deserve their position in the team. We look forward to the opportunity.

**Q. Trevor, you already talked about having two Colombian golfers on the team. You already talked**

**about Sebastian, but you're also going to have Camilo on the team. Why did you pick him as assistant captain, and what do you expect from Camilo that week?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yes, we are extremely excited to have Camilo join our squad. Again, he played the Presidents Cup before, I want to say it was in 2009. I've been friends with Camilo for a long time. I have a ton of respect for him. We competed together on the TOUR around about the same time.

The thing that has always drawn me to Camilo is his passion and his energy. He's an extremely positive guy, always has been, even through some adversity that has been thrown their way. He's maintained that positive attitude and upbeat attitude.

He was somebody that I thought would be a perfect addition to our squad, start to bring some new assistants in that could possibly be captain one day, and he hasn't let me down. He's been an amazing part of our squad in the last few months, bringing that energy, bringing that fire, also extremely engaged from the standpoint of preparation, possible picks and combinations that he's definitely been a guy that I've been able to rely on over the last few weeks, and I really do appreciate that a ton because here's a guy that was trying to get his card back playing the Korn Ferry Tour finals but he was still extremely engaged in the process with us. He made the trip between events to Quail Hollow with our team to hang out with us. That's how much being a part of this team meant to him.

I'm very appreciative of that, and I look forward to seeing him again at Quail Hollow.

**Q. Did you name replacements for Cam Smith and Joaquin yet?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yes, I did. Originally we had eight automatic qualifiers and four picks. Once automatic qualifiers became ineligible to compete in the Presidents Cup, I got extra picks. So I ended up with pretty much the same system as Davis from the standpoint of automatic qualifiers and picks, six and six.

**Q. Did the two players who left, did they give you the courtesy of a phone call or was there any conversation after the fact with them?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: They absolutely did. Look, let me make one thing extremely clear. Everybody that's been on our squad since 2019 at Royal Melbourne all the way through today has been in constant and open communication. Everybody knew exactly what the



situation was, knew that if they made certain decisions it was highly likely that they would not be able to compete in the Presidents Cup. Everybody knew that going into it. It was part of their decision-making process.

Nevertheless, communication has been open amongst everybody. I knew in some cases a while before everybody else exactly what those decisions were, and I do thank and respect those players that would keep me in the loop so I could make the best decisions possible to put our team in the strongest position possible going into Quail Hollow.

**Q. What did you learn about your team from bringing them to Quail Hollow ahead of time?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: That they're damn good. I knew that already. But it was just great to see everybody there. It's been a long season for everybody through the FedExCup Playoffs. A long, hot summer. But these guys made the effort. They made the effort. They came straight from the TOUR Championship. We had a couple great evenings, dinners, hanging out, relaxing, chatting through things, understanding exactly where our team is at, how we like to operate, how we do things.

It was an awesome couple days. It really was. It got me extremely excited, even more excited than what I had been over the last few years, which I was already at a 10 out of 10, so now I'm beyond that.

**Q. What did you learn that you didn't know about the team then, if I can rephrase the question?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: They're hungry.

**Q. I want to ask you, is it a disappointment for you not being able to consider somebody, an experienced competitor like Louis Oosthuizen? And not having somebody like Cam Smith on the team, how much does that take away from this year's tournament?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Is it disappointing? Hey, I'm not going to lie to you; absolutely it's disappointing. But I'll revert back to what I said a moment ago. Every single player, every single agent, every single caddie, everybody involved knew exactly the situation we were in.

When the players decided to ask me to be their captain early on in 2020, this was before the pandemic, before the professional game was fractured and divided, I signed up to a particular set of rules, and our team is a team of loyalty. Our team is a team of their word. We'll abide by those rules.

All those players in question, and even all the players that are on the team today knew exactly what the situation was. Everybody was crystal clear what the situation was and made their decision accordingly.

These are the 12 players that wanted to be eligible. These are the 12 players that wanted to be on the team. Those are the 12 that I want at the end of the day. If we're going to get into some really tough competition here in a couple weeks, I want the guys that are committed, and these are those guys.

**Q. Was there any consideration given to Ryan Fox, and did not being a PGA member hurt him at all?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: There was a ton of consideration given to Foxy. Really have been communicating with him quite regularly since the Open. He's been playing some brilliant golf on the DP World Tour, had a great stretch there through the summer. We wrestled with that decision a lot.

He's a player that hits the ball a long way. I've said before that that could be a key attribute at Quail Hollow.

Him playing on the DP World Tour did not in any way, shape or form hurt his opportunity at all. We still had an opportunity to watch him play at the majors. That really didn't come into the equation at all for me.

But you know, these are the six that I decided to go with.

**Q. Could you give us obviously something on going with Cam Davis, adding to the Australian flavor on the team. And also what the underlying message will be; will you play the underdog role up much with your guys? Are you ready to shock the world, so to speak?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, I don't really think I have to play the underdog role up. I think everybody knows it. Everybody sees it clear as day. Our team has had a lot of adversity thrown at us over the last year or so.

But adversity makes you stronger. Like I said to Adam a little earlier, the trip that we took really showed in just a couple days how tight these guys can get and how much they want to be on the team and how badly they want to compete.

You know, the underdog role is there. Everybody sees it. We'll carry that with pride. We'll be representing underdogs all over the world in every facet of life, whether it be business or sport or kids at school. We'll be out there representing all the underdogs trying to make them proud.

As far as Cam goes, he's somebody that I've been impressed with for a long time. Great ball striker. I seem to, when I'm out on the TOUR broadcasting, always find my way down to where he's hitting balls on the range. Hits it a mile. I've spoken about that before; I think that suits this golf course very well.

He's an explosive player, makes a ton of birdies and eagles if you look at the data of his seasons on the PGA TOUR.

He really did have a strong finish to the season. His last seven to ten events, he really started showing some form when it came down to crunch time regards to qualifying for our team.

He had a little extra pressure there, and I thought he performed really well.

We can't wait to have him. We had an awesome time with him in Charlotte. Felt like he came out of his shell a little bit. Naturally he's a pretty reserved guy, unlike you and a few other Aussies that I know. But he really did thrive in the team atmosphere in the couple days we spent in Charlotte, and I look forward to seeing that growth from him as he starts to learn more and more that all of us have his back and he can trust us and he can just go out there and free-wheel it.

**Q. From my perspective, 2019, regardless of winning or losing, seemed to represent a big leap forward in terms of strategy and in terms of the culture of the team in Melbourne. Again, looking past wins and losses, I was curious if you feel a sort of historical responsibility as the captain of the International Team to keep that momentum going for a future when this becomes maybe like the Ryder Cup is today.**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: That's a great point, and yes, I do feel that responsibility, for a number of reasons. Number one, I love this team. I competed and practiced my butt off when I was a kid and on my early years playing on the TOUR to make this team. I was fortunate enough to make it twice. I wish I had made it more often.

Those two Presidents Cups I played are things that I look back at now with some of my fondest memories of competing and being in that team environment. It's something that I've always thoroughly enjoyed. It's why I love broadcasting.

The other reason is the respect and administration I have for Ernie Els and what he did for us in 2019. He gave us an identity for the first time ever. He gave us a logo and a shield, and in the shield, team colors for the first time ever.

Finally instead of players coming together from seven, eight, nine different regions of the world, we all came together no matter of the culture under one flag and one shield, and it was an extremely powerful experience for us down in Australia. Really that was the baseline. That was the foundation for our team.

Ernie brought a lot of new, clear, fresh thinking to our system.

For all of those reasons, we absolutely have tried to use that foundation to build off of and jump off of for not only this Presidents Cup in Charlotte but also future Presidents Cups, whether it be in Canada, Chicago and all the others down the line.

This event is extremely important to us. Everybody needs to understand that. I read so much on social media about we need to blow this event up, we need to change the format, we need to add female golfers.

First of all, I believe female golfers could hold their own Presidents Cup. That's how good they are. They don't need male golfers to make them relevant. I watch the Solheim Cup every time and am just like glued to my TV. It's some of the best golf you watch every couple of years. So I think that's kind of demeaning to both the men and the women players when people throw that out.

But we love this event. We love our team. When we grew up outside of the U.S. and Europe watching the Ryder Cup, watching the passion and the energy and the great golf from that event, this is our opportunity to be a part of that.

We're thankful that we have that opportunity, and we look forward to it every time. Even over the years you look at the history books, everybody knows we've had our butts kicked, but that doesn't mean we'll come with any less passion and compete to try and win.

**Q. Are you using again -- I think it's the 21st Group, the European stats outside? Are you going to use them again?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: We will not be using them, no.

**Q. Different one, or none?**

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yes, different one.

THE MODERATOR: That's all the time we have today. Thank you, Trevor, for joining us to answer some questions, and congratulations on the finalization of your

team.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Thanks again to everybody who took the time to join in this morning. We really appreciate it.

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