

The Presidents Cup Media Conference

Wednesday, September 7, 2022

Davis Love III

Press Conference



STEWART MOORE: Davis Love, thanks for joining us for today's announcement of your six Captain's picks to round out the US Presidents Cup Team.

Davis, why don't you kick us off with your announcement of the six picks and we'll go from there.

DAVIS LOVE III: In no particular order, we would like to announce that we have Max Homa, Cam Young, Jordan Spieth, Kevin Kisner, Billy Horschel and Collin Morikawa joining 2022 Presidents Cup team.

STEWART MOORE: Why don't you maybe give a couple comments on each of the six players and we'll turn it over to questions. Just a couple thoughts on each guy.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, obviously we've got some veterans in there. Guys that have played Ryder Cups and Presidents Cups. It's just hard to believe that Jordan Spieth is a veteran. Maybe not in age but starting way back in 2013. Jordan has been a big part of Presidents Cup teams and has become a passionate leader on and off the golf course of the team and then Collin Morikawa had a great Ryder Cup last year. And then he's just played great ever since he came out on TOUR and is one of the top players. Again, a guy with experience with a pick.

And then the other four guy, obviously, well, Kisner played the Presidents Cup in 2017, so he missed the 2019 team. Kevin, again, adds some veteran leadership, a guy in the team room that everybody loves having around is really, really easy to pair. We have veterans on the team that know the guys that are easy to play with. We have statisticians, analytics who tell us who is easy to pair and who fits the golf course, and Kevin as a veteran certainly fits that role.

And then Billy Horschel has been close to making a bunch of teams. He's passionate about playing for the U.S. even though he's over playing a DP World Tour event this week. He's clearly one of the most passionate players on the PGA TOUR, and we are hearing his voice a lot more lately.

I think guys are really appreciating his position on playing on this team.

And then Cam Young is obviously going to play on a lot of teams in the future. He was pretty far down there in points but he was way up there in the team wanting to have that power and that ability on the team. Obviously he played great all year. He came so close to winning so many times. Probably should have won a couple times. Had a great season.

And then Max Homa is the voice for trying to make the team all year. He's been one of the voices in support of the PGA TOUR. His best line of the year was when he said, "If you could be anybody for a day?"

And he said, "I would be Davis Love III and I would pick me for the Presidents Cup Team." So I've known since the start of the year Max had a passion for playing on this team and a passion for the PGA TOUR. We have a bunch of great guys for the team room, and obviously our six qualifiers have been ready for a long time. They know what's coming and a lot of them obviously have played on teams except for Sam.

So I'm excited about this 12 and ready to get going.

Q. In terms of Billy Horschel, you talk about the passion, and we know he's been vocal about wanting to play on one of these international match-play teams. He had a really good match play record with the Palmer Cup and Walker Cup, and beat Rory in singles in one of those Walker Cup matches. Talk about what you think that brings to you on the course and in the team room and do you think you might have to rein Billy in at times?

DAVIS LOVE III: Can you rein Billy in? I don't know, I've been around Billy a lot over the years and I haven't figured that out, how to rein him in. You ride his wave a little bit.

You know, he can certainly be over the top sometimes. But that's what we want. We want Billy Horschel on the first tee all Quail Hollow. They are going to be over the top and he's going to be over the top, and I think that's great.

You know, you have to indicate too the right partners for



Billy because Billy -- and when you look at our picks, and obviously there are some guys that we didn't pick that could easily have been on this team, and matchups are so important for our pairings. You need a couple guys for Billy that Billy is comfortable and he's comfortable with them.

I would love to play with Billy because I need that energy. I need someone to pump me up. Kite was always trying to fire me up, get me more passionate. Payne Stewart was trying to get me more passionate. So the right guy with Billy, he can carry the energy. So we are excited about him make the team. He'll be most prepared, like he's playing this week. So I have a feeling he's going to come in hot and ready.

Q. The last major U.S. Team obviously put up 19 points against the Europeans. Was it this hard to make a U.S. Team when you were playing, and could you possibly field a pretty good team with just the guys who didn't make it?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yes, I always say our first 12 is good and our next 12 is really good and that's what makes my picks so difficult is because just start right on the list of automatic qualifiers. You go right past -- obviously it's disappointing that Will got hurt. Our first 12 was incredibly strong. We almost could have just gone right off the Top-12 list. But when you start at 13 and work your way down, every one of those guys is a great player and had a great year and has a case for playing.

You know, I was fortunate that I made the team on points 12 years in a row. My first year that I thought I should have made the team, I might have been the best player available outside of the qualifiers. But I was a rookie and I didn't match up well with anybody on the team for an automatic pairing like I did in '93 with Tom Kite, my first team. I had somebody that wanted to play with me and was a veteran, to be a leader.

We certainly could have picked any one of the next ten or 12 guys and had a great player. It just happened the way the matchups fell, obviously there's three or four guys on there that I had a really tough phone call with. Hopefully they will look at it like I did, and I thought Dave Stockton was wrong and being mean and didn't pick me. And then I watched it on TV and I went, oh, wow, maybe I don't want to be out there on Sunday. And then I played in '93, and I went, I get it. I understand what this team thing is all about.

You know, if you haven't played on one, and you haven't had to pair guys up before, it's tough to make those matchups. But yeah, there's a lot of great players out there, and Trevor had the same thing. You know,

obviously he lost a bunch of guys but went right down the list of some great players and filled those gaps.

Q. Obviously you have Max announced and Justin Thomas, both have won at Quail here recently. How much will that play into any strategy and how much time have you all spent together at Quail Hollow in the leadup?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, we haven't been able to spend any time together, but we do have a lot of experience there. I was surprised to find out that Cam Young has not played there a whole lot, even though he went to school right down the road.

But most of our guys know the golf course. It's funny, on our text-change and everything, everybody kind of defers to Justin because he won the PGA there. But we have a bunch of experience like Max. Rory keeps lobbying to be on our team because he likes the golf course so much.

But I'm comfortable with our preparation because we have so many guys that can take a rookie that hasn't played there and show him around a little bit. We are going to try to get in there and get some good practice in on Monday when it's real quiet, and then obviously have Tuesday, Wednesday to dial it in.

Q. Nick just asked you about the local knowledge that you guys are going to be picking up in the practice and having guys that have won there in the past. How integral was Webb Simpson in giving you the advice on who should go with -- who should be part of the Captain's picks, and did he lobby for himself a little bit as well? Like he said he might lobby for himself when you made him an assistant captain.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, we were lobbying for Webb to make the team so we would have a second clubhouse over there on the back nine, and then lobbying for him to be an assistant captain just because, you're right. One, he's a great guy and a great leader already and will make a great assistant captain and hopefully future captain.

Webb is really important to this team as a player and as an assistant captain, just his assistance on the golf course and local knowledge and leadership on and off the golf course. We are excited to have him. He can be in charge of Cam since he's a Wake Forest guy. It's going to be great to have a whole lot of that local -- Kisner is not far away and loves the golf course, and then obviously the guys that have played there. Everybody loves the golf course, the club, the Harris family hospitality. There's so many great things, for both teams, but especially our team because we have been playing there so long for the Wells

Fargo.

Q. You've been part of this for so long now, going way back, and even at the beginning of the task force, which in some circles was somewhat ridiculed. But I'm sort of curious all these years later, did it actually end up serving the purpose intended you've pretty been in all of these since?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, yeah, I've been in it since Tim Finchem floated the idea of a Presidents Cup to the board back in, I guess, '93 or early '94.

Well, the task force was just a bad name. Like maybe independent contractor is not a descriptive term. But what happened was a bunch of veterans and a bunch of future leaders of Ryder Cups, Presidents Cups, sat together in a room and discussed how to get better at what we were trying to do, and it started with Raymond Floyd was in that call, and then on down the list, Lehman and Furyk and Stricker and future captains and Tiger Woods. There was a bunch of guys in that room that were invested in these Team USA, and we have gotten better at being captains and leaders since then.

We do a lot of things differently than we did back when Dave Stockton had to pick that team. He went on guts that Davis Love was not a good pick. You know, he was right. But he didn't have any analytics to back it up. He didn't have any team communications program. He didn't have assistant captains that had been in the program for three or four years. So we've gotten a lot better at it.

It's not perfect. We are still just a bunch of golfers trying to figure out how to help this team play well. But we've gotten a lot better at it since the board of directors or the team ownership was kind of changed.

Q. Just wanted to ask you, when you have a team that's won eight in a row, and is coming off a throttling in The Ryder Cup and playing an International Team that lost a bunch of guys to LIV, and has 12 really nice guys on the team it looks like, where do you find your motivation, and how do you guard against over-confidence?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, you call Dr. Bob Rotella a lot in the next couple weeks (chuckles) and you make sure you've got a game plan for the messaging.

But you know, Jay Haas was at Quail Hollow a week or so ago and sent us a video of the first tee, the stadium there, and said, "Just think what this is going to be like in ten days." And it hit you that, hey, this is going to be huge and it's still going to be that stadium, that first tee, American

flags and go USA. These guys, this is their 12-man team that has never played together before. So they want to win for this team. So I don't think we have to do too much messaging or motivation. Certainly you don't want to be on a losing team ever.

And we know we are up against it. Trevor is going to have a team that's got a chip on their shoulder and that's motivated and wants to prove that they can still be competitive. We have to be careful. Certainly these guys are not going to take it lying down.

Q. Have you found over the course of your career, captain, assistant player, whatever, the pressure is greater when you're trying to win compared with trying not to lose?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, I think what we do in the Presidents Cup better than The Ryder Cup is we don't have this fear of losing or this doubt in our head. We just go in with a lot of confidence and we have to keep that momentum going.

This year, obviously was a little closer than we wanted last time in Australia, but we proved that we can play and we can go on a long road game, and we have to take this home game, one, seriously, and two, get the momentum. But our guys understand that anybody can win any match in match play, and if they are not ready come Thursday at lunchtime, somebody is going to jump them.

So we have to take it seriously and get prepared.

Q. Do you feel bad for Trevor Immelman?

DAVIS LOVE III: I feel bad for the game of golf right now that this is the star I going in, and we've got how many ever days until we actually tee off and -- or they are playing great event this week and the story is, you know, Billy Horschel and Jon Rahm wishing guys weren't there. That's sad. I feel bad for all of us, really.

But Trevor has a job to do, and that's to take 12 guys in there ready to play, and he's focused on that. We've talked about it a lot. I have to get these 12 guys that are dying to play for Team USA ready to play, and it will be a great show once Thursday starts. So yeah, it's just a -- Tim Finchem always used the word, it's a distraction. This is a big, big distraction away from what we really should be talking about.

Q. A lot of talk about adding women to this event. Do you think it could enhance the event? What's your opinion on that?

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I love the Solheim Cup, and I love watching that. So they probably would not want us to come play in theirs. So I think the Presidents Cup stands on its own and has been great.

I would love to see, and it's talked about a lot, especially since everything's up for grabs right now in the Tour schedule and the game of golf. I would love to see the mixed team event come back. I would love to see some sort of event like this that was mixed teams. Billy Andrade and Brad Faxon did that in their CVS event and it was a lot of fun. So I like to see something different.

I like the way the Ryder Cup, Presidents Cup, and Solheim Cup are going right now.

Q. Tiger was all over the place in 2019. He was a player, he was a captain, he was obviously a big part of the whole thing. What role do you see him playing, if any, this time around?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, he's obviously, like everything he's been doing and Rory's been doing is a big influence on everything we do. He's been very, very helpful so far. He even called Webb Simpson before I did to tell him he was going to be an assistant captain. He's very involved.

He's very helpful. We send him the analytics stuff we get and he makes his own pairings and send them to us. I still have copies of the notes he was sending me back in 2015 to get ready for 2016. He's a great -- he's his own analytics team and he gives us a lot of great information. He'll be very helpful. He just can't come to The Presidents Cup but the text messages and the Zoom calls and the e-mails will be flying for sure.

Q. You've done this as a player and as a captain in Ryder Cups, Presidents Cups, and this is old hat for you to a certain degree but is it becoming more and more real that you are coming home at Quail Hollow in Charlotte, and the emotions of being back in your own backyard for something of this magnitude?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, I've obviously done a lot of interviews and talked about it a lot. But when Jay sent that video, I was like, oh, my goodness, I'm going to have to take this team out there and say something to them, not like -- Stricker and I get grief for getting a little bit emotional.

It's going to hit. We have talked about it for a long, long time, more than the three-year cycle that we were in. I've talked about it with Commissioner Finchem and Commissioner Monahan for a long, long time. Obviously there are a lot of other guys that could have been the

captain for this team. Tried to get Tiger to do it.

But it's going to be very special for me and for Trevor. Trevor's got great ties to Charlotte as well, and we are both now honorary members of the club, and the Harris family has been great to both my family and the Immelman family over the years. It's going to be very, very special, special for a lot of guys on our team, and we've got to make it about those 12 guys and their team and what Fred and Steve and Webb, what we have to do is just put all that aside and let these guys go play and get them really prepared.

So I'm excited about it for a hundred reasons. I'm way over my limit on tickets with the TOUR. So it's going to be a special week for me.

STEWART MOORE: Thanks so much for your time this morning. Best of luck at Quail Hollow.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports