

# The Presidents Cup

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Montreal, Canada

Bell Center

**Mike Weir**

**Ryan Hart**

**Caroline Proulx**

**Luc Bertrand**

Press Conference



part of the Presidents Cup. It's been a huge part of my career.

I've talked extensively about how a lot of great memories and friendships have been formed in those years, and now to be here as captain of the International Team and to have it here in Montreal, my home country, in this great city, at a wonderful venue, at Royal Montreal. Couldn't be more proud and excited to get started on this journey for the next two years.

MICHEL LACROIX: The International Team has gained serious momentum in I'd say the last two playings of the championship under the leadership of Els and Immelman. What do you look forward to most about your turn as team captain?

MIKE WEIR: Well, I've learned a lot being an assistant captain and part of the last three. My good friend Nick Price before Ernie, and then Ernie started something pretty significant with our team logo and really brought some unity to our team, and Trevor continued that momentum in Charlotte.

As the great Scotty Bowman said, one of your famous coaches, "You're always trying to adapt to win in this league," that's what he said, and I think we have to learn to adapt and adjust as we move forward, and I think we've done that. Ernie started that, Trevor continued that, and I'm going to try to continue that, as well, and try to get this thing on the winning track for our team.

MICHEL LACROIX: Mike will be back with you shortly. You won't escape at least one question about your match in 2007 about Tiger Woods.

We'll now hear from executive director of the Presidents Cup at the Royal Montreal, Mr. Ryan Hart. Ryan?

RYAN HART: This is an unbelievable day for us. I think as Canadians, leading into today, first and foremost, bringing our largest global event to this market is one thing, but to have an icon in our sport really leading this charge has really set the stage for an even more exciting next couple of years.

MICHEL LACROIX: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for joining us for a momentous occasion. My name is Michel Lacroix. I'll be your emcee for today's press conference. To set help the scene for today's announcement, please enjoy this short video highlighting the 2024 International Team captain.

(Video shown.)

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Presidents Cup International Team captain, Mike Weir.

(Applause.)

It's an honor for us to be here today to formally announce that you've been named the International Team captain, as the event looks ahead to return to the Royal Montreal in 2024.

Also joining us on stage, the executive director of the Presidents Cup, Ryan Hart; Quebec's minister of tourism, Caroline Proulx; vice chair of National Bank and chair of the 2024 Presidents Cup business development committee, Luc Bertrand.

We'd also like to acknowledge the Presidents Cup global partners, Citi, Rolex and Cognizant. Thank you.

Mike, the Presidents Cup has been a steady drumbeat in your career, first as a player from 2000 to 2007, followed by three assistant captains with Nick Price, Ernie Els and Trevor Immelman. What does it mean to you to now be named International Team captain in your country of Canada?

MIKE WEIR: It's a huge honor. I've been thinking about it for a long time. As the video showed, 22 years I've been



They say there are few people in sports and entertainment that give you those where-were-you-then moments, and I think with the gentleman sitting next to me, I can remember as I'm sure many of you can where you were when he won at Augusta or where you were when he beat Tiger in 2007. I look forward to working with everybody here on the next where-were-you Mike Weir moment in 2024.

MICHEL LACROIX: Although, Ryan, the 2022 Presidents Cup was wrapped recently in Charlotte, North Carolina, you've been here for a while now starting preparations for the 2024 edition. Discuss some of the work that's already been done and the potential growth opportunity the Presidents Cup has in the culture of Montreal over the next two years or so.

RYAN HART: I think, as you said, we just completed our most successful Presidents Cup in history, but that doesn't happen overnight. Much like our team that was in Charlotte for four plus years with the pandemic, we started coming here in the fall of 2020, and really it's listening and learning.

You can't come into something like this and say, just because it worked there, it will work here. I truly believe that the first year and a bit, and will continue to be, was a listening tour. The culture is very unique here. It's very special to Canada, and I think in many ways if you excuse the pun, this market is tailor made for this event. It's a cultural melting pot.

When you look at the countries represented, I could think of no better place to host an international playing of the Presidents Cup.

(Presentation in French by Mme. Caroline Proulx.)

MICHEL LACROIX: Before we proceed to another question, especially on 2007, Mike, we do have a special video for you from a lot of your friends. Let's listen.

(Video shown.)

Just like you said, a moment to remember, right? Let's go back in time, Royal Montreal 2007, Mike Weir versus Tiger Woods. How did you feel before, during and after that match?

MIKE WEIR: Well, there's a lot to remember about that day. A few things. I think Gary Player having the belief in me to put me out there against Tiger, to put me in front of our Canadian fans against he and Jack Nicklaus, either debatable about the greatest player of all time, and to have that opportunity at home to go out there and show that, you

know what, you can overcome the odds. You can be the underdog and win.

That's kind of been our team the last few years. Looking into 2024, our team, a lot can change in two years, but likely as strong as the U.S. is, we'll probably be the underdog; we'll relish that role. But for me, I accepted that challenge and went out there with a very determined mindset, got off to a great start that day, played very well.

Tiger did his thing, came roaring back to pull ahead by one, and then the last couple holes were really special. To birdie 17 with the crowd and the energy and to walk to 18 and hit a tee shot like I did on 18 to put the pressure back, it was really a special day.

But still, a little bit bittersweet because our team lost. It was special for me that day to beat him, but it's a team event, and still really disappointing to lose. Being on the team as a player five times and being so close, especially in Africa, we were tied, and Tiger and Ernie's playoff holes, that was maybe the best event I've ever been part of, that one down in South Africa. That was so intense, to put all that pressure on those two guys to perform and pull off those shots until dark was pretty incredible.

Yeah, 2007, that match was very special, and the fans were incredible, and we're hoping that it's even better and bigger in 2024. We're off to a great start. I think it will be. Really looking forward to the challenge of being the captain and motivating those guys to be that underdog but overcome those odds.

MICHEL LACROIX: We saw a Canadian delegation absolutely, fabulous delegation. To your point of view, how many of these guys should we see in Montreal, three, four, five?

MIKE WEIR: (Laughing.) You never know. The way they're playing, we have some good momentum early in the season. Obviously Adam Svensson and Mackenzie Hughes getting their wins, Adam Hadwin is a great player and his swing looks great. I think he's going to play really well here in the next couple years, along with Taylor and Corey and who knows who else might emerge.

Golf changes so fast now. We didn't know really who Tom Kim was midway through the summer last year. He comes over here, wins an event in Greensboro making an 8 on the first hole and still wins the event, comes to the Presidents Cup, people don't know who he is, and he was the star for our team that week.

There was a lot of stars that week, but he really did some great things, especially on that 18th hole in that match with



Si Woo on Saturday night.

You never know who's going to emerge, but the Canadian players are looking very strong, so nothing would make me happier than to have three, four guys on the team. It would be incredible.

MICHEL LACROIX: Thank you, Mike.

LUC BERTRAND: This event is going to be of a stature for the city of Montreal that we haven't yet experienced in my view, and the benefits, the canonic benefits of the Presidents Cup in 2024, will probably in the whereabouts of \$75 million in direct contribution to the tourism industry, but above and beyond that, it's all the individuals that will be directly or indirectly involved, the hundreds and hundreds of volunteers.

In the end, it's also a very important community event. That's largely the reflection that we all had at the club when we decided to put our name in for it, to have the Presidents Cup.

MICHEL LACROIX: Luc, tell us more about what to expect from the Royal Montreal, how the course will be set up before match play competition, and the overall experience for both the players and the fans on-site during the event.

LUC BERTRAND: Well, work has already started on some of the holes, and we've been working with the PGA TOUR now for many months, and in fact, some holes and some tee boxes have been moved around, so there's a lot of work going on.

We of course have the benefit of the experience of 2007, which was a very successful Presidents Cup, but I know that this one is going to be significantly larger in size.

In terms of a venue, the great thing about the Royal Montreal Golf Club is it's situated on L'Île-Bizard, which, by the way, the club is going to be 150 years old this year. It's the oldest golf club in North America. I thought I'd throw that in there.

But with regards to this kind of event, match play, the ability to move people around so they can capture most of the golfing experience that's going on, to make that experience for the fans as great as possible, we have the real estate to do that. Just with some context, last September, the Presidents Cup that was held in Charlotte, they built 550,000 square feet of temporary buildings, temporary lodgings. So can you just picture that?

But now at the Royal Montreal, the advantage we have is we have 54 holes. Of course only 18 will be used, but we

have lots of space to make the fan experience as great as possible.

I think that in itself will be a huge draw. We'll bring in tourists from the U.S., from Europe, from Asia, the world. I'm happy to hear that Korea is going to have a direct link now from Seoul to Montreal. Congratulations to the minister for working on that.

All these elements to me will mean that Royal Montreal will be very well equipped with the planning that is going on with the PGA TOUR who has deep experience in hosting these kind of events. All in all, I think we'll be well equipped, well prepared for receiving north of 40,000 people a day to the event.

MICHEL LACROIX: Questions, please.

**Q. Mike, with respect to that video, when Trevor says, "It's your turn now, protect the shield," what does that mean to you?**

MIKE WEIR: Well, to me, we're going to keep to -- I think what I said earlier, kind of evolve, and what Ernie started in 2019, it really brought our big international community of players and team members together, and to kind of continue that forward, continue to grow, to kind of learn, and who knows in the next couple years. There will be a few new ideas going forward, but we really feel like it's a team unit now.

Before we were coming from all over the world. We were coming together for that one week. We were trying to put it together. There's a lot more that goes into it now, and we feel a lot more cohesive, so I think it's kind of continuing that on.

Yeah, it was a great video. Makes me feel good that the Canadian golfers and everybody wished me the best, and I'm very excited about the opportunity for sure.

**Q. Mike, is there anybody, any name that you would think of that you would like to face as the U.S. Team captain?**

MIKE WEIR: Well, there's one guy I think that would be great if he can do it. Tiger, obviously the history we have at Royal Montreal. But there's a lot of great candidates going forward. They're in position with the Ryder Cup every year that they're probably not able to make the decision as soon as the International Team.

Whoever it'll be will be a great captain. They have great players and great people on their side. They've had great captains, respectful guys that I really like.

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But it'll be competitive, and looking forward to it, whoever it is.

**Q. With the situation in golf in the last year, it was a big challenge to build a team for Quail Hollow in September. Are you expecting the same bumpy ride moving forward to 2024 to build a team?**

MIKE WEIR: Well, I think, look, no doubt it was a challenge for Trevor and the captains on our team given the circumstances, kind of what went on. But the guys that were there to play, they wanted to play. They wanted to be part of the team. Those are the kind of players that we want. We want the guys that really want to be part of this.

Our guys were. They were up for the challenge. Sure, we got off to a slow start on Thursday and Friday, but they found their stride and they fought hard. They had a lot of heart.

I don't know what the future holds. I can't predict that. But I know that the guys that are going to be on our team are going to be prepared, and they really want it.

It's just proof to show that -- I'll just use MacKenzie Hughes as an example. He was really disappointed that he wasn't chosen for the team, and he comes out there right away very motivated and wins.

That shows us, myself as captain and everyone else, that he wants to be part of this. That was extra motivation for him. I love that.

Those are the kind of guys we want that are hungry and want to be on the team.

**Q. Mike, to know a little bit more about what the Canadian right now feels before the selection, what did you feel in '05 and '06 before your selection for '07, because here you were about to play in Montreal in your home country. What kind of advice can you give to the PGA TOUR players, the Canadians, who want to play in two years?**

MIKE WEIR: Well, I'll even go back to my very first Presidents Cup in 2000 when I made the team. It was still kind of in its infancy; maybe it was the third or fourth Presidents Cup. It was new. I knew about the Presidents Cup. It looked really cool. Growing up in Canada, playing team sports, playing hockey, playing an individual sport professionally, I always thought in my head, this would be great to play on a team again.

When I made that first team in 2000 and having that

experience, I'm like, I never want to miss one again. It was so great.

As the years went on and as we knew it was going to Royal Montreal in 2007, yeah, I remember the two years prior to it, I wasn't having great years, especially 2006 I wasn't having a very good year, and the pressure mounted. I wasn't playing very well. I wanted to make the team so badly.

It was the only time in my five Presidents Cups that I was a pick. The other times I made it on my own. It was great that Gary picked me, and it was extra motivation for me to play well and to prove Gary's pick was the right one.

My advice to the young guys, just kind of especially the Canadian guys coming home here, no doubt it's a lot of pressure, but to just play their game, to just be themselves and to work hard, which they all do. You know, let the chips fall where they may.

But they're motivated. I know that. I've talked to the guys. They're very motivated.

The other advice, you don't want to put extra pressure on people, it just makes it harder, but they all know what's at stake.

**Q. Tiger Woods was talking yesterday in the Bahamas about what's going on in the golf industry right now. He said in the war between the Saudi league and the PGA, saying that Greg Norman has to go. For you to build a team for 2024, I want to pick your mind on this topic; what are your thoughts, if it could help you to build a better team in two years?**

MIKE WEIR: I think I already addressed that. I think it's the players that we want, the guys that want to be part of the team. I think guys that go over to that Tour, they made their choice, and they know their decisions, that hey, if you go over there, you're not part of anything regarding the PGA TOUR, which means the Presidents Cup.

It's unfortunate for them at this time they're not going to be part of it.

I'm focused on the guys that are going to be there and the players that are going to be there, and those are the guys that I'm looking to that really want to be part of it.

**Q. Are you supporting Tiger Woods in his thoughts on this topic, that Greg Norman has to go, if golf needs a truce?**

MIKE WEIR: I don't know. I'm not into the politics of those





two sides. I don't know if Greg needs to go or if they need to work those things out. Sure, down the road I think it would be nice that golf isn't divisive. It's a sport that unifies more than divides.

If there could be some way that that could be resolved, that's great, if that's the road that they think that needs to be. They're more entrenched in going on, the PGA TOUR and Tiger and Rory. They're on policy boards and things like that, and I'm not. I don't know what's going on behind the scenes and what talks are being had. I don't know, so I'm not going to comment on that.

**Q. Maybe a question for Ryan Hart. In previous conversations that we had, you were talking about the implication to the city of Montreal, building like entertainment shows and everything, because Royal Montreal is a great venue, but are you going to implicate downtown Montreal in any way, shape or form to celebrate the event in the city of Montreal?**

RYAN HART: Well, I think in many ways, this whole week, this whole event, it's a global celebration. Golf in some ways is the vehicle to bring people together, but I think when you look at this city, it's really how do we encompass everybody. Yes, we're 45 minutes or 40 minutes away at Royal Montreal, but downtown having a festival-like atmosphere. I was captivated being in F1 last year and being able to experience a post-COVID F1, which was definitely -- it's infectious. You see the city come alive.

Really I think one of our great challenges is how do we channel that. Really our mantra in and around this is this is the biggest celebration we do. Yes, it's a golf tournament that's tied into it, but it's a celebration of the market that we're in, and I think you saw that in Charlotte, and I can only see bigger and better things here in Montreal.

**Q. Ryan, people are tweeting me asking about tickets, so I figured I'd ask you about tickets. Do you have a timeline on when tickets might be for sale for this event in 2024?**

RYAN HART: We've got these bulk tickets, like 35-person suites that you can buy right now. But no, in all seriousness, you're probably looking at next fall where we'll launch. We had a nice cadence in Charlotte that worked, and looking that year out, I think you can expect to see some information in and around that.

**Q. Mike, as someone who brought a major to Canada, first Canadian, as someone who is the first Canadian to captain the International Team, how big would it be -- look, I'm not putting too much pressure on you, but how big would it be to bring a second Presidents Cup**

**to the International Team?**

MIKE WEIR: Well, it would be huge. At this stage of my life and my career, that would be a real feather in a career that's gone above and beyond what I ever dreamed. To have it here in Canada, look, I want Canadian fans to be engaged in this. We Canadians, we love golf in this country. Last I heard, we were the highest per ratio golfers per capita in the world. We love our golf here.

To bring that trophy not only to the fans of Canada but to those 12 players in the rooms, the caddies, the wives, I've said this before or earlier today, being part of five and not winning one is tough.

Again, growing up playing team sports, when you win something together, it's a lot funner than winning by yourself, honestly. It's great winning a tournament by yourself and you celebrate with your family and your caddie, but to win something big with a team, there's nothing like it.

There's been 24 of them here in this city.

That's what we want. That's what we hope happens. I'm going to be pushing for that, and it would be a great thrill, probably the biggest thrill of my life golf-wise.

**Q. Montreal was the first international chapter of the First Tee, and it's nice to see that Golf Canada has now endorsed the First Tee. Basically what was mentioned here today was a lot of the multiculturalism of Montreal is important to the international sector. I want to know what's going to be done to make it more accessible following the Presidents Cup, because we know the sport is growing, and clearly Montreal is going to be in the eye of the international community. How can we work to make sure that yes, it continues to grow?**

MIKE WEIR: I would say you're right. Our country in general is multicultural melting pot, as Ryan said, and it's probably a question more for Golf Canada to see what they're going to do going forward and expand on that and continue to grow.

But it's a great initiative, and the values that the First Tee instills in the young kids, getting them exposed to the game, they're all great things.

RYAN HART: Maybe just to add to that, part of really the core of who we are as not only a Tour and an event is to work with many organizations in the community, and what does that legacy look like.

At the beginning when we talked about that listening and

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learning Tour, I look out in this room right now and I see we've got the First Tee of Canada here, I see Lisa from One Draw, MUHC Foundation, Montreal Canadiens' Foundation. There's a lot of great organizations in this community that we will have eyes and ears open with, because that legacy piece, yes, we're here in 2024 and we don't know when the next time we'll be back is. That legacy piece is so key for us. I think you'll see a bit of a drumbeat over the next two years or 18 months in ironing out what that looks like.

But I can assure you we'll be speaking with many people like yourself, I hope, on painting that picture.

MICHEL LACROIX: Thank you. Our guests are going to be available for one-on-one interviews in just a few moments. Thank you all.

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