

The Presidents Cup

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Montreal, Canada

Royal Montreal Golf Club

Mike Weir

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Mike, the International Team for the 2024 Presidents Cup was finalized just now with you live on Golf Channel selecting your six players to round out the 12-man team. If you don't mind rehashing through those six picks and talking about the guys.

MIKE WEIR: Yeah, well, I'll name the six and then talk through them. I'll do the Canadians first. We have Corey Connors, Mackenzie Hughes and Taylor Pendrith. We have Si Woo Kim, Min Woo Lee and Christiaan Bezuidenhout from South Africa.

I'll start with Corey. Corey has had such a solid year again, no missed cuts, consistently one of the best ball strikers in the game. Second time around, I truly believe he's going to play well with the home crowd here. I think he's going to be a big part of our team.

Taylor Pendrith has had an incredible summer, starting off when we all met in Dallas and had a dinner, and he went ahead and won that week and continued his great play throughout the summer, to his first TOUR Championship, so that was very exciting. So glad to have him back for a second one.

The rookie Canadian is Mac Hughes. Mac played very solidly all year. Really like his short game. All-around short game, he's one of the elite and best short game guys on the PGA TOUR. I also love Mac's grit. So that was the reason I picked him.

We have Christiaan Bezuidenhout from South Africa. This will be his second Presidents Cup. Very steady year, made his first TOUR Championship birdieing three of the last four to get the 29th spot and get in, which was incredible. Very fun in the locker room. He's a great addition, another addition from last time, but great addition to our team this year.

The other rookie is Min Woo Lee, who brings a lot of excitement on and off the golf course. He's great in the team room. Everybody loves being around Min. He brings a lot of power, a lot of flair. We're super excited. He pairs

up well with a lot of guys, so that was the reason for the pick for him.

Then we've got a veteran Korean, Si Woo Kim, who's very versatile, again, very well-rounded player, as I was saying earlier. He's gone back to a longer putter, which seems to suit him a little bit better. Had some better putting stats his last event, and he's a real gamer, so that was the reason we picked him.

Q. You mentioned the three Canadians. I wanted to ask you about Nick Taylor. With some of the events he's won in recent years, obviously the Canadian Open, won the Waste Management this year, I know his summer his form dropped, but how difficult was it to leave Nick off this team?

MIKE WEIR: Really difficult. He was looking very good to make the team, and as it happens in golf, sometimes you go through a little spell that's not your greatest. It was a super tough decision for me but one that was well thought through, and through a number of different analytical things and gut feelings and all kinds of things, it came to that conclusion, but it was very difficult.

Q. On a similar note to Dan's question, how hard was it to leave Adam Hadwin off this lineup?

MIKE WEIR: Similar. Adam had a very solid year. He's a very solid all-around player, was playing pretty well. Again, both those calls to those guys were extremely difficult, and like I said earlier when I was talking to some of the Golf Channel guys, the way they handled it just showed me a lot about their character, which I already knew, but even made me respect them even more, and I just told them that they're going to be on these Cups going forward, and stay engaged with this Presidents Cup team because Adam has been on a couple of teams, he knows how special they are, and wants to be on them. So did Nick.

I suspect Adam will be pushing hard to be on the next one.

Q. As a follow-up, you and I both know, three Canadians on the International Team, this is the most ever. How important is it do you think to have three



Canadians not just because Canadian golf is in a great place right now, but also to attract Canadian fans to Royal Montreal at the end of the month?

MIKE WEIR: Well, I think it's important but also as captain you have to be fair to the whole international community. I think I was very justified the three picks, very exciting. As I was saying earlier, I think it just shows the state of Canadian golf that we can pick three for five or six guys that were in the mix. You had Adam Svensson in there, too, that was playing well.

It just shows the state of Canadian golf. But it's a factor. You do want the Canadian fans. I think they're going to be very engaged with all our international players. But having some Canadians on there brings a little bit more juice, so to speak, to our team.

Q. What was the thinking of Si Woo, kind of in the context of overlooking Cam Davis?

MIKE WEIR: Well, if you look at Si Woo, his record in these things and the way he competes, all of his captains have seen it firsthand and up close. We just know how consistent he is all the way around. Not that Cam isn't, either; Cam was very deserving, as well, and you wish you could pick 13 or 14, but there's only 12, and it was a really tough choice.

I believe in Cam Davis, too, but also believe in Si Woo, and that's why we went with him there. Those are the tough calls as captain that you have to make.

Q. On a broader picture, how much do you talk about the fact you guys have lost nine in a row? That comes up obviously every year; the number just changes. Is there any part of you that looks at the culture as just a clean slate? Or how much do you look behind?

MIKE WEIR: I would say a little bit -- to the first part of your question, I don't spend a lot of time thinking about how many years it's been, but I think the things we've done to increase our chances are a lot of the little things behind the scenes. Getting our guys -- it's no secret that we've struggled to form unity with all the cultural differences and things the International Team has had to deal with over the years, so that's why we've implemented a lot more engagement amongst the players playing practice rounds and us doing some dinners to get the guys together to get more familiar with one another.

You can just see it. You feel it that the guys are more comfortable with one another. The Korean guys just aren't playing by themselves, they're playing with the Canadian guys, playing with the South African guys and Australians

and sitting with each other for dinner and things like that. Everybody is more comfortable, and I think that's a big factor for our team.

We do know the past, and we want to change that, and we're doing all the little things behind the scenes to help to change that.

Q. Three Ontario boys; just wondering if you considered their closeness growing up, going to Kent State and those guys playing a lot of practice rounds, and by all accounts often taking the money off the BC boys when they partner up with each other? Was that a consideration, just the fact they know each other so well?

MIKE WEIR: I would say I never really factored that into play. I was just looking at a number of different things. Corey was pretty much a shoe-in, and then you start looking at Taylor's form this summer and winning and his consistency and the power and all of that, and then you start looking at other factors with Mac and the other guys. So you start taking in -- when you start looking at statistics and gut feeling and everything, but the BC/Ontario thing I never really thought about.

Q. You talked about how much you like Mac's grit. Can you expand on that a little bit more, provide some examples of what you've seen in that regard?

MIKE WEIR: Well, I think when Mac has gotten in contention in tournaments, he's proven to have done very well. When he's played the Match Play event, his match play record is very strong, so he's good head-to-head, which shows me a lot what's inside, when you put a person in that type of scenario.

And just being around him a little more and talking to him, he's very passionate about this. So are the other guys, but I just have a gut feeling with Mac that he has what it takes in these big moments. They're big pressure moments, and I have a feeling he's going to do great in those moments.

Q. Did the fact that Adam Scott and Jason Day both made the team on merit, did that free you up because you probably would have wanted to use at least one of your picks to get those guys based on their experience and veteran leadership, but did the fact that they both made the team free you up to get three Canadians on the squad?

MIKE WEIR: Yeah, possibly. I guess I hadn't thought of that because on the other side, if one of the Canadians or two of the Canadians would have gotten an automatic pick, it would have freed some other things up.

But certainly good to see Adam and Jason playing well. Watching them play, you can see why they're up there near the top in our top six, because they're really on top of their games.

Q. Explaining your picks, you said that you've had dinner with Taylor Pendrith in the summer. Can you give us more details and the main lines of the discussion with him at this dinner?

MIKE WEIR: Oh, so I had a team dinner, not just Taylor. We had an International Team dinner in Dallas, so there was about, I don't know, 15 to 17 players that showed up for the team dinner, Taylor being one of them, and before I left for the evening, I said, okay, someone from this team room win this tournament this week. Come on, let's get a win, and Taylor won. That was kind of what I was referencing.

Q. Nothing personal towards him saying, Taylor, you need to do this to get on the team or I need to see this kind of stuff?

MIKE WEIR: No.

Q. You've used the phrase "gut feeling" a lot today, and I think also on The Golf Channel. When it comes down to gut feeling versus the analytics, which one do you take?

MIKE WEIR: I think it's a balance. I think when you're faced with tough decisions, you can look at analytics and you can look at a number of different things, but that's part of being a captain, I believe, and a leader is that you have to trust your gut, trust your instincts on things. I'll lean into that throughout the course of the tournament, and we'll take what we use with the analytics.

We've got a lot of smart people on our team that's giving me input, which is fantastic. It's very helpful as a captain, and we tried to provide the same when I was on the assistant side for the other captains that I was assistant for.

At the end of the day, there's some gut feels when you have a decision to be made that you have to use and trust that.

Q. You indicated that one of the reasons you didn't take Nick Taylor was because of some analytical things. Could you outline what those were?

MIKE WEIR: No, I'm not going to get into that. Yeah, there's lots of factors we looked at on all the picks, and I'm not going to discuss any of the negative things and why I

didn't take somebody. But I know there was some close, tough decisions. That's all part of it. The stats and analytics, that's definitely part of it.

But they're just tough calls.

Q. You mentioned when Min Woo Lee you suggested he was somebody that would fit in a spot that you needed. I guess maybe he might be multipurpose in regards to how you look at it. I'm not sure if that's true. But if it is true, what was it you were looking for that you didn't feel like you might have had or you needed from the first six guys that made the team?

MIKE WEIR: No, maybe I didn't state that correctly. I was saying he's a good fit for a lot of our guys, and he fits in really well with a large number of different scenarios that we come up with. Min fits in there very well. I think that's what I meant to say. I didn't say we were lacking anything, I said he just kind of fits in well.

Q. We saw last year the golf course play a big factor and Edoardo Molinari was talking about they set up the course in a certain way and they chose guys based on certain profiles and how they fit the course. Was that part of your process, and how would you describe the test that Royal Montreal will provide?

MIKE WEIR: Yeah, we certainly looked at the golf course and looked at maybe golf courses that we think of as maybe comparable and see how certain players played on those golf courses. That was something we looked at.

Unlike the Ryder Cup, the Presidents Cup is a PGA TOUR event, so they actually set up the tee boxes, pin placements. I think the Ryder Cup is different that way.

What we have, the home captain has control over is the course agronomy. So if you want to make it firm, if you want to make it soft, green speeds, rough lengths and things like that, but we don't have control of if you wanted to make five drivable par-4s, I couldn't do that. The PGA TOUR sets the actual golf course up.

Q. I imagine you're not going to tell you how you're going to want to set that course up?

MIKE WEIR: No. No, I'm not. Sorry.

Q. Is the team practicing at the course today?

MIKE WEIR: We already did. We practiced this morning and yesterday. We had a great couple days and had a lot of fun.



Q. What does that add to have the team gather ahead of time in preparation? How does that make the actual week easier? Second question, have you encouraged players to try to play in Napa next week or in some way ahead of time to stay sharp?

MIKE WEIR: Yeah, I guess the first part of your question, I guess just like we do for our own individual games, when you're playing a major championship, guys fly in sometimes the weeks before to see the golf course, get a feel for it. Our guys, they're all pretty young. The last Canadian Open here was 2014, so 10 years ago. Most of the guys haven't played it. In fact, I don't know -- I think some of our Canadian guys have played it but none of the other guys. So just to see the golf course, familiarize yourself a little bit with it.

We were able to knock out some ancillary things behind the scenes, get our suits fitted a little bit more, make sure that's all dialed in so we're not scrambling early in the week for the Tuesday function that we have with both teams. Just getting some of the little things out of the way early, which is always nice.

Then the second part of your question again?

Q. Are you encouraging guys to go to Napa or to -- some of them that maybe didn't make it to the TOUR Championship will have gone a pretty significant stretch.

MIKE WEIR: Yeah, I have. I have encouraged the guys to play. But at the end of the day, it's been a long year for the guys. The guys are their own individual players, and I just know that whether they play or not, they'll be ready, and they know what they need to do to work on their games and be ready to play.

Sure, we encouraged them to play. All of us captains encouraged them to play. Some will and some won't, but I think they'll be sharp.

Q. When I covered the Presidents Cup in Melbourne, Ernie Els, one of his ideas was trying to forge a team identity for the international side. Do you agree that that's a big part of it? What steps have you taken to do that? And if you can compare what the team identity feels like to you now versus even when you played and has it changed or grown?

MIKE WEIR: Maybe that's where I'll start is that third part. I've noticed a huge difference from my era of playing, which is many years ago now, but a lot of the guys, we didn't really know each other that well, and you're trying to come together that week and form bonds and form

teamwork. That's a bit hard, the different cultures that we have.

As it's kind of gone along to your point with Ernie, the shield that he helped create for our team in 2019, our team colors, and create something to unite us and play for. We had a friend of Ernie's who's a SEAL Team Six member that helped Ernie create this shield. He came in and spoke to our guys last night about that and what that means and the shield, that it means the connection there.

Yeah, the guys have formed a bond. They bought into that. They've bought into our team strategy and the way we've tried to create our team, form our team. Yeah, it's gotten better.

I think when we started doing these dinners a few years ago with Trevor and kind of continued that path on, you could just feel -- I guess that part of your question, there's a sense within our team room that everybody really likes each other. We're more familiar with one another. Hopefully that leads to good play. When you're a little bit looser and you know one another, you tend to play a little bit looser. Hopefully that leads to the guys really playing free and good.

Q. What about the fan side? How do you get them to care?

MIKE WEIR: We've been working on them. We've been working with the Montreal Canadiens organization a little bit, getting their fan engagement. I think throughout Canada here, I think the word is getting out. Once the Olympics was done, I think they started talking about it a lot more.

Around the city, banners are going up. I think there's more of a buzz now. These last three weeks, I think people are going to get really excited about it. A lot of the summer sports, the F1, everything is all done now, and I think fans are really going to be excited about this event. It's going to be two, three times bigger than what it was in 2007.

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