

Skechers World Champions Cup supporting Shriners Children's

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Clearwater, Florida, USA

Feather Sound Country Club

Team Captains

Darren Clarke

Thomas Bjørn

Jim Furyk

Steve Stricker

Mike Weir

Mark Hensby

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Thank you all for joining us for day 1 of the 2025 Skechers World Champions Cup supporting Shriners Children's. Today we have joining us the captains from Team USA, Team Europe, and Team International, as well as one player from each team.

We're going to go around, and everyone's going to kind of give a brief recap of today's events and what you're expecting going into tomorrow. We'll start with Darren Clarke.

DARREN CLARKE: Obviously it was a good day for Europe. We got off to a nice start. But as you can all see, scoring is still really, really tight, really close. There's a lot of volatility in the matches to come.

Yeah, we played nicely in our own matches. Thomas played nicely this morning, and I sort of didn't really. Then we got a little bit better this afternoon.

It's exciting to see where we're at. There's only four points or something between everybody after the first day's play. When you think there's so many points on offer, to have it so close is quite amazing really. But you have some of the best players in the world here over the age of 50 competing against each other. So it probably is going to be tight.



Certainly the course was great. There was a little bit of banter right there, a little bit of chat amongst us all, but it's great to get those international match play juices sort of going again. Certainly for us it was a wonderful day.

THE MODERATOR: Mike Weir from Team International.

MIKE WEIR: I had a great time playing out there. My first time being in this, the format was great. As Darren said, it's close after day 1. We had great banter out there. There's lots of good golf, lots of solid play, lots of putts made.

I think all the teams played pretty solid. I think it was good golf out there today. I expect that tomorrow as well. I really love the format and look forward to tomorrow.

THE MODERATOR: And Team USA, Jim Furyk.

JIM FURYK: To kind of reiterate a lot of the same things, great day. I saw a lot of wonderful golf out there, a lot of birdies, eagles. The golf course definitely gave up some low scores today.

I was proud of our team. I would say in both the early and afternoon matches, we kind of -- I was telling Strick, we kind of got behind the eight ball, first four or five holes felt like we dug a little bit of a hole. At times you can get very impatient, start pressing, start forcing things. I thought the guys stayed very patient and scratched, clawed. Those holes 6 through 9 were very good for us, both in the morning and in the afternoon. We kept ourselves in position.

As Darren said, they played some great golf, took the lead. There's a lot of volatility. It's nice to see all three teams within 4 1/2 points. A lot of fun, and we've got a couple of good days coming up.

Q. For Jim Furyk. You mentioned patience being a key out there. I was talking to Jerry Kelly a little earlier, and he said he was getting antsy on the 1st tee watching four or five different guys hit. Does the sixsome format require a different skill set that we don't see week to week on tour?

JIM FURYK: I think everyone up here played other than



... when all is said, we're done.®

me, so they probably could answer this question a little bit better.

I would imagine, especially in the morning format where you have six guys hitting every shot, every putt, it takes a lot of patience. I think it's probably somewhat difficult to get in a rhythm as well because you're not hitting a lot of shots. It's like a practice round where everyone's hitting a lot of chips and putts and the round's a little slower.

This afternoon went much, much quicker. I'm sure it was probably a little easier to stay in rhythm and keep moving.

Q. Does anyone else want to speak to that, the secret to being a good six-ball player?

DARREN CLARKE: I'm trying to avoid standing on anyone else's line. There's so many markers. Where is everybody? We're checking to see where everybody is because you're sort of into your shots and then you get up onto the green, and there's five or six balls on the green, and you're trying to be careful and not get in anybody else's way and stuff and waiting for your turn to come around.

When it does, as Jim just said there, the rhythm we normally have on a week-to-week basis is totally different out there. But if you look at the scores, I think we all managed it pretty well today.

It's just one of those one-off scenarios where we're playing six balls. It doesn't happen anywhere else apart from this tournament. I guess we're all delighted to be here, so whatever is required, we will do.

MARK HENSBY: The other thing too, you have different guys play at different speeds. I feel like I'm a pretty fast player. So obviously I had to kind of change the way I went about things where the slower players, I don't know who they are, it's still slow for them, but it's more -- but for me, I felt like you're just standing around a lot.

But you just kind of pay attention and take your time. Yeah, it's a little different, though. It's definitely different. Four times I walked when there's still one or two guys to hit. So that's definitely different.

Q. For Strick, how good did it feel to get back out there and get the competitive juices flowing?

STEVE STRICKER: It was a lot of fun today. It was a good format to come back into. You have a partner that you can rely on a little bit. I hit some good shots. I hit some bad shots. It was great to be back. Great to see these guys that I normally play with when I do go out and

play.

This format is a ton of fun. This tournament is a ton of fun. It was definitely nice to be out there and be a part of it.

Q. Darren, can you just talk about how proud you are of Søren going out there, subbing in, and scoring 20 points for you guys alongside Alex?

DARREN CLARKE: Søren Kjeldsen has been a mainstay on the European Tour for a long, long time. He's a determined, dogged player. He grinds it out. He drives the ball well. He hits his irons well. He putts well. He's just an all around good player.

Listen, you don't win Champions Tour School last year in the fashion he did and then don't get a start until halfway through and then make it all the way to Phoenix. Søren's a wonderful player.

We're lucky that he has actually been here. The tournament has got two vice captains this year with Bernhard being under the weather. We've been very lucky that we've had him here.

Søren has been relying on Thomas. He might want to say a few words about him. For Thomas' experience of being out on the Champions Tour, Søren's been in touch with him because they're both from up the same part of the world. He's been very instrumental with helping Søren as well.

THOMAS BJØRN: I'm glad we have him here. I think for guys that might not have played Ryder Cups or might not have been in that environment or Presidents Cup, for them to have a chance to play in this, that's a pretty big deal.

I could see with him, Bernhard was not great when we came here. Søren, you could see that he got kind of the idea that he might be playing. He prepared well. I think that says a lot about him. A lot of guys will have come here as a vice captain and just kind of bobbled around and not doing anything.

Søren prepared like he was going to play, and that's why he went up and played well. That's the character of the man, so good on him.

Q. Darren, just on Bernhard, he's not a guy we're used to seeing call in sick. He kind of has an Iron Man reputation. Can you give us a little sense of his condition? Do you expect him to play the next two days?

DARREN CLARKE: Bernhard has indicated to me that he



wants to play tomorrow afternoon. He's not 100 percent, but the competitor in him -- like you said, he's Iron Man. He wants to play and wants to be part of the team. He doesn't want to just be here.

He's still not 100 percent. He's still not really up to speed, but Bernhard being Bernhard, he's practiced and kept himself ready. He said he wouldn't be able to play 18 holes tomorrow, but he would be able to play nine. I think you can expect to see Bernhard in the lineup tomorrow afternoon. He'll be back participating.

With the rules the way they are, Søren will then step aside, and Bernhard will then come back into play.

Q. Mike, I was wondering if you could give us some of your thoughts on the differences being a playing captain this time versus the Presidents Cup when you were obviously a non-playing captain.

MIKE WEIR: It's a pretty big difference. I think it would be hard to be a playing captain in the Presidents Cup or Ryder Cup with 12 guys and trying to organize all that you have -- that goes into those events. I think it's more manageable with the three teams. It's a little bit easier.

I think of all of us guys being veteran guys and done this a few time, you don't have to worry about them too much. They're professionals. They go about their business, and they know what to do. It's a little bit easier from that perspective.

Compared to like, say, Keegan, who had that idea of possibly playing, that would have been a tough task, I think.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you all for today, and we'll look forward to tomorrow. Have a great night.

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