

BMW PGA Championship

Tuesday, 6 September, 2022

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

Guy Kinnings

Dr. Pawan Munjal

Press Conference

CLARE BODEL: Good afternoon, everyone, welcome to a very special announcement. We are joined by Guy Kinnings, European Ryder Cup Director and the DP World Tour's Deputy CEO and Chief Commercial Officer, and Dr. Pawan Munjal, Chairman and CEO of Hero MotoCorp.

Guy, we'll start with you.

GUY KINNINGS: Thanks, everyone for coming along today. I'm delighted to be joined by Dr. Munjal. All of you, I'm sure, will know him and recognise him given the extraordinary long-term support that he and Hero have given us, the Tour.

Hero have been unbelievable supporters of the DP World Tour for many years. Back from starting in the Hero Indian Open in 2015 as well as having The Hero Open, which has been on the schedule for the last three years, and The Hero Challenge, which was a kind of innovative new concept that took the sport to a lot of new locations and probably a lot of new audiences and we thank Hero for that support.

Today's announcement is very much an evolution of Hero's commitment to innovation and different formats on the DP World Tour, and as you know we as a tour, it's in our DNA. We like to try and do a few things a little differently.

With the support of Dr. Munjal at Hero, it's my pleasure to confirm that this January we will play The Hero Cup in Abu Dhabi.

The Hero Cup is a team match-play event. It will be contested by two 10-man teams, Great Britain and Ireland take on Continental Europe over three days, foursomes, fourballs and singles, with all 20 players playing, which means that there will be playing captains who we will be announcing in the coming weeks.

The Hero Cup will be played at the Abu Dhabi Golf Club from January 13th to the 15th, the week prior to our first



BMW PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

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Rolex Series Event in Abu Dhabi in 2023. I think you will remember Abu Dhabi Golf Club had been the venue for the HSBC Abu Dhabi Championship for many years.

We would also like to thank and mention his Excellency, Aref Hamad Al Awani, the General Secretary of the Abu Dhabi Sports Council who, like Dr. Munjal, have been huge supporters of the DP World Tour for many years and have played a big part in us taking this new event and events in the past to Abu Dhabi. He unfortunately cannot be here today but will be here later on in the week.

Another person integral to this event is European Ryder Cup Captain Luke Donald. Luke has been from my experience an incredibly impressive leader in some of the work since he was appointed, and he demonstrated amongst his many skills his decisive meticulous approach and we saw that last week when he put his own stamp on the qualification process. That, of course, gets underway this week at the BMW PGA Championship here at Wentworth on Thursday.

Luke will, therefore, be keeping a close eye on all eligible players in the coming months and the changes he's made will, we believe, give his team the best chance of success in Rome in 12 months' time. We did some intensive research and analysis following The Ryder Cup last year, and he has worked very hard with his vice captains looking at that. And an event of this sort is something that many of those stakeholders felt would be a good thing, a good thing for the Tour, and also good thing for preparation for The Ryder Cup.

Another thing Luke was keen to do was enhance Europe's chances, and he feels getting the players to may match-play format will give European talent at all levels the right experience that's needed.

As you can see, believes the match-play events that we played in the past shaped a lot of the players and shaped a lot of the experience of those captains, as well, and whether that be The EurAsia Cup of the past or the Seve Trophy, I think a lot of people felt that this helped the players in terms of their preparation, and it helps sometimes vice captains, captains and others get great experience in that kind of environment.

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Luke will, therefore, have an overarching presiding role at The Hero Cup. Typically he will be choosing two captains and players working with select those players and both teams which will be chosen at the conclusion of the DP World Tour Championship in November.

So The Hero Cup will not only be a terrific way for the DP World Tour to start the 2023 calendar year but will also be a key part in Europe's preparation for The Ryder Cup which will take place that year at Marco Simone Golf Club in Rome, Italy. And as you know, The Italian Open will be there next week and there will be another one in May, earlier in the year next year.

Therefore, with both of my tour and Ryder Cup hats off, I would like to reiterate my thanks to Dr. Munjal and Hero for believing in our vision for this event, and once again supporting innovation in golf and on the DP World Tour, so thank you.

DR. PAWAN MUNJAL: Thank you, Guy, for your kind comments, and good afternoon to all of you.

As Guy, mentioned Hero has been a proud sponsor and supporter of innovation and different formats on the DP World Tour now for many years, and The Hero Cup is another example of that and another step in that same direction.

We are very pleased to be supporting the Tour, showcase talented European players to a global television audience. Team events always provide plenty of drama, and many of us have seen that in the past in many, many match-play events. We are, therefore, excited to be part of this new contest and to extend our long-term partnership with the European Tour Group.

We have enjoyed a very strong relationship together since the Hero Indian Open, which became a part of the Tour schedule in the year 2015. Before that, it used to be part of The Asian Tour. The Hero Open has also been part of the Tour's UK Swing for the past three seasons now, showcasing some of the Tour's merging talent.

We are extremely proud of The Hero Challenges, which have helped golf reach new audiences but taking the fast-paced shootout to some iconic locations around UK and various other parts of the world. Those locations included the Edinburgh Castle, Canary Wharf in London, the Atlantis and TopGolf both in Dubai, and Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Grand Prix circuit.

This year The Hero Challenge has evolved into short-form social and digital content, showcasing the incredible skill and talents of the Tour players and also its renowned

content team. Challenges have included the one-yard fairway, which is one of my favourites, and the Guinness world record for the fastest hole in golf.

The Hero Challenge has pushed boundaries since it first began in 2016, and then Luke Donald hosted the British Masters at The Grove. We are delighted that Luke will once again be involved in the Hero Cup, and we are very pleased to be supporting this exciting new team match-play event in Abu Dhabi next January.

We hope everyone involved enjoys it, and we look forward to seeing you all in Abu Dhabi in January 2023. Thank you and enjoy the rest of the day.

CLARE BODEL: We will now open up for questions.

Q. You mentioned obviously this has come out of the review of post-Whistling Straits. Can you give us a flavour of those kind of conversations and why it's led to starting the Hero Cup?

GUY KINNINGS: I mean, we always look at it and go we have a pretty good model that works well in The Ryder Cup but clearly, every cycle, you need to improve. We certainly needed to improve after last time, and we've looked at every aspect, listened to everyone. We did an institutional intensive: Spoke to players, caddies and every other stakeholder.

A number of themes came out in that. We need to have a look at qualification process, which we did and Luke was pretty vocal in his capacity as vice captain as he talked about.

One thing that came out that have is finding an event which would allow the players and those involved to compete in a way that would allow them to maybe give some time between Ryder Cups, the Americans have their Presidents Cup between Ryder Cups.

So we were looking at that as something we wanted to do anyway but it's got to be an exciting event in its own right. When you are working with a partners as important as Hero, when you look at the broadcasters, when you are looking to something in the schedule early in the year which is such an important part for us, it all came together. It was the product of listening, thinking what would be good for the players, talking to Luke and talking to his vice captains, and to be honest, it looked like a logical step.

But great ideas are just great ideas until someone supports them and stands up and sponsors them; and to have Hero do that, it shared the vision.

And we have still a lot to announce. We've announced the concept, the date, format, but clearly we are going to have announce captains and a number of other aspects because the event will be great in its own right, but we also want to make it an event that will be great in terms of whoever the players are that are there to make sure they get the most of that. That was the background.

Q. Towards the final days of the Seve Trophy, a lot of the quote, unquote, big names weren't involved in it. Have you had commitments from the likes of Rory McIlroy, Viktor Hovland, Matt Fitzpatrick; that they will make themselves available for this?

GUY KINNINGS: To be perfectly honest, as you can imagine, everyone is looking at the global schedule and working out where they are going to play and how they are going to play, so we are looking at that. We have chosen a date that we think could be appealing to really all aspects of players. We would love to have stars there. We'd love to have all Members there, from the Members of the Tour, Europeans, we'd love to have rising stars, youngsters for whom it will be a new experience and whatever else that.

So that's really stuff we will be working on tough between now and the end of the DP World Tour Championship. And then to an extent, what we want to do is to get -- end up with what is the right mix to achieve everything we are trying to do.

But clearly, what we are doing here is responding to a lot of the thoughts; those players have been fantastic and they have been so supportive of us and they have talked about ways in which they can help The Ryder Cup cause. It may or it may not involve this event; and it may involve, look at the commitment they have made to The Italian Open next week. They are helping mentoring with some of the young players:

Luke will talk about it far better than I ever will, but he is really keen on building out this kind of ecosystem to involve more and more players, feel they are involved in it.

So this is just part of that process.

Q. Sorry to address the elephant in the room; is it safe to assume that European LIV golfers won't be taking part in the event?

GUY KINNINGS: At the moment all we are doing is, as we said, the teams will be selected after The DP World Tour Championship, and that's something that Luke as captain and working with the vice captains and his team will work together to decide what the right makeup of those teams is.

Q. As a long-term supporter of golf on this side of the Atlantic and the United States, can I ask what you have made of what has happened in this sport over the last 12 months, and why do you feel so confident still supporting the existing tours and ecosystem rather than maybe turning attention to another tour?

DR. PAWAN MUNJAL: Well, Hero has been involved with both the tours now for many, many years. Hero continues to be involved going forward. At least until the next two years Hero is signed up with both tours on various events and that's what Hero is continuing to do, support both tours.

Q. What have you made of what's happened in the sport over the last year, does it sadden you or disappoint you?

DR. PAWAN MUNJAL: Well, there's a lot of stuff going on there which people like me, who are more focussed on our businesses, and mine is making and selling more and more motorcycles, and now moving from internal combustion engines to electric scooter and motorcycle. I'm really focussed on that and it's for guys like Guy to be able to answer those questions better.

GUY KINNINGS: All I'm going to say is we hugely appreciate the support. We have been through challenging times, not just for what you're referring to but you're dealing with at a time when you've got inflation rates; you've got pandemic; you've got war in Europe; you've got every challenge there could be, and we have hung on to partners here at the DP World Tour and The Ryder Cup who stuck through it, and that support is extraordinary and we truly value it.

One, that's because we have got great partners and they are loyal to us, but also, with all due respect, they wouldn't be doing it unless they get the financial return on that. So we have worked hard with all of the partners, whether it's good times or tough times, and that's why we call it partnerships. That's what we do.

All I will say is I'm very appreciative of Dr. Munjal's support and the support of others. There's a reason they are doing that, and that's because they recognise hopefully that there's a good product that they are investing.

Q. I'm guessing that the Tour came to you with this idea and asked whether you would be kind enough to sponsor it. And if they did, did you have any doubts as to whether you would rather have had another 72-hole stroke play tournament; and if you didn't, as I suspect you didn't, would you please be kind enough to explain the advantage to you of a match-play event?

And also, in sponsoring an event like this, do you actually have any concrete evidence, do you sell more motorcycles as a result of an event like this, or have your sales gone up over the last three years as a result of your involvement with the DP World Tour?

DR. PAWAN MUNJAL: When I started to make my comments, I started by saying that Hero is very focussed on innovation, not just in what Hero does as a business, but also, in everything else that Hero does.

For instance, golf. Hero has been involved with the DP World Tour now for quite a few years in innovative, new innovative methods of bringing new audiences to golf through The Hero Challenge.

We already have four-day events on various tours, quite a few of them. And we want to keep taking the innovation forwards.

So when the DP World Tour approached us, of course we did not respond to them overnight. We did our thinking and we did our own analysis, due diligence, to see how and why is this going to work. And finally, we both agreed that this is a good format, a good idea, for both the Tour and for Hero.

Let me clarify here: While I said making and selling motorcycles and scooters, yes, we are doing that. But all of this has a brand on top, which is Hero. There are some sporting disciplines like cricket, soccer, and some others where we get millions and millions of eyeballs, and those are our real customers as of today.

But the game of golf takes the brand to a very different level, a very different audience, very, very different stakeholders from just consumers who are buying our motorcycles and scooters. That's why we focus a lot on golf, and as you can see, with the events that we have on the DP World Tour, on the PGA Tour, the brand is not only existing and popular in our markets, but also in many countries where we don't even sell -- we might even never sell, but the brand is already there.

Q. So your presence in golf over the last seven to eight years -- (how long is the commitment to The Hero Cup).

DR. PAWAN MUNJAL: So whatever Hero does, it does not just for short duration or short bursts; it does for longevity and longer periods. So Hero's involvement in golf is not only from the year 2016. 2016, yes, 2015 on the DP World Tour.

But Hero has been hosting the Hero Men's Indian Open,

Hero Women's Indian Open for decades.

So Hero's involvement with golf is long term and Hero's involvement with cricket has been for a very long time, from the early 80s, and Hero's involvement with field hockey and soccer also has been now for long term.

Hero believes in sport. Hero believes in supporting sports persons and bringing in new audiences, new youth into the game so that their energies can be channelled in the right directions and don't go straight. Hero also had for many years an academy similar to Laureus, helping and supporting youngsters, kids, in many parts of India that which unfortunately for some reasons could not continue, but I'm sure welcome back into an academy of sorts to help and support the youth.

It very well matches our business, too, of motorcycles, so clearly Hero has long-term plans to keep supporting these disciplines.

Q. How long is the commitment? One year? Two years? Three years?

GUY KINNINGS: Multi-year. Certainly the next two editions, yeah.

CLARE BODEL: Thank you, everyone. Thank you Dr. Munjal, thank you, Guy.

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