

The Ryder Cup

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Rome, Italy

Marco Simone

Captains' Press Conference

Luke Donald

Zach Johnson



MARCO SIMONE
ROME, ITALY

STEVE TODD: Welcome, everyone to the opening press conference of the 2023 Ryder Cup here at Marco Simone in Rome. Delighted to be joined by our two captains, as is tradition. On my far right, Zach Johnson, for the U.S. Team, and to my right, Luke Donald for Team Europe.

Zach, start with you for this question, how was the journey over for the team?

ZACH JOHNSON: The journey in the last 24 hours was really, really easy. The journey getting here from a year ago, a year out, has been quite long and a lot of anxiety because I wanted to get back. This place never disappoints and I know the players feel the same way. It has everything to do with the golf course and certainly with Marco Simone, all of the amenities at the hotel but more than that it's the people that we are excited to come back and see.

The guys are ready -- well, I shouldn't say that, it's partially a lie. They are exhausted but they will be ready, but they are ready to compete. Excited about the week.

STEVE TODD: Luke, similar question to you. I know you've been here a couple of days yourself personally but now the team is on site. How are you feeling about the week?

LUKE DONALD: Very excited. It's been a long build up, as Zach said. It feels almost longer than a year ago since we were here on the grounds together for the Year to Go event. A lot has happened. There's been a big build up. I feel like my team is ready. Very excited about the team that I have and very excited about the challenge ahead, and looking forward to it finally to get going. I think the players are raring to go and it's going to be a fun spectacle.

I think everyone at Marco Simone, everyone involved with the Ryder Cup have done an amazing job. I've never seen stands as big as these. All the hospitality, how we are

being looked after at the hotel, of course, it's just been magnificent. I've seen most of the players today, a few are just arriving as I was leaving but I'll see them all tonight.

Q. My first question is Zach son John, there have been a lot of important victories from The European Team, and the U.S. Team has not won in Europe for 30 years. What do you think of that?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, I mean, it's difficult. It's hard to win outside of your comfort zone. It's hard to win against a team that's always been very, very formidable. It's really just that simple.

The European teams have been very stout, very good, very deep, and this year is no different. It's just difficult. I know what history says. I'm very aware of that. But at the same time I can speak confidently, and talking to my team, these guys are ready and want to embrace that difficulty and want to just look at this as a great opportunity.

The teams of the past are teams of the part. This is a new team with a new opportunity.

Q. Question for Luke. Are you confident that Europe will be able to assert some advantage this time, too?

LUKE DONALD: As captain, you have to be confident. I certainly have a lot of belief in my team. I know it's going to be a difficult next few days, is really is. The U.S. are very strong. We know that. We are coming off our worst defeat ever in a Ryder Cup. U.S. players are strong, high up in the World Rankings and they have some great partnerships and have had a lot of success. We have our work cut out but as I said, you have to have belief in your team that you're going to get them into a place where they are going to be successful. I'm sure Zach feels the same way.

I'm looking forward to seeing how it all unfolds over the coming days.

Q. In your career, which did you find it most challenging, to be a captain or to be a player?



ZACH JOHNSON: I'll go really quick on that one, definitely a captain. Yeah. When you're playing, you for the most part, you've just got to get ready, be prepared, ideally have your A Game, be a decent cheerleader for your teammates, that kind of thing. But this is a lot more difficult.

However, I've relished every second of it. Certainly doing it with the people that I surround myself, fortunately with, The PGA of America, certainly my vice captains, my wife, and obviously being around Luke and Diane, it's been an amazing journey.

Hard, difficult, but I love it Luke very similar answer to accurate. I think being a captain is far more difficult than being a player. A player, you do this day-in, day-out. This is a new experience for both of us to be able to manage a team, to be able to manage different characters. To come up with ideas that you think will help your team; it's been a labor of love in a way but a really fun one. I've tried to enjoy the journey as much as possible. I'm glad the week is finally here. It's been a long buildup but yes, it's a lot involved in being a captain, certainly, and certainly being a home captain, having some of those extra decisions that fall on to my plate.

But again, I've tried to enjoy every moment.

Q. How much of the Solheim Cup were you able to see over the weekend, and how much inspiration can you and your team take from the performance? I know a draw wouldn't be quite good enough, but the manner of the comeback and the performance?

LUKE DONALD: I caught a decent amount of it on Sunday. I saw a little bit of the start on Friday before I had to get on a plane to come here.

Didn't see much of Saturday. I was busy up here at the golf course. But watched most of Sunday. Yeah, obviously after a very tough start, and going down 4-0 to the U.S., I thought it was a very admirable come back. Some great golf by both teams.

You know, when I started watching on Sunday, it looked like Europe kind of had it in the bag. They got up early. The U.S. came fighting back, and really didn't look very hopeful at the end.

And then, you know, a couple players, Hedwall and Ciganda, some amazing turnarounds in their matches, and it was enough to get the tie and retain the Cup, and obviously couldn't be happier for Suzann.

Certainly a lot of the guys were talking about it. A lot of the

guys were posting stuff on their social, and you know, I think that's only good inspiration for our team going forward for this week.

Q. Any idea what your heart rate would be like in a similar situation come Sunday afternoon?

LUKE DONALD: It would be high. I think when you don't have control, when you're watching as a spectator as I will be, I'll be a captain but I'll be spectating, not being able to have any control over those shots, I think that's when you really feel nervous. We would love to be out there just hitting the shots. At least you feel that you have control and you have destiny in your own hands but you get to watch, and you rely on your players to come up with the goods, and obviously Carlota was able to do that, some amazing shots on 16 and 17 when it really mattered.

Q. In Whistling Straits, Steve Stricker's philosophy seemed to be these guys don't need big speeches, they don't need hype videos and maybe even the fewer big dinners they have to go to, the better. Do you adhere to that philosophy?

ZACH JOHNSON: 100 percent yes.

Q. And the second part to that question is, what does it say about the American psyche or whatever that this is a huge part of what Europe does every time, the passion, but it's more like it's better for you guys that it's clinical and ordinary and I kind of what it would look like week-to-week, what's the difference there?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, if you're comparing routine, as you said, clinical, pragmatic work to passion, I think we -- I think Team USA has incorporated both. I'm confident saying that.

I think what my role is, and I'm assuming Luke would have to agree, too, is that guys know what they are doing. They are professional golfers and they are the best players in the world. Many indises would say that, they are the best players in the world, depending which one you look at.

My role is to give them access to anything and everything they need, whether it's personnel, or you know, specifically a gym or recovery, their bed, whatever it may be. That's my role to kind of remove the clutter so they can go be who they are. That's what Steve did. That's kind of what we kind of tried to do within Team USA is to kind of lay everything out so that they can go be who they are, and with that, comes a natural or almost an organic team building, if you will. These guys want to be around each other. They are getting their tissue work done and they are all -- they have got music going with each other. They are

in the ice plunge, not together, but they are doing all that they need to do so that they can be ready come Friday. That's all I ask.

I mean, you know, I can remove only so much clutter. I want to take the burden off them when it comes to the periphery so they can just go work. It really is a simple approach. It's not like it's -- there are some systems in place that we have implemented, but it's not overly elaborate. It's just it's a nice construct that we can kind of live in. We think it's pretty effective when it comes to how we go about the week and the weeks leading up to, frankly.

Q. Historically it seems the matches have started with four-balls when it's held in Europe. Curious your decision to start with foursomes.

LUKE DONALD: Pretty simple really. We feel like as a team, statistically we are stronger in foursomes within our team than we would be in four-balls. Why not get off to a fast start? That's it.

Did you hear that last bit, sorry? There was a bit of a squeak.

Q. Just talking about players expressing themselves, Sam Burns put a video with USA shaved into his head. Have you ordered him to shave that off?

ZACH JOHNSON: That was a direct order, yeah.

No, I had no idea he's doing that. He's got great hair. I mean, I'd do it if I could do it. I just don't have any hair to do it.

So they can have fun with it. I've got two, three, four guys who have it short on the sides and long in the front and long in the back. You know what, hey, more power to them. Hey, if they are more comfortable, that's what it's about.

Q. What did you make of Jon Rahm's comments about Sergio Garcia and how it's stupid not to lean on his experience at the Ryder Cup?

LUKE DONALD: Obviously we know the situation with Sergio. He resigned his situation five months ago, and once that happened, he was ineligible for me to even consider him.

I know there was some stories about him trying to pay off some fines and stuff. Obviously we know what the DP World Tour rules are, and once you resign, can you not reapply for membership until the following year.

Again, those things will be decided in the future. Right now I'm just concentrating on my 12 guys that I have this week. My sole focus is dealing with those guys over the next six days and giving them the best opportunity for success.

Q. You have a number of players who are in great form and in the prime of their careers. Do you anticipate having some of those guys play all five, and on the flipside, could you see a scenario in which some of your guys get only one match or can maybe just play in singles?

LUKE DONALD: Well, in terms of playing five, I think there's some guys that certainly could do that, and we have done that in the past. This is a very tiring, taxing golf course. I think the weather is not meant to be too hot but it's certainly a warm weather week with hills, and it's a long build up, the Ryder Cup. These next few days, there's a lot of team dinners and practise and dealing with the crowds.

You know, it's meant to be pretty sappy. I remember as a player that you were really ready to go by Friday and you wanted to compete, but it's a long buildup. So I'm wary of some of that. I'll certainly be considering that but it's not out of the question that some people might play five.

I very much doubt that someone wouldn't play until the Sunday singles.

Q. For Zach, knowing the Europeans have leaned a lot on analytics the last couple of cycle, do you plan on devising pairings from the numbers or based on relationships or what guys tell you who they want to play with?

ZACH JOHNSON: We have had a group of individuals help us navigate the numbers and stats and data, if you will, since 2014 or 2015 -- '15. It's just one element of how we organise our system so yeah, you chew on it and you kind of ingest it, and you kind of figure out whether it's worthy of some of the numbers, and I guess you'd say results are worthy of implementing.

But it's not the only -- we deal in the objective and subjective. There's numerous factors when it comes to how we are going to go about our week, tandems, formats, etc.

Q. The one element to this that you guys can be most second guessed on obviously is the captain's picks, and curious if you can both address the pressures of deciding those guys, and how difficult of a process that was for you, and is as you -- as you go forward.

LUKE DONALD: Certainly I lobbied for six picks, which

can produce a lot of options in one way. But I felt like it was going to give us the best opportunity to get the right players for the team. You know, a mixture of really in-form players and a mixture of some guys that had experience, but you also wanted to look at the six who are also automatically qualified and try to be able to find some pairings within those through statistics and through personality matchups.

And then lastly, you're looking at what the course demands and people who have been successful on the golf course, as well. There's a lot that went into it and very happy with the six that I went with in the end.

ZACH JOHNSON: Very much along the same vein. Six picks gives you the ability to put a team together that's right for the golf course, that's right for the formats, that's right for the team room, etc. There's a number of factors involved there when it comes to those six guys. I've said it. It's not like we had -- and I mean this in full transparency. It's not like we had a first pick and a sixth pick. We had six picks that made the other six whole for Marco Simone this year.

So it really is that simple in the outlook; the process is not simple. But it's personality; it's locker room. You want the six guys that qualified that earned their way to take some ownership on the team as well. You value their opinions and their insights, and you just kind of form that all together and figure out what's best for this fall.

Q. Can I just follow on that? If there's pressure that you feel, obviously both of you guys, you're the final say on those things, and if a particular guy does not perform well, there's going to be second-guessing potentially or a guy performs very well, and you made an amazing judgment. Do you feel any pressure personally?

LUKE DONALD: Absolutely not. Again, I think this has been a process for me, about a 14-month process, a little bit longer for Zach, but I've been looking and studying these players and talking to my vice captains along the way, and we feel like we have the best people that are up for the job, and there's no second guessing now. It's too late for that.

ZACH JOHNSON: If anything, the six guys that I picked added confidence to what was already in place.

I would say that we all know that at this point anybody can beat anybody. It's not a matter of -- I mean, I understand the end result can go a number of different ways, but when it comes down to it, I'm confident in the 12 guys I have make the best team for Team USA this year, and it really is

that simple.

Q. You mentioned Tiger Woods has a peripheral influence and input for the team. What's that going to be like? Is he going to be involved in any video calls for the team room or last-minute trip over to Europe?

ZACH JOHNSON: I can answer the last couple there. No, Tiger will not be joining us in Italy. He's got a lot on his plate.

As far as conferring with him, communicating with him, I mean, we have up to this point, and he is one of -- he understands that now that our feet are on the ground, it's probably kind of best that we navigate this ourselves. But he's always on inner corner, and at this point it's more encouragement on his side, whether he's texting the guys or texting the vice captains and captains, he's there to encourage because he's very invested in what we do year-in and year-out with Team USA, and that has never ceased and I'm grateful for that. I mean, he's the best player of our generation. Thankfully he's an American. We are going to utilize his knowledge and his wisdom and his candor and his passion the best we can.

When it comes to the week of the tournament, if you're not in on it and inside the team room, inside the ropes, shoulder-to-shoulder with these guys, it's not fair to ask him questions. It's probably -- he can give us insights, don't get me wrong. At the same time, I don't know if that's proper and I think he would understand completely.

Q. Zach and Luke, I heard recently two American caddies talking about why Europe did well in this event and they said, slightly controversially, they said they thought Europe practiced their putting better; that the caddies were more moved, the players worked together better and they cited Sergio as being someone who putts better in a Ryder Cup than when he's playing on his own. Wonder what your reaction, each of you, is to that comment?

LUKE DONALD: I haven't heard that one before.

ZACH JOHNSON: I haven't heard that one either. I'm assuming Luke would agree with me on this.

Preparation for the Ryder Cup obviously goes -- starts way before we get here. Now, the actual tournament week, that preparation, that practise, obviously is vital. My guys, I'm very confident saying Luke's guys, know how to prepare for a tournament. Whether one putts more or less, chips more or less, wedges more or less, I have no idea.

Speaking of Sergio, he's one of the best Ryder Cup players



that I've competed against. It seems like his best golf has always come out in the most grandest of stages. I don't know what the reason is behind that other than he's -- certainly when it came to the Ryder Cup, he was a world-class player and he played his best.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I kind of agree with Zach. I wouldn't have thought these players really practise any differently for an event, a regular event, stroke-play event, for the Ryder Cup.

You know, Sergio, obviously he just seemed very motivated. His game seemed to elevate in this format. He seemed to always bring a lot of passion and love playing in these Ryder Cups, and he always has. You know, I think that was probably more the reason for him putting better, not changing the way he prepared or practiced during a Ryder Cup. I wouldn't see anyone really changing their preparation.

They are all world-class individuals that know how to get the best out of their games in the moments when they need it most. You know, whether that's a Ryder Cup or a major or PLAYERS Championship or BMW PGA Championship, you know, these are the big events that they want to elevate their games to, and I wouldn't have thought that their practise really changed much to be honest with you.

Q. A couple weeks ago, Jordan and his wife had a baby. Was there ever any concern he wasn't going to make it leading up to that? Obviously we don't know the circumstances, but were you ever concerned about that?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, no, I wasn't that concerned about it, given pieces of information Spieths have let me in on; that I think my confidence was pretty high that he was going to be able to participate.

Congratulations to the Spieths. Pretty amazing.

Q. Also, did the whole team come together, including Brooks, did he meet you guys or did he come on his own?

ZACH JOHNSON: I'm sorry?

Q. The whole team, did you guys all fly over together, and what about Brooks?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, so we all met in Atlanta. Given time constraints and I don't know, what's the word, when you have to take off and when you have to land, whatever you want to call that, the slides of taking off and landing,

time -- time-wise, it seemed it was best that Brooks meet us here. He actually beat us here.

But for him to fly from Chicago to Atlanta and for us to wait to him and go, we would have got in a lot later. I don't think it was even feasible. So he met us here.

But he was here two weeks ago with us during our practise session.

Q. They talk about home-course advantage a lot and the setup of the golf course. Do you think this setup is so different or unique that it presents much of a challenge do you guys?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yes, it presents a challenge. I think it presents a challenge to both teams. I think the beauty of Marco Simone is that it already has a canvas that is really, really good, and so whatever Luke and his team decide to do to it, probably only enhances that.

The course, the grass, is extremely healthy and very pure. The greens are fantastic. I mean, I'm very confident in saying that. I haven't been on them this week but they were really good two weeks ago. I can only imagine what they are like right now. The rough is penal. It's very difficult. But we've experienced that before. We'll experience that again, whether it's, you know, a tournament in the States or one over here.

Yeah, it's going to present a challenge. I think you have to have your entire arsenal working, and I think that's a great test.

Q. Much has been made about the rough. Why would that be more of a challenge to you guys, or will it be?

ZACH JOHNSON: I don't know. Maybe I should ask you that question.

I think it's a challenge for anybody that hits it in there. I mean, it is penal. It's difficult. I feel like fairways are a premium but you could probably say that any given week. Whether it's bermuda or bent or fescue or bluegrass, you know, you've still got to keep that ball in the fairway, and maybe more so here.

But I think it's well-defined. I think it is for the most part, with a couple blind shots but that's Marco Simone. That's not the setup. I think for the most part, it's right out in front of you, which is all you can ask for in a test.

And I think the most important factor that I'm confident in is my guys really like it. That makes it -- I mean, if you want to play it, that helps a lot. I think hats off to the grounds

crew. Whatever they have done to this point has been terrific.

Q. This is a two-parter, but when did Ludvig first get on your radar in terms of making this team, and secondly as someone who has played college golf before, can you put in context how impressive it is to have a guy who was playing a NCAA championship a few months ago on a Ryder Cup before even playing in a major championship?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, Ludvig certainly came on to my radar at the beginning of the year in Dubai. He was paired with Edoardo Molinari, one of my vice captains, and Edoardo was like, "We need to keep an eye on this guy."

When you play with certain players, you can tell. They have a certain talent that you see them hit golf balls and you're blown away, just by the different strike, the sound, the trajectory. How he can drive a golf ball is very, very impressive.

We just kept an eye on him. It was a long-shot, it really was. He was going to be in college through the beginning of June. He was obviously doing some amazing things. I think he was the No. 1 college player by a stretch out there. I went through college and for one or two years, possibly, I was the best player but I didn't really feel like I was accomplishing what he was. I think he was more of -- and especially in the last 20 years, if you want to compare him to other college players that have come out and done well, Viktor Hovland or Jon Rahm would be in the same sort of breath of fresh air in how good he is.

Then he turned pro and we just kept an eye on him. He had some great results. I played with him in Detroit. He was 9-under through 16 holes, which was pretty impressive when he knew I was watching him. He seemed to be very unfazed. He didn't finish that weekend off well but he's obviously young and a little bit raw.

Every week, he just kept getting better and better. Had a chance to win the John Deere. He came over, obviously, with a couple weeks to go in Europe. Had a very strong finish in Czech, and obviously went on to win in Crans.

Whenever the question was asked of him to come and commit and show up and play well under the most scrutiny, he seemed to perform at a very high level. He obviously a couple weeks ago was two shots ahead after three rounds in our biggest event in Europe at Wentworth.

His pedigree is just starting. He's just getting on his road. He's just starting to write his history. I think he's a generational talent. As I've said in the media before, I think

he's a very, very strong, strong player and I'm looking forward to seeing him lap up this Ryder Cup experience because it really is an amazing thing to be a part of.

Q. The fact there were so European fans at Whistling Straits, it was played in front of probably the most partisan crowd at the Ryder Cup. How much do you think that contributed to the severity of the defeat, and how important are the fans as the 13th fan this week?

LUKE DONALD: In the end we didn't perform at what we needed to to perform at, a good standard of golf. The Americans were strong and they played how they know they can play.

And certainly, being at home, we know that's an advantage. We know it's an advantage when you're in the U.S., and it's an advantage to us. But having that support, that crowd behind you, is helpful and it picks up your energy as a player and you can feed off it.

Absolutely we are looking forward to having a lot more support this time around. It was certainly lacking a lot because of COVID two years ago, and hopefully that is something that will certainly be in our favour.

Q. There's a myth built up around the team element of the United States, and that accounts perhaps for why the team has failed to do well in Europe, and you remember the 2014 team at Gleneagles when Phil had an altercation with the captain afterwards, and there was a task force announced to dig into just how America, the United States, failed in Europe and why they couldn't grasp this kind of central element of being a team. Do you think that's unfair, or is there something about the way that Europe performed in Europe that you -- that have taken something from that?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, I think you touched on a few points that are accurate there. No. 1, I do think -- I mean, I played on a lot of those teams. Unfortunately three of them over here where fortunately the experience was amazing but the result was not what I anticipated.

But every one of those teams, I wanted to be around the guys. There wasn't, from a camaraderie standpoint, that was not an issue. The passion was there.

I think what has -- just like anything, times evolve, and sometimes you've got to really dig deep and see if you can potentially make things better and more efficient and effective, and that's what's happened.

It does not mean it's going to result in wins, but what it

does is it allows the guys that are inside the ropes that kind of have been there and felt those feelings, maybe make some, you know, pretty crucial or even pivotal decisions.

I applaud The PGA of America for allowing myself and some of my peers before me to have direct ownership in how we navigate Team USA.

I think it's in a better place, and I think it's all because of that collaboration between us players, The PGA of America and some of the other powers that really know what's going on because we are passionate about this very Cup.

You learn from things. You learn from defeats probably more so than wins. I think you'll learn from both, certainly, but -- and since that point, I think the efficiency has probably amped up a little bit and you know, that's part of it. But when it comes down to it, you've got 12-on-12, all pros, all know what they are doing, and it comes down to execution, and that's the beauty of sport. That's the beauty of competition.

But yeah, make no mistake, I think we -- Team USA is arguably in a better place now than what it was seven, eight, nine years ago, whatever it may be.

Q. For both you guys, we know the singles decides these things. Curious how the pressure changes when you go from a team aspect to you've got a partner to lean on, and then you go to having to be by yourself. I'm wondering what the mental, psychological adjustment to that is, pressure, etc., or is there any because you guys are used to playing individually most of the time?

ZACH JOHNSON: Well, I'll go first.

There's definitely a comfortability just being by yourself out there with your caddie navigating the course, competing against the course, but also against your opponents. There's something just more -- you're just used to it, that's what we do.

And you can say that adds a little bit more freedom and peace. At the same time, personally speaking, I relish the Friday and Saturdays more so than the singles just because you are with a teammate. You are -- it's different. You are trying to -- there's more elements, and it's just that chemistry is fine. I understand your statement, Shed, about it's decided in singles.

At the same time, Friday and Saturday have a massive bear-ance on what happens on Sunday. I think every match is pivotal. Every snap in football is pivotal. Every, whatever, every play is pivotal.

So I think you've got to look at it from that lens.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I agree with Zach. I mean, obviously, there is 12 points for Sunday but there's 16 points obviously on the Friday and Saturday.

So don't discount that. I think that part of the Ryder Cup is very important. If you can establish a lead, that gives you a great opportunity.

When it comes to singles, we talk a lot about where people play in the lineup. Certain places are probably easier to play than other parts. You have to sort of prepare the guys at the end to know that they might have a pivotal role, but in the beginning of their round, it might be quite quiet. A lot of the guys usually follow the first few groups.

Again, going back to what you are used to, singles, but I think the guys really enjoy the foursomes and the four-balls having their partner there as a support, a support system. It's something unique about this event; that you can play with a partner and form relationships and form personality matchups and enjoy that experience.

So we obviously play a lot of individual stroke-play events, and so singles is a little bit more like that, but I think the guys really enjoy the team aspect, too.

Q. On the picks, Bryson won the latest LIV event and afterward he said he had done to merit a call. Can you explain why he wasn't, and some other players perhaps? I wonder, do you have any regrets about who you didn't call in terms of picks, and the did other LIV guys, other than Brooks obviously, come seriously into consideration for a pick?

ZACH JOHNSON: Yeah, I can answer all of those in a very simple manner. We kept a tally of -- we have a points system within The PGA of America, within the Ryder Cup USA. It's pretty evident that of how you garner points and which tournaments can accumulate points.

I basically, you know, I kept at one point -- I mean, I have my own probably a top 30 but when it got down towards the end of the process, it was the top 20, the top 25 guys in that point system that I felt like had the merit and certainly, well, should have my full attention. That's where I was. I was basically in the top 20, top 25 guys in points when it came down to formulating this Team USA.

Q. So because we are in Rome, obviously this is the site of a famous historical empire that never lost at home until some serious internal divisions weakened them and then the barbarians were at the gates and

they took over. This may be a jet-lag question; I desperately need sleep but Luke, do you worry that you're something like the last Roman emperor? And Zach, do you ever think of yourself as a Visigoth dressed and ready bear furs ready to attack?

LUKE DONALD: Well, history is always important. We know that, and hopefully the beginning of the history of the Roman Empire will be kind to European golf this week.

ZACH JOHNSON: Wow.

LUKE DONALD: Keep my answer short.

ZACH JOHNSON: I do love history and I do appreciate certainly what this country is about, and specifically this city.

I mean, Luke and I had the pleasure, I would even say distinct honour of walking the streets of Rome in Europe a year ago and actually hitting a ball by the Colosseum and the ruins and whatnot. I don't take that for granted, whether you're talking empires, biblical importance, whatever it may be, I mean, this history, the history of Rome, I mean, it's the eternal city.

All that being said, this is golf. I mean, this is sport. I'm going to keep it pretty simple. That's the way I operate. I'm going to let whatever drama you're trying to get into, I'm going to let that happen inside the ropes with our golf balls. Cheers.

STEVE TODD: Thank you, everyone.

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