

# The Ryder Cup

Tuesday, 26 September, 2023

Rome, Italy

Marco Simone

## U.S. Team

## Jordan Spieth

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We are joined by Jordan Spieth. You are no stranger to playing Ryder Cups in Europe. How much are you looking forward to this week?

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, quite a bit. At home we talk about the away Ryder Cups more than we talk about the home ones like with friends. I don't know if it's just less logistics going on for us. It's just you're hanging within the team. You don't have to worry about much on the outside like who all is coming.

And then it's unique because it's one of the only times the majority of people watching you are rooting against you for golf. And that happens in half the games for other sports, but for us it's once every couple years as an American with Presidents Cup and Ryder Cup.

So these are very unique, and I try to remember that coming in and really embrace that and try to have a lot of fun with it because although they are rooting against you to make putts, they are very educated and fantastic crowds that if you have fun with, they will have fun with you.

So I've had a lot of great memories from my two away Ryder Cups before and hope to generate some more this week.

**Q. As a team, or as a whole, can you take any confidence from the last time you did this two years ago, and if you can, is it possible to take too much confidence?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think you can, and I think you can also look into just how Presidents Cups have been approached, too, recently. I think just a culture of winning within a team of a decent number of the same guys is always a good thing.

I think people's form, golf courses, how good the guys are in that particular match across from you, that can always, you know, maybe throw out the sample size a little bit.



MARCO SIMONE  
ROME, ITALY

But I think no doubt it can be something that you try and draw on. Having said that, there's a lot of differences, as well, to two years ago. So I don't think it will be an issue on trying to -- or having too much confidence off of it. I think guys are very aware of -- we've been made very aware of how long it's been. And most, I would say, what, almost half the team wasn't -- over half the team wasn't born yet the last time we won over here. I think that's been made very clear to us over the last few months. It's not something we really care about, to be honest.

Most of the guys weren't on any of those losing away teams. I was on two of them, but I felt like I played good golf. And all you can try and do is have a winning record, and if everyone on your team does, you dominate the other team.

In part as a team, it can be a really nice kind of culture thing within the locker room, but individually there's a lot of freshness to this event within -- within our squad.

**Q. You mentioned sort of the uniqueness of the sort of negativity being directed at you in this event, as opposed to a normal golf tournament. Do you just try and block that out, or do you try and convert that into some sort of like "I'll show you" type of motivation?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I don't think either, and I really didn't mean for it to sound like I said anyone is listening to any negativity around it. I was almost making it a joke; we haven't won the Ryder Cup over here, but most of the guys weren't born yet, so that doesn't really matter to us, is what I meant.

**Q. I meant fans cheering for you to miss a putt.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Oh, sure, I gotcha. I also didn't say cheering for you to miss, but I know that's implied. They are rooting for the other team, and when you miss, it's a cheer for the other team winning the hole. No one is pointing at you and saying aha. I'm essentially saying it's respectful, great crowds, but they are hoping, for the most part, Europe wins, majority of the crowd.



Having said that and cleared that up, what was your question again?

**Q. Brian Harman at The Open Championship, he was a guy that -- he specifically called a guy out and said, That guy's comment fuelled me to show him that I'm actually going to do this. You have no history of that?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I'm sure I have. Honestly, I've been called a number of things, and nothing -- you just have to learn to brush it off. I mean, in the situations that Brian had, I think are unique and individualized, and I think that that continued -- isn't like -- doesn't continue to happen.

I haven't had it in that -- that specific in a non-team event. I can't say I've had experiences like that. I can't say that it would be something that would motivate me or not. In fact, I try and just throw it out of my head and just stick to what I'm doing because I think blocking out the noise is the healthiest thing to do, and that's because I'm a guy that -- I played a lot of matches with Patrick Reed, when he felt insulted, he turned the notch up. When I feel insulted, I don't turn it up or down. I'm just like, okay, they are drunk, move on. (Laughter).

I've also shouted plenty of things at sporting events at people that I have no reason to do, so I also try to say, pot and kettle, and recognize that it's all just sport and move on.

So everyone approaches it differently, and the way I get up and get going normally is not affected by that. But some guys, it is. I could be jealous of that in certain cases.

**Q. You know that we are in Italy, so our favourite sport is football. I think the support of The European Team will be more like football than the golf, frankly. Do you think this will influence the game?**

JORDAN SPIETH: If I went to a game.

**Q. That the atmosphere will be more football-like.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Oh, the atmosphere here? I hope so. That's what this tournament is about, so it's probably the most similar to like a football match of any other golf tournament, that's for sure. And I think that we enjoy that. It's an exhibition that we prepare like it's the biggest tournament in two years, and part of that is, you know, the fact that it's -- there's a lot of uniqueness to this event, and one of them is the crowd.

Coming to a country -- we played in France. I believe that it will probably be a bit rowdier here in Italy than it was in France. Having said that, I think in four years' time in

Ireland, you could argue it would be even more so than here. And Scotland was obviously maybe more similar to how Ireland will be.

**Q. You've been a part of some of these teams over the past decade. How have you seen the concept of pods evolve from when you first started to kind of what it is now in 2023?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think maybe my first Presidents Cup in 2013 was a little different, and since then I haven't noticed much of a difference. It's really, like we have -- you can't really have five or six different potential partners for every player. It's too much to try and figure out in a few days based on how you would be playing, so you come up with whether it's guys want to play with certain guys and won't play with others, or stats say these guys are a team and they like each other, or whatever it may be.

You know, the captains and the assistants, you know, they listen to the team, and then they do their own work and then you come up with some scenarios on one to two potential partners, especially in a foursomes format. Best-ball, it kind of doesn't really matter.

But in a foursomes format, you're trying to figure that out, and so it makes sense for it to just be groups of four, and I believe ours will get mixed and matched over the next -- I don't think we'll play in the same group we did today.

But again, to answer your question, you can only think of one that maybe was a little bit different, and even then, they had Strick baby-sitting me in 2013. So my experience was pretty much, I know I'm going to be with him and he's supposed to baby-sit me, so I'm just going to follow him around attached to his hip.

**Q. Firstly, is it fuel for the American Team, this 30 years of hurt, if you like, that you haven't won over here? And is there a risk that Europe may underestimate you because they may think that you're beaten already because of this great historical question?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I think you know the answer to the second one. I don't think there's any of that.

As I kind of alluded to before, not only were most of the guys not even born, the ones that were weren't even alive then. And I think to your point, saying that means it was a long, long time ago.

Rickie has played in three over here. I've played in two over here. Brooks and Justin played in one over here. We weren't on all those losing teams. I was on a couple of

them, but I played well. Justin played well. Brooks has played well. So it's not -- it doesn't matter to us, I guess, is the feeling. I don't mean to speak for everybody, but I would be somebody who could probably speak on that matter on our team.

I said it at Whistling Straits after the round. I said that this is really nice but until we win one over there, nobody can talk about a change in the Ryder Cup or the U.S. or anything like that.

Having said that, I don't think the Europeans are underestimating us by any means. I think it's going to be a really, really good match this year. I think they have guys that are playing fantastic golf, especially of late, and really good form with an unbelievable crowd behind them. And we've got a really tall task, but we have a phenomenal group of guys as well.

**Q. So that's driving you on, then; you said there won't be a real sea change until you win one over here?**

JORDAN SPIETH: That's me personally. I felt that way.

But I can't imagine -- I mean, probably Rickie feels that way. Guys who have played one and lost one over here probably feel that way. But it has nothing to do with 30 years of it. It's just a couple of them for me and one of them for some others.

**Q. Very, very quickly, you talk about some of the stuff you've had shouted at you in the past. I'm sure during your experiences, there must have been some funny lines as well; if you can recount some of the wisecracks?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I'll be honest, there's nothing that sticks out; but if someone said, oh, did someone say this to you, I'd be like, oh, yeah, I remember where I was.

But normally in good fun. I feel like I've been good to fans, and therefore I feel like I've been treated well in return. So any wisecrack was probably deserved and appreciated by me. And I'm sure if they caught me at a bad time, maybe I didn't handle it extremely well and probably laughed about it later.

I guess I try not to take too much on the chin and recognise that when I go to a sporting event, I'm sometimes that guy. Everybody has people they align with and cheer for. In our individual sport, you get to go watch them. You don't have to watch people you don't like. In team sports, people play away games and you root against them.

So this is just one of those times where we get that

experience, and again, if you just -- if it fuels you, go ahead and hope people are saying stuff. But for me it's just part of the game.

**Q. Two things, one of which is on J.T. Obviously a lot of speculation about whether he deserved a pick or not because his form was not up to his standard, but obviously he's had a great Ryder Cup record. What makes him so good in this forum in your opinion?**

JORDAN SPIETH: He plays really good golf, and I think he will this week. You know, you talk about -- I think he's kind of turned into a backbone for the USA Ryder Cup Team, and that doesn't mean that -- that doesn't mean he's on every one. I'm sure if you asked him, he said he didn't think he was going to be on, and I think would he have and maybe even already accepted that to a degree.

So I think he's going to embrace the opportunity. He worked really hard on a lot of things. I think he was able to try that out and had success with it a couple weeks ago. But to answer your question on why he's successful, he just gets the ball in the hole faster than other guys do, and that's how you win matches here and that's how you play good golf.

The elevated pressure and honestly the away games and kind of the opportunity to go like that, like he does, and to raise the crowd up, the home crowd, but also to quiet one and upset them here, he loves doing that, and it creates maybe just a little extra level of focus for him.

I've been beside him for these Ryder Cups, and he quite simply plays better golf than the guys across from him.

**Q. Unrelated, the giant grandstands, how is it different as a road game?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I wouldn't say it actually feels that different in a road game. I think it's a unique shot. It's like hitting a shot on 16 in Phoenix but in contention on Sunday, but you hit it a few times here instead of just maybe a couple times ever unless you play that tournament well every year.

**Q. Is that something you convey to the guys that haven't done it before?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I think that would be -- yeah, I think so. I think that's something that would help maybe what they expect. But it is just the first tee shot. I think Xander just said it. It really does mean the same as any other shot, but it's still worth embracing the spectacle that is the first tee of the Ryder Cup. You start hearing it while you're warming up and you know it's coming. You can kind

of have two attitudes about it, I guess.

But I don't think guys on the team need me to say, hey, by the way, this is going to feel like this. Because that's a 9-iron and this is a driver or a 3-wood and close your eyes, swing hard at the fairway and move on.

**Q. Congratulations on your son.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Thank you.

**Q. Was there ever any doubt you would be here?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Not unless things didn't go well but not as far as timing.

I guess we were safe but I don't really want to get personal. I was not prioritising my child's birth to happen at a certain time because of the Ryder Cup, but we knew it was going to happen because of certain reasons. But yeah, everything has gone really well and they are both doing great, and our son has been awesome. It's been great.

**Q. They are at home?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, they are at home.

TOM CARLISLE: Thanks for your time. Have a great week.

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