

The Ryder Cup

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Rome, Italy

Marco Simone

Team Europe

Nicolai Højgaard

Press Conference

STEVE TODD: Welcome back, everyone. Very pleased to be joined by Nicolai Højgaard from Team Europe.

Nicolai, your first Ryder Cup. Talk about the experience so far of being in the team room and being out on the golf course for 18 holes yesterday.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Yeah, it's a special week. You're sitting next to your idols and heros and you're going out preparing for a big week. It's pretty cool to be here and preparing and being in the team room and seeing the stuff that goes behind it. That surprise Luke made yesterday with our shirts next to each other and then Seve's in the middle, it was special and emotional, and that's what this week is about.

Q. You talked about some of your heros on this team have said if there's anything they could do to help you, don't hesitate, you can ask them anything. Have you been asking them anything, and what sorts of things have they been telling you?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I think the good part of all this is they have been in the same position that I'm in now. They got the rookies -- obviously Rory and Rahm and Rose, those guys have been here a lot. They were rookies at one point as well, and they had guys, they had questions. So being in the same position as them, trying to learn from the best is pretty cool. It's about how you prepare for this week going in as a rookie compared to when you're an experienced guy.

And yeah, they are all very good to me and the other rookies and how to learn to approach this week and prepare. Yeah, I mean, just like basic stuff, really. It's quite simple stuff you worry about, and they are pretty good at putting it down to simple things you could do to prepare the best way.

Q. What's the best -- (off mic)?



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NICOLAI HØJGAARD: That we all be in the same place. Everyone has been in this position where they have come in and be in the team room with guys you've looked up to your whole life, and suddenly you're playing with them, and you're asking silly questions that you don't probably normally would ask. And I think that's the cool part of all this is that we have all got the same feelings and same emotions when we play and being in that team room, and that's the cool part of all this.

Q. What sort of silly questions?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I mean, it comes down to simple things. I mean, what do you do when you go on the golf course, what do you do? All that stuff you don't normally ask about, but it's because this week is so special, and you want to ask a lot of questions and you want to interact with everyone all the time, and you want to be prepared when you get to the golf course and what do we do and how do we do it.

Because normally you know what you're going to do when you get to the golf course, but this is just an experience you would never imagine, and when you get here, everything is so big and so different compared to a normal week.

Just trying to learn as much as possible from guys who has been here a lot.

Q. Is there anything you arrived worrying about?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I wouldn't say probably worried but more about making sure that we are all part of the team and we are all interacting with each other and we all make that team room the best possible place to go. Everyone is very good at it, and you always are like a little worried or scared getting into a team room where you haven't been before, and you're getting into a team room with your idols, the guys you've been looking up to your whole life.

Sometimes you're here and you have to pinch yourself a little bit, but it's reality now and now it's about going and preparing those guys and get ready for Friday.

Q. What's the best thing you've experienced or the thing that's pleased you most since you've arrived here? Doesn't have to be golf-related.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I think being in that team room yesterday, Seve's shirt in the middle, and we all talked about all the guys and heros before us and keeping that legacy going and the DNA of The European Team. You hear about it, but once you're in that team room, you get goosebumps just talking about it, and what it means to Europe and European golf.

That's been obviously the biggest or the coolest experience.

Q. Do you feel confident to express your thoughts in that environment?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: I do, yeah. I feel like we've got a very good environment in that room. You can say whatever -- we all have the same goal. We are all part of the same team. We all focus and determine on the job ahead, and that's why I think it's such a cool place to go. It's where you go when you come for a little bit, is in that team room, and everyone is -- (audio interruption.)

Q. (Audio interruption.)

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: We are on the same team, so I would like to say we're both pretty good. He's in great form. He's been playing well. I know him pretty well, and we've played together a few times. So I'm happy that he's in my team.

Q. Your pronunciation and enunciation is very similar to Thomas's. Do you take the mickey out of him? Have you ever been asked to do an imitation of Thomas?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: No, I haven't, but, well, there's some good fun going on. Yeah, he's a great guy and a huge part of all this, and especially for me. So it's a cool experience just to share this together but also that we both are very focused on the job ahead. But we can still make a little bit of fun, yeah.

Q. Give us an example.

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: That's a tough one. It just happens naturally. It's not something you just write down and it's like a script. It just happens in the right moments, and that's part of being from the same country, speaking the same language. It's just a different vibe or a different -- you can always go in and say things, and when you're close as well, you know where to say the right things at the

right times and stuff.

It just happens naturally. But yeah, it's good fun.

Q. You are 22 years old and the youngest player in the Ryder Cup. Tell us how you feel as such a young prodigy playing in the Ryder Cup?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: Yeah, I don't think about it that much, actually. There's a lot of young players in both teams, and it's not really something I think about. But in the end of the day, it's a cool achievement being the youngest I think on both teams.

But I don't feel like I'm walking out there and playing like the youngest player on the teams. It's not something that's very important to me or anyone. It's just about 12 guys getting the best out of each other and performing on the golf course. And if that means you're 20 or 22 or 40-something, doesn't matter. It's just a cool thing to say that you're playing in the Ryder Cup when you're 22. It's not really that important. It's just more of a cool thing to say, I'd probably say.

Q. If you can tell us specifically some of the things Luke Donald has done for you?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: When I started playing a little bit in America this year, he was very good to me. We were out for dinners and lunch and always interacted during the weeks. That's probably where I learned (about) Luke. He's been a very important part of all this process, of course, but also to me, learning Luke and learning the environment a little bit.

That's the thing about America, I'd say you feel probably a little bit alone in some way because you're in a different environment you're not normally used to.

Yeah, I've spent a lot of time with him in the States, and he's been really good to me, and now being in his team is very special.

Q. Can you identify a point where you thought, I might be able to make this Ryder Cup Team? Was there a point you thought you would be a part of this?

NICOLAI HØJGAARD: When I started the season, I wasn't really thinking about it too much. We put a plan in place at the start of the year where this was one of the goals, and there was two goals on that list.

We tried to focus on how would we build our game to get in the Ryder Cup, and I could see slowly when the season went on that there were some good things in place and that

happened. And then when we got to Prague and Switzerland, I played some good golf where I needed to, and I feel like I've been doing that for a long time. Probably really haven't had like the really top results, but it's been on the right track for a long time. A couple good finish there probably put me in a position where I've probably done my part and hopefully that will be enough.

But I've always had in mind that I think I could be on the team and I get on the team golf-wise, and yeah, sitting here now is pretty special.

STEVE TODD: Any more questions? Are we all done? Nicolai, thanks for joining us. We wish you well this week.

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