

The Ryder Cup

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Rome, Italy

Marco Simone

U.S. Team

Wyndham Clark

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, all. We're delighted to welcome to the media centre here at Marco Simone Wyndham Clark, U.S. Open champion. Starting on that, you've won your first major, you're here making your debut at the Ryder Cup. Just sum up how that feels.

WYNDHAM CLARK: It's an amazing feeling. It's something that at the beginning of the year I didn't think was possible -- not that I didn't think it was possible. I just didn't have it in my goals. Then we have a great year and win two times, won a major, and then now here at the Ryder Cup.

It's been an amazing year and honestly something that I've always dreamed about. I'm just so humbled and blessed to be here.

Q. I saw an interview, I think it was a Sky Sports guy was asking you about your comments about Rory. I don't know if it's rubbed some people the wrong way, but are you surprised by the reaction to some of the comments?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, I want everyone to know, I think it was taken out of context. If you listen to the whole interview, I praised Rickie and said how much I respect him and how good I think he is and how he's one of the best players in the last 20 years.

And what I said was I think I'm better than him when I'm playing good -- if I don't think I'm better than every player out here, then what am I doing? If I'm trying to be the best player in the world, which is what I'm trying to be, I've got to believe that.

Right now, maybe I'm not. He's had a way better career than me, that's obvious. But I also have to have that self-belief that I can beat anyone out here.

It is kind of funny to me that people took it that way because they kind of saw that I'm better than him and I



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want to beat him. Well, of course I want to beat him and of course I believe that I can beat him.

Yeah, it's interesting how things get taken out of context.

Q. There's a lot of speculation about who's going to play with whom on Friday and Saturday. Just was wondering, not necessarily in Ryder Cup, but what do you think makes a good partnership? What do you look for in a good partnership?

WYNDHAM CLARK: You know, I've played only, let's see, as a professional, three or four times I've played in the Zurich where it was a team event, and of those times, the ones that I had success were guys that I really enjoyed being on the golf course with.

Golf is so tough day-to-day that if you hit bad shots or you have an off day, the last thing you want is your partner to make you feel bad about it or you feel added pressure.

I think making a great teammate is someone that's like, hey, man, I got you or just feeding you confidence and always makes you feel comfortable regardless of how you're playing.

That's one big thing.

Then another thing is just being really positive. Momentum is huge in team events, especially match play, and if you can always stay on the right side of momentum, I just think you can ride that wave and play really good golf.

Q. If I may go back to the opening question, the comments about Rory, it's great fighting talk before a tournament. If I could get your take on how players should not shy away from that, and what's wrong with sort of talking yourself up. You kind of alluded to it in the first answer there, but how you have to back yourself, but also as well as that, how you feel about those comments now that Rory is on the premises and you could bump into him at any time.

WYNDHAM CLARK: Well, the question, when the guy asked it to me, what am I supposed to say? If I say I think



he's better than me and he's going to beat me, then I'm going to get ridiculed because people don't think I have any self-belief; and then if I have self-belief, which I do in myself, people take it out of context either way, so it was kind of a tough question.

But to the part of running into Rory, I don't know if Rory saw the full interview or if he just saw the little snippet that everyone is running with or if he's seen it at all. I have not seen him or talked to him. I would love to talk to him because I imagine he'd probably give me some jabs here and there.

Like I said, I have so much respect for Rory. I've always looked up to him. Even when I was in college, Rory was winning majors. I'm like, man, one day I'd love to be Rory McIlroy.

By no means did I say anything that was trying to belittle what he did or be cocky or arrogant; it's more just self-belief in myself. I'd love to get a chance to play against him this week, and if it doesn't happen, that's fine.

Anytime I get Rory in a pairing, I'm excited because I like to measure myself up against the best players in the world and see how I fare.

Q. This is your first Team USA experience, Presidents Cup, Ryder Cup. I'm curious if there's been anything or what along the way has been the most surprising part of the entire process for you.

WYNDHAM CLARK: I would just say how much camaraderie there is amongst us. I'd say about half the team, six, seven guys, I was already really good friends with coming into this. And then when we did our team practice and then all the team meetings we've had and now flying over here and hanging out in these practice rounds, there's guys I thought I wasn't going to be that close with to where now I really enjoy spending time with them.

And then adding that aspect of having the spouses here makes it really fun, too, because we're all going out together, and it just seems like -- even though this happens every two years, it seems like we've been doing this for years together, which is really neat.

It makes me feel more comfortable it being my first time and makes the experience so much more fun.

Q. I know you qualifying for this team was kind of a formality; you clinched on points. But I'm wondering if you've had a moment to kind of maybe take in the accomplishment and maybe if you could pull back the curtain and give us some insight into maybe what that

moment was like.

WYNDHAM CLARK: Yeah, I haven't had that much time to sit back and think about things. The nice thing is after the TOUR Championship, I had these last four weeks off, and all the talk was about this, the Ryder Cup. That's when I kind of -- I'm like, oh, my gosh, I can't even believe that I'm here.

Then when we got here and all the cool things that go on, I just look back and I think about my dad sent me a really nice text, and he's like -- he goes, W, we used to watch these things and now you're playing in it. That's stuff that every kid dreams about, and now I'm doing that, it's amazing.

I'm still pinching myself every day, and once we get started, obviously I'm going to try to be in grind mode and be the best I can, but I'm still going to be hopefully soaking it all in because this is the pinnacle of golf. To be considered one of the top 12 American players is just such a huge honour.

Q. You mentioned that you played in the Zurich a couple times. Would that be the only time that you've played foursomes? Maybe discuss the awkwardness or the struggle or process of getting used to playing that format and maybe even how it's gone here.

WYNDHAM CLARK: I played foursomes in the Palmer Cup in college, but that was two matches, and that was when I was 19 years old and didn't really know the golf that I do now.

So yeah, the Zurich -- I've had four partners there. Three times we've had a chance to win with three different partners, and I think of myself as a really good match play player. I had a lot of success in college in match play.

But as far as getting comfortable with alternate shot, it is tough. The rhythm of it is so tough because you might not hit a putt over five feet for seven holes, and the next thing you know you have a 30-footer and you're like, I don't know the speed of the greens. Little things like that that makes it difficult.

But what I've learned and the success that I've had at the Zurich is if you can just constantly kind of play to bigger areas and just make it really easy for both of you guys, just always kind of be in play, don't take too many undue risks, you kind of feed -- you start to work your way into feeling good. And then as the round goes on, that's when I felt like we start making birdies, at least in the past, because we felt really comfortable, strung a lot of pars together and then you throw in some birdies.

None of us really have that much experience. If you really think about it, sure, guys play in Ryder Cups every year, but that's the only time they play, and then they play it two years later.

We're all the best players in the world, and when it comes down to it, we've just got to hit the golf ball where we see it and do what we do every week.

Q. The last four Ryder Cups have been blowouts to the home team. One conclusion you can draw is having 50,000 people cheering against you is kind of an obstacle. Curious, is there a way to prepare for that? Is there advice you can take to the players on the team? Is there anything the captain has said to get you ready for what it's going to be like Friday and Saturday?

WYNDHAM CLARK: You know, I think in previous Ryder Cups, I think our current team right now, we have so many guys that have not played a foreign Ryder Cup, an away game, if you will. I think that ignorance is bliss in my opinion.

We have guys like Scottie Scheffler and Max Homa and Collin Morikawa and myself that have played on Walker Cup and Palmer Cup teams where we dominated, and all we know in our years is how to win, both away and at home. Then all we've ever seen and watched is that we lose on the road for Ryder Cups, and so I almost feel like we have a little added chip on our shoulder that I think this year, I'm really hoping that that is the case.

I think that we'll come in and say, you know what, we've seen what not to do, and all we know is what to do. I'm hoping that's the case this year. I really think our team is really strong, and regardless of having the fans against us, I think a lot of us are going to embrace that.

I think a lot of us played other sports. We were all athletes in many different sports, and I think we all said, hey, I love that it's an away game. We feel like we can quiet the crowd, and it would be even more fun and more enjoyable to win on the road.

I'm hoping this is the year we break the streak, and I feel really confident in our team.

Q. I know you can't get into specifics, but do you feel like you know right now when you're going to play and with whom, or is that still up in the air?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I have an idea of who I'm going to play with and kind of when. We don't know Saturday and

Sunday. I honestly don't know if I'm allowed to express who I'm playing with, so I'm not going to, and when; but we kind of know what we're doing on Friday, but we don't know Saturday groupings.

Q. You mentioned the four or five weeks off, while the Europeans have largely played their way into form here at the Ryder Cup. Just curious, how did you prepare yourself physically, mentally, emotionally for a tournament like this?

WYNDHAM CLARK: Well, I took about two weeks off from golf. I had a long season. I won -- after winning Wells Fargo, that kind of changed the trajectory of this year. And then I win a major, and then that just threw everything out the window of what I thought I was going to do this summer and in the fall.

I went from probably having a lot of free time to having no time. And then we play three tournaments in some of the hottest conditions I've ever played in in the FedExCup Playoffs, and afterwards I said, I don't want to touch a club. So I took two weeks off, got my mind right and refreshed.

Then kind of really got into grind mode, practised and played quite a bit, worked on my equipment in San Diego with Titleist, made sure that was all good. Then last week played a lot of money games at Whisper Rock with a lot of good players, and then Max and I played best ball and alternate shot multiple days against other good players.

So that's kind of how I prepared. I think the European team, it's great that they got to play, but I also think they might be maybe a little mentally fatigued as this week goes on. This is obviously a very intense environment and mentally challenging, and then also you put in a pretty physically demanding golf course being so hilly and up and down that maybe come Sunday they might be leaking oil and we'll be fresh.

Q. You mentioned all the time you guys spend around your teammates. Do you guys see the other team at all, or do they keep you guys pretty separate?

WYNDHAM CLARK: I have seen the European team actually zero times outside of them walking on the range. There's been almost -- there's been next to none. There's been zero interactions.

Tonight we have a gala, and that will be the first time that we probably see them and get to really talk with them. But yeah, they keep us -- I think we kind of are on this schedule where whoever leaves first, the other one leaves after and vice versa, so we don't see them pretty much until tonight and then on Friday.



