

The Ryder Cup

Wednesday, 27 September, 2023

Rome, Italy

Marco Simone

U.S. Team

Max Homa

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: Next in the chair we have Max Homa from the United States team. Max, making your rookie appearance for team U.S. Just tell me how the week has been so far for you.

MAX HOMA: Yeah, it's been great being with all the guys. A couple weeks ago made this really exciting. I think everybody gets along really well, so I was itching to get back to laughing and doing all the stuff we've been doing.

It's cool being out here. They've done a crazy amount of things to the infrastructure, even in the two weeks since we've been, so it's been exciting to see this place with fans and good to play the golf course with fans around and looking at all the buildings. It's been a really cool week.

Q. We've been talking amongst us all week about why does this team feel different than maybe 10 years ago, 12 years ago from Ryder Cup teams, and the two things that pop up are camaraderie and friendship, like you mentioned. But then also Zach Johnson talked about, and this was talked about with Steve Stricker at Whistling Straits, just making it easy for the week to happen for everybody. Which of those two things is more important to you guys?

MAX HOMA: I'm not sure. I don't have much experience in this type of event, obviously. But I'm big on the camaraderie thing.

I played at a college where we had a ton of success, and we were all super, super close. My Walker Cup team we were all very, very close. The Presidents Cup last year, very, very close. I do think it helps.

In an odd way, this is such a selfish sport. It's always just us, myself and my caddie, and that's all we care about. I won't sit here and say I'm rooting against people, but if I'm one back and somebody is on the 18th hole and it could be my best friend in the world, I hope that they make a double and I win.



MARCO SIMONE
ROME, ITALY

It's a bit of a different dynamic here, and I think we crave that in a way. You crave being around people that you want to root for and that you enjoy spending time with.

As fun as it is at these events, so much of it is chaotic. It's so much going on. I've had hardly 15 minutes so far this week just to sit and absorb what's happened. You're just going and going.

I think the times in between where you are just sitting at lunch, as I just was with Harm and Sam and JT, Jordan and Wyndham, enjoying our time, I think that's a big deal.

When you're playing -- I think that just bleeds into when you're playing. I think you have massive trust in the person you're playing with, not only because they're a great player but because you know they're going to hit bad shots, you're going to hit bad shots, shrug it off and keep going. So I think that actually does play a large part in my mind.

Q. Wyndham was just in here describing some matches that you guys played at Whisper Rock where you guys partnered up. What did you take away from that? How did that help you?

MAX HOMA: I just think it's good to do it, just simply to get somewhat comfortable. Obviously it's significantly different.

I really enjoy playing with Wyndham. I think he is as talented of a golfer as you'll ever find. I just enjoy getting to be on his team, whether it's at home or if we're playing a practice round in a Tour event we have a little match.

It's fun watching -- when you're partnering with somebody -- we played a little alternate shot match against Joe and Colt Knost the day before we left, and it was just cool because you're like on the same side, you're kind of talking things through.

I enjoy asking people sometimes for their reads on putts just to see how they read them, bounce ideas on what clubs -- you're starting to see how their brains see shots and how they work. And if you get to play with that person,



I feel like you have maybe a little bit of a head start on if they do ever have a question or they want to talk over something, you kind of know what they like to hear, the shots they like to hit.

I've gotten to play a lot more golf with Wyndham in the last year or two. Anytime we get paired in a little game at home, it's fun because I know what shot he's going to hit and where he's going to excel. It's just also fun to watch somebody who's that great at golf on your own team. That's quite exciting.

Q. How important was the trip here a couple of weeks ago in terms of learning the course, and is it a tough course to learn say compared to any other place you've played for the first time in a tournament?

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I'd say basically it felt like a lot to come here, especially because myself, Justin and Zach were playing Napa. So it felt like a lot at the time. We play new golf courses four times a year typically or three times a year for the majors, and usually you get to know them pretty quickly.

But I will say when we were here, the first day we played, mostly all of us hit the wrong clubs on quite a few tees, and then the next day I thought I went out and played the golf course so much better because I not so much knew where I was going but more so knew I had to club down a bit on the third hole and little things like that.

At the very least I saved myself an entire day of prep. I think that was a big advantage, considering -- it is all the way over here and it made the trip feel completely worth it because I feel like it saved us all day of yesterday, and little things like that can go a long way.

Q. How many shots do you have to give Joe and Colt?

MAX HOMA: Well, they played best ball so we got to play straight up. But I give Joe two a side. I think Colt has been begging for two a side, as well. But I usually show him what he's made on Tour and get him to knock down a couple shots.

Q. Now ties in Ryder Cups, Solheim Cup, it's kind of a hot topic right now. Just curious your thoughts on it. It would be kind of like the Dodgers tying the Astros this year in the World Series and the Astros retaining the title. What are your thoughts?

MAX HOMA: I've never liked ties. They don't make sense to me. The whole point of any competition is to see who wins. So I do not like ties. I do not like the retaining thing.

I understand it, I understand why they do it, but I'm not a fan of it. You have a completely new team, for instance, at the Solheim Cup, and they tied. Someone should play a playoff.

I thought one of the most exciting things we've had, although it still ended in a tie, was Tiger and Ernie playing at the Presidents Cup. That was one of the coolest memories you could have of a team event. You would, I guess, crave more of that if possible, plus we don't tie very often in this thing. I don't know, people much smarter than me would have an answer for that, but I don't know, just ties leave a bad taste in my mouth.

Q. I've asked the last two guys about the concept of having people cheer against you, which is not normal in golf, and both of them were like, actually we kind of like it. We think it's great. At the same time, the last four Ryder Cups have been blowouts for the home teams, so there's something that having people cheer against you is somewhat of an obstacle. Just wondering what you think about when you take the course on Friday.

MAX HOMA: I guess I don't know what it feels like yet. It doesn't happen -- I guess like the concept of it, if you can flip it in your mind that every time they're not cheering, that's great. If you can get it into your mind that you'd like to make a bunch of people sad, it's also great. I feel like that's something I've been thinking of.

I nerded out and watched a bunch of the old away Ryder Cups on YouTube and just started really enjoying the silence because it meant that our team was doing well.

I think it's just kind of changing that in your mind. I do remember when I played the Walker Cup, the first hole of my first match I got to play, I thought it was going to be all just cheers for just myself that day, it was a singles match, and it was going to be quiet if he was doing anything great. And he made a long putt for eagle on the first hole, and the crowd went crazy. And I remember how much I hated hearing how loud they got for him.

It was a fun game of trying to change that, so although I won't get the cheers when I do something great this week, I will crave a lot of silence. I think that will be quite nice.

I'm not sure that it's just -- the home advantage has just been because of the crowds. I'm sure that plays a part. But I would argue there's things that have gone into it that swing the pendulum much more than just the crowd because I don't -- I can't speak for these other teams, but I know all the guys on our side would enjoy making a lot of the fans quite sad by keeping them quiet. That's just kind

of how I see it.

I think there's just more that goes into it.

Q. Just curious which Ryder Cups have you been watching? You kind of have to go far back to see --

MAX HOMA: Yeah, I've never seen us win over here. Paris obviously being the most recent. I watched Wales. I watched -- I've watched pretty much all of them that they had to offer after like -- it must have been like 2010 on they were all on there, most of them. Sometimes they just had matches from them.

But it was just fun to watch. It was different. My poor wife, I was just showing her what she was about to get into. I don't think she cared, but it was an excuse to just nerd out and watch a bunch of Ryder Cups.

Q. Is that something Zach Johnson has spoken to you about this week as a team, how you'll deal with it? And was that Walker Cup, was that what you would call the most hostile sporting crowd that you've actually performed in front of?

MAX HOMA: To the first one, no, he hasn't. We've been lucky, we have a lot of guys on the team who have played over here. And I think a lot of us rookies or players who haven't played over on an away team have just been asking them what it's like, is it different.

I know I asked Stricks a bunch about playing, what's the difference over here, what does he think the reason is we haven't been as successful and what's it like when the crowds are clearly against you.

So I just feel like we've been able to ask people. It hasn't been like a hot topic of discussion. We all know. Everybody has seen it. Just at the Presidents Cup there, they don't get big cheers when we're playing, so you can see both sides of it.

I play Waste Management every year in Phoenix where everyone is both for you and against you at the same time, so that is significantly more hostile than any golf tournament I've been to so far.

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