

# The Ryder Cup

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Rome, Italy

Marco Simone

## U.S. Team

## Collin Morikawa

### Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: I'm delighted to be joined by Collin Morikawa from the U.S. Team. Collin, first away Ryder Cup appearance for you here in Rome. Give us a sense of how the experience has been so far and what you're expecting with the home European crowds later this week.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, it's awesome. We're in Rome. You've got to enjoy it, be able to embrace it. Yeah, it's the first away match really in any big team competition. The ones I have had in amateur golf were never really this big and kind of on a neutral site. So just knowing that the fans are not going to be for us, I think I'm going to look forward to it.

When I played The Open two years ago in '21, the fans weren't rooting for me, and it is what it is. We're still going to have some fans out here in the red, white and blue, and you've got to embrace what it is, and that's just an extra task that we're going to have to step forward to.

At the end of the day, you play good golf and you win your point and you move on.

**Q. I asked Brian Harman about this, but this is kind of a new situation. You're going to have 50,000 people cheering against you. Anything you can do to prepare for that? Is there any precedent in your life that could get you ready for this, or is it like, we've got to go see what it's like?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: The Open was the closest thing to it. We were walking to every tee, and everyone was rooting for Louis and not me. But when you win it, now they do root for you.

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter. Things like people cheering, you do hear it and you do draw the energy, but it's almost like you know they're cheering for the Europeans. But you're still going to have the fans out there for the U.S. Team that are going to be able to push you through, whether it's one person or 50,000, having that one



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means the world.

Those people are coming over here probably from the United States to root us on and watch us play some golf and hopefully win the Cup back. Just knowing they're coming over here to watch, that's the excitement we're going to get out of that.

**Q. You're an analytical guy. Why have the last four Ryder Cups been blowouts for the home team? What do you think goes into that? What do you think is the single biggest factor?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I could really only talk about two years ago when I was on the team, and we just meshed well as a team. We got along. We knew what the goal was. The goal is to win. You do whatever it takes, sacrifices. You push your blood, sweat and tears out there.

It's nonstop everything. This is a long week with all the things we have to do, but at the end of the day it's all worth it, come Sunday, if you've got the Cup in your hands with your team, everything is worth it in this kind of seven-day stretch.

**Q. Jordan had a good quote two years ago at Whistling Straits after you guys won where someone was bringing up the talk of American juggernaut, going to win the next 100 or something like that. He kind of pressed pause on that and said there's still unfinished business because until you win one over here you really can't talk about things like that. Now that it's two years later, do you kind of agree with that assessment, that this one is -- not more important, but in terms of that kind of talk, in terms of dynasty talk?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, look, history speaks for itself. You can't erase history. Once it happens, it happens. We're always going to talk about it. But it's how do you learn from that, and I think all the captains and the way the U.S. Team has kind of been going forward since whatever it's been, a handful of years, we're making adjustments and we're finding ways to make it work.



Look, their team is great and they're playing some great golf, and our team is, as well. It's just who's going to use the energy and use the buildup and momentum of this week to show up on Friday and be ready to play some golf.

Yeah, that's really all I can say about it.

**Q. Besides hitting good golf shots, what makes a good foursomes team?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: A foursomes team? I mean, I played with DJ obviously two years ago, and it was just -- everyone is different, so everyone has a different personality. It's whether you're able to just kind of mesh with each personality.

I think that's a huge factor of being able to go out there with your partner and just understanding what makes you feel comfortable. You can feel comfortable on the setting, but you can have someone that's there and you just trust them.

So me being that rookie and the young guy on the team -- I still am the youngest, I think, but having DJ there, nonchalant, going out, hitting drives, he was hitting it all over the place in the practice round and there wasn't one worry. Just having that extra confidence.

But I think in a foursomes partner it's just always being in the hole. Even if you're out of the hole, hit it in the fairway, give yourself a putt for par, just always giving yourself a chance. Because foursomes, you just never want to give holes away, and that's how a lot of matches are won in foursomes.

**Q. What do you consider to be the most pressure you've ever been under as a professional? Invariably, if it's a close match, it'll always work its way down to one match left on the course that decides it, which is a ton of pressure. Would you welcome that?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Absolutely. The most pressure I've had, that's a good one. I don't know.

Look, I think what Detroit taught me this year is that I still love the pressure. I still love being in those moments. I believe I can hit those shots in that moment. I believe the rest of the 11 players on our team can hit those shots. Even though I lost the playoff, I hit every shot how I wanted to in that playoff.

That's all you can ask for. Sometimes you're going to get the bounce; sometimes you won't. Knowing I can do that, I'm absolutely up for the task, but I think everyone on this team is up for it, as well, and we're going to have to. We're going to have to step up and be ready.

**Q. Having played the course, what do you think will be the key to success here? Accuracy off the tee, putting, getting out of the rough?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think the rough was way worse two weeks ago when we all came. They've definitely cut it out. They've taken out a lot of bushes for a lot of spectating, for a lot of walking areas. You still need to hit the fairways, but I think you're going to need to find some momentum and make birdies.

There's a lot of short holes. The par fives are very gettable. A few drivable par fours are gettable, obviously, and you're going to have some birdies that you just need to make with three wood, five irons, three wood, six irons. So there's going to be a lot of birdies, and you've got to keep your foot on the pedal and keep it going.

**Q. How do you see the undulation on the greens? A lot of it, right, on the greens?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, there's a lot of different slopes. There's a lot of tiers. Yeah.

**Q. What's your favourite part of the Ryder Cup?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Two years ago, winning.

Look, wearing your country's colours, wearing the red, white and blue, showing up every day knowing that you're playing with a team, there's no better feeling. There really isn't. When you're able to put everything together, game plan comes together and game plans are always going to change, but just hanging out with these guys and just learning that you're a team, and when it all comes together, there's no better feeling.

**Q. Is there anything you would change about it?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: About the Ryder Cup? I've played one Ryder Cup, so I wouldn't call me a vet. No. I wish it could just continue -- it's a long week, but if you can spread it out over like a week and a half and get through things and get on a normal schedule, there's no better feeling than just showing up on Friday and just going to that first tee and bombing a drive out there.

**Q. Why is camaraderie important? We hear it talked about a lot throughout this week, but as it relates to the way you go out and play and compete in the Ryder Cup, why does it matter? Why is it important to you?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Well, I think when you compare it to -- look, we're such an individual sport, but we also have a

caddie with us, so I wouldn't hire a caddie that I don't get along with because that would be hell for five hours every single day for the rest of my life.

It's like anything else; this is just a bigger team, so getting along with the team, everyone meshing well -- it doesn't mean every person has to get along, but at least have someone around that you can kind of free up, that gives you access to being able to enjoy the moment and enjoy being with the team. If you don't enjoy being with other people, it's going to make it harder.

That doesn't mean you have to be like an extrovert versus an introvert. It's just knowing that the team cares about you, and everyone does. That's the biggest thing is just knowing you're 1/12 of this team or 1/100 of this team, and with everyone else, with our captains, vice captains, wives, everyone else that's a part of this that puts this together. That's really important because if you don't have that, then you're going to show up and you're going to feel like it's just all on you or you have to do more than someone else, but that's just really not the case.

**Q. I know you're a veteran of one, but it seems these grandstands on the first hole get larger and larger every year. What do you recollect of your experience the first time you teed off on 1 two years ago, and how different do you think it'll be on the road?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I remember we showed up, it was before sunrise. We showed up at 4:30, 5:00 in the morning and people were slowly filling the stands and they started singing before we could even get out of our locker room. That's the coolest thing, and this locker room is even way closer to the first hole so we're going to start hearing that before we even show up. Obviously not American songs, but I think it's awesome. It shows what the Ryder Cup is about. There's that energy to it.

I'll be honest; I thought the buildout was going to be bigger. It still is big, don't get me wrong. I just thought it was going to be like really, really big. It's big, but...

**Q. This might be too personal in nature, but --**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I love how you're leading these questions.

**Q. I'm apologising in advance. With the \$200,000 you have for a charitable contribution, I'm curious if there has been any discussion about Lahaina which has a connection obviously for you but also to the Tour with Kapalua and west Maui?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I've thought about it. I've got

a couple -- not projects, but a couple things. At the U.S. Open this year I was talking about the Maggie Hathaway project that a bunch of people in Southern California and SCGA and USGA are all helping with, so that's a big part for me.

Lahaina, obviously what has happened obviously touches the heart, as well. I haven't decided how I'm going to distribute everything yet, but those are two that I'm going to continue to focus on, not just from this but just continuing forward and seeing how much I can help out in really any way.

**Q. The other one, which is not the least bit connected, I'm curious when you made your first team in '21 and you guys started a group chat, group text, were there any numbers that you did not have?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: A lot.

**Q. How are you doing now in '23?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: We're doing better. I still didn't have a few, but we're doing much better.

**Q. Care to reveal which two you didn't have?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I definitely didn't Harman's, I can tell you that. I don't think I had Wyndham's. I think those were probably the only two I didn't have.

**Q. Two years ago were you and DJ simply a product of the analytics where they paired you together, or was there something personality-wise?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I don't really know. I was on the range, I remember it was the second round of the BMW at Caves Valley. Strick gave me a call like five minutes before my tee time. It was really odd. He didn't realise I was playing golf that day and said, how would you like to play with DJ? And I was like, of course, like I'd love to.

I loved already playing with him, and it made sense. I knew I would get along with someone like that. It would be really easy for me to get into the scope of what a Ryder Cup is.

It just kind of kept going. We played our practice rounds together, we played some matches together, and there we go. Played pretty well.

**Q. Which do you think is more important, personalities meshing or the data side of it, optimising the skill sets?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: There's both. You can argue both ways. If any two of us on the team are playing really good golf, it doesn't matter what the data says, I think.

But the hard thing is that we do revert back to our data and revert back to our averages at some point. Whether we're going to bring our "A" game or maybe our "B" game or some guys will have their "C" games out here, we don't know.

That's just how you kind of play through the week and then figure out and balance, okay -- like DJ and I, we were playing really well through the first day and a half, so they put us out in best ball. They told us we'd be a terrible best ball partner. We did just fine. If you're playing good golf, it handles itself.

**Q. What's the most interesting thing you've found out about a teammate in close proximity this week, and what have you made of Brian Harman close up?**

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think Brian -- what I've learned is that I'm still very young and I have a lot to learn because Brian Harman knows a lot of facts. He spits facts out of nowhere. He's always questioning me about random things that I have no answer to.

Even though I finished college, I have a lot to learn from him and everyone else.

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