

The Ryder Cup

Monday, 1 September, 2025

Farmingdale, New York, USA

Bethpage Black Course

Team Europe

Luke Donald

Shane Lowry

Matt Fitzpatrick

Jon Rahm

Ludvig Aberg

Press Conference



Q. Just to clarify, what airport are you in?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I'm in Amsterdam.

Q. Just tell us when Luke let you know and just describe, you played so well, just the emotion of getting that confirmation, the news of confirmation from Luke?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it was after the round yesterday. It was one of those that I felt like obviously I had played well the last few weeks, and obviously I had a couple of good showings over here in Europe when it probably mattered a little bit.

Obviously to receive the call is always exciting, and like I said, it's what I want to be part of; the 12 best European golfers for this Ryder Cup cycle, and to be named as one of them is always a huge positive.

Q. When you were asked to play in the British Masters, did you consider it a positive or a negative sign, and were you still in doubt over your place right up until then?

MATT FITZPATRICK: There was a combination of feelings, really, David. Playing both of these, this has been my fifth in a row, which is obviously pretty unusual.

I kind of registered with the idea that I was going to play the British Masters and Switzerland about April time when I wasn't playing well and thought I might need to make a big push to try and get the Ryder Cup.

I had a conversation with Luke, and you know, said to him, Listen, I know I've been playing well but I'm thinking that I need to manage my schedule here from an energy standpoint. I might miss British Masters and play Switzerland. It just gives me an extra week of kind of rest.

He asked me to commit to the British Masters. That was important to him, and obviously that's important and that's something that I want to make sure that I'm doing the right thing as well.

CLARE BODEL: We have Matt Fitzpatrick with us. Happy birthday for a start, 31st birthday today. Celebrating two things, your birthday and being back on Team Europe. I wonder if you can share with us how you feel today and then we'll go to questions.

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, it's obviously great to be back on Team Europe. It's always obviously always a goal at the start of the year. Obviously the start of my year, it wasn't going to plan. So it was well out of my head to be honest, and obviously managed to turn my form around to make the team.

Yeah, obviously delighted.

Q. Could you just talk about when Ryder Cup became part of your thought process? You said early in the season it was far, far away from your thoughts. Wondering when it became something that you thought was realistic.

MATT FITZPATRICK: I would probably say after The Open, after a good result there, and I apologise for walking and talking, I'm boarding a plane back to the U.S.

Probably after the U.S. Open championship, the finish there obviously really gave me a lot of confidence. I was pushing to make that Top-50, as well, and that was obviously important. I think it was probably July, and obviously that's still not far off until the Ryder Cup qualification closed. So obviously it was still pretty late in the process, really.

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Yeah, it was obviously the right thing to do, and you know, I had two really good weeks.

Q. You're as aware as anyone about your unwarranted record in the States in the Ryder Cup, but you always felt perhaps you would do better if you were a four-ball player as well. Is that something you'll speak to Luke about and you're particularly driven by?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Yeah, I think my game has changed a lot. I know I spoke about it a lot at the British Masters that 2016, I will openly admit that I probably wasn't good enough to be on that team. I wasn't probably playing well enough. The golf course was big and demanding and was very different compared to this year and the previous couple Ryder Cups that I've played.

In 2021, I actually felt like I played pretty well. Me and Daniel Berger were 6-, 7-, 8-under even in the singles and I lost in the last. And I felt like, again, I played pretty solid at the last Ryder Cup, to.

I think for me, it was probably some good play but not necessarily got the right results.

Q. What generally has to be very different from Whistling Straits to this time around in the U.S.?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Can you just say that one again?

Q. From Whistling Straits, what has to be different generally for the team this time in the U.S. to the last time? I know the circumstances are different but what has to change?

MATT FITZPATRICK: Like you say, I think the circumstances are different. I think obviously the team is different. It's a team that's already played a home Ryder Cup together which is huge, I think, and from a team chemistry standpoint.

I think the other thing is, if I'm being completely honest, guys have just got to play well. I think obviously Luke and his vice captains have got an important task of picking six players, but I think for the most part, the majority of the time, the team tends to pick itself based on experience and form and previous results during that Ryder Cup cycle.

But I think for me, I think the biggest thing is just play better, and I think that's the one thing that the U.S. Team did very well in 2021. They played extremely well, and you know, we just didn't.

Q. There's obviously a significant improvement in

your form between the start of the season and the latter part of the season. Can you put your finger on that, on what it was that was most significant in that improvement?

MATT FITZPATRICK: I think there was a lot of things. I think I was actually driving the ball quite well at the start of the year but wasn't capitalising on that. I wasn't hitting my irons close enough, and then you miss it in the wrong spot, it makes the short game much harder. You don't get up-and-down, you miss a 6-foot putt rather than you make a 6-foot putt, and you're behind the 8-ball on a Thursday morning straightaway.

I think that's what happened now is I've been able to drive it similar, if not a little worse, if I'm honest. But my irons have been completely different. I've given myself a lot more chances and the more chances you give yourself, the more chance of making them.

I think that I'm a good, solid putter, and you know, historically my stats have showed that. So I think being able to give myself those more opportunities, managed to give myself a chance of making more birdies and finishing higher up the leaderboard.

I would say the biggest thing is my approach play. There's a few different technical things that really changed for me and resulted in obviously a much better form over the summer, and managed to capitalise on that with making the putts and hitting the chips close at the right time as well. I think that was the big turnaround.

CLARE BODEL: Shane, just sum up for us how it feels to be back on Team Europe.

SHANE LOWRY: Obviously I'm chuffed. You know, it's always a big part of my goals at the start of each year, especially a Ryder Cup year is to get on the team.

I got pretty close to making the team this year. I was disappointed not to do that but obviously very happy that Luke gave me the call. Yeah, on the team again. So all roads lead to Bethpage now.

Q. Just when it comes to winning away, which is getting even harder it seems and the crowd is obviously a huge part of that, what is acceptable and what isn't acceptable from the crowd, and do you trust a New York crowd to stay the right side of that line?

SHANE LOWRY: Talking about acceptable, unacceptable I don't think you can actually single things out.

I feel like when you're prepared for something, it's much

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easier to handle it. So I think my first Ryder Cup away, I wasn't really prepared for mentally what it was going to be like playing against 50,000 people along with the 12 guys we're actually playing against, you know, what that was going to be like. When you hear cheers on the course, it's actually a bad thing at an away Ryder Cup, so stuff like that.

I honestly do feel like -- and I know because I've not been a definite in the team over the last few months, I'm probably not as clued in as to plans Luke has in place for us going forward over the next few weeks. But I would imagine there's going to be a lot of things done between now and the first tee shot on that Friday morning to get us ready for whatever is to come.

There's been a lot of talk about what the crowds are going to be like and how bad they are going to be. But, hmmm, I don't know, I think there's going to be a lot of European fans there. I said it last week when I was asked about it, we play week-in, week-out in America. We all live in America, or most of us do, anyway, and we have all got a lot of fans in America. I don't think they can turn on you that bad for one week, but that remains to be seen.

Q. From your own sporting family background and what team sports means to you, obviously it's in the DNA, and also in terms of this is now your third Ryder Cup, what can you bring to the team in terms of leadership?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, team sports is something I always grew up with, and obviously Gaelic football has had a huge part to play in my life and my family life and my upbringing and I think that's where I get my competitiveness from. I think I get that from my dad and what he was like as a player.

And what can I bring to the team? I think I bring -- honestly, I think I bring a lot. But like a sense of, like, togetherness. I feel like I'm one of the players that I'm always in the team room. I'm always there. I'm always around. I enjoy the aspect of being around other people and getting everyone together and getting everyone to kind of open up and be themselves. You know, at the end of the day, we're kind of all working towards one thing and that's winning the Ryder Cup.

So yeah, I think I do bring a sense of, like, togetherness in the team room, and I feel like I'm someone that people can open up to and talk to, as well, if I'm needed.

Q. Just on the team, 11 of the 12 guys were there last time. What difference does that make to the task ahead this time, and do you feel that you guys should

maybe be considering yourselves favourites rather than sort of having a bunker mentality of "Us Against the World" in an away match?

SHANE LOWRY: I think what's great about 11 of the 12, and obviously Rasmus was there in a decent capacity last time as well. He spent a lot of time in the team room and a lot of time in and around us. I suppose they are thinking about having Rasmus there the last time is he's going to play Ryder Cups in the future and they were right on that.

It's great to have him here this time. Also, we have a lot of continuity like in the backroom setup as well, whether it be the captains, vice captains, and the people we're using in the background, as well.

So I think it's just going to be an easier kind of get together for the team when we all come together, we all feel as one pretty quickly. Whereas sometimes it can be kind of hard to do that when you play an individual sport all year to come together and all be one together quite soon. I think that's what's great about the continuity we have from the last one.

And as regards to us going in as favourites, I think no team is going to really go in as favourites for away Ryder Cup. I think it's a hard thing to do. I think Rory hit the nail on the head at a press conference the last time. You know, but I think we'll put in the work and we'll put in the preparation over the next few weeks, and even though we might not go in as favourites, I'm sure that we're going to believe that we'll be able to do it.

Q. Just from a personal point of view, obviously it's been a bit of a frustrating year for you with a couple near misses that were understandably hard to take. If you were part of a winning team, regardless of what you might do at Wentworth or Dubai, does that mean you could look back on this year as a pretty positive one?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it's hard to explain sometimes and people might say it's not the right way for me to think but honestly, I say it all the time. If I'm sitting there at the end of September with the Ryder Cup or whenever it finishes, I think it will be a good year regardless. I put a lot of eggs in that basket, and that's just the way I am. It's a big, big part of my career. It's a big part of my goals. Always has been.

But yeah, if we're sitting in New York on the Sunday night with the Ryder Cup in our team room, I'll be a very happy man.

Q. You've spoken about the togetherness and coming together as one. Luke has a two-day trip planned after

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the BMW. What will that trip look like and how important is that?

SHANE LOWRY: I think it's important and we showed how important it was the last time. I think we got together and we did our trip to Rome. Then when we arrived in Rome for the Ryder Cup, it felt like we had never been apart. It felt like we just sort of floated into the week and cruised into the week.

Yeah, it is a big part of it. Obviously to get to see the golf course outside of the mayhem of Ryder Cup week is very important as well. When you get to a Ryder Cup week, it's just a bit different and it's just not the same as a normal week. Practise rounds are a little bit more challenging than normal, and yeah, so it will be nice to see. I think we are playing a couple of rounds that week.

It will be nice to see the golf course, and kind of figure out a game plan for how we are all going to play it. I'm sure by then we'll know who we're going to play with, or to a certain extent, anyway. But yeah, those trips are very, very important.

I can't remember if there was another part to that question.

Q. What you thought that trip would look like in terms of obviously you all know each other quite well so there's not much bonding that needs to go on but I presume it's not all about the golf, that trip.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it's about coming together and I'm sure there's going to be certain things in place. Even some guys might change caddies over the last couple years. Just getting everyone involved. It's not only the players, making them feel like they are a team. It's everyone. At the end of the day, the week of the Ryder Cup, it's a lot more about the whole backroom team and getting everyone involved in making -- it could be 40 or 50 people all making us feel like we're one and having everyone working towards one goal, and that's what I think those two days will be great for.

Q. Your debut was in Whistling Straits in 2021, which was a strange Ryder Cup during COVID and obviously the restrictions of people traveling so there was very little European support. But I would imagine New York will be different because there's a big Irish community in New York and Long Island. It will be different this time around, and I'm sure you're looking forward to that.

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, Whistling Straits was a bit of an outlier where pretty much next to no European fans -- I think I was asking somebody only the other day, on

average, how many European fans turn away to an away Ryder Cup, and they were saying something along the lines of 15 percent. You're still talking about 6,000, 7,000, 8,000 people a day will be cheering for you. So there will be pockets of European support that we will have and we will definitely need.

Yeah, it will be a bit different, and obviously I feel like I'm a different player than I was in 2021, a lot more mature and obviously got two Ryder Cups under my belt now. I feel like I said at the start, one of the first questions, I feel like we'll be as prepared a team as ever was going to an away Ryder Cup. A lot of confidence comes from preparation, so the next few weeks, with all the work that's going to go into it, I think that will build confidence week-by-week in the team and in your fellow teammates that we can actually pull this off.

Q. Just wonder what you expect from Bethpage when you get there for your reconnaissance mission. Do you expect there to be no rough and fast greens or will they just try and make it as birdieable as possible?

SHANE LOWRY: Historically that's what the U.S. have tried to do with the golf courses. I played the PGA in 2019 and I do remember the course went quite difficult, but I don't really remember much else about the course.

I do remember it being long. So even if -- I don't know how short you can make it or how birdieable you can actually make the golf course or what they are going to do. So I think that's what the two-day trip will help us with. Yeah, historically that's what they have done and I wouldn't be surprised if they did that again, but we'll just have to wait and see.

CLARE BODEL: Welcome back to Team Europe. Sum up for us to get that call and be back on the team.

JON RAHM: It's an honour. It's an honour. I must say, really impressed with somebody like Tyrrell to have been able to qualify with such little scoring opportunities. I wanted to be one more and I wasn't able to get it done. You never want to leave anything up to chance but I'm glad I played good enough to impress Luke and have his trust put in me one more time. So I'm very excited. You don't want to believe it right until it happens, and anything, right, any decision can be made towards the end.

So very, very thrilled today to be announced, and like I said earlier, we were way more emotional than I thought it was going to be. But any time I start seeing teammates and highlights of the Ryder Cup, it's a wave of emotion that is hard to explain. Certainly happy I started an early day today and I'm going to have all the energy I need for the



rest of the day for sure.

CLARE BODEL: We certainly appreciate you getting up early.

JON RAHM: I'll do that any time.

Q. Can you expand on why it means even more this time?

JON RAHM: I don't know if I meant more, but I haven't needed a pick before. So this is the reality of like in the past, when the rankings were down and I was qualified, it was the same feeling. But I think it's more, exactly, the feeling of knowing it's a hundred percent; the confirmation that it's happening.

And the images, not only mine but Shane's and then the guys afterwards. I want to live that again. I want to live that as many times as I can for the rest of my life.

So it's really rewarding in that sense to enjoy that and part of that is to be able to continue that Spanish legacy that I'm really proud of and hopefully I can keep upholding.

Q. Do you almost appreciate it more because you didn't know for sure? I'm sure you had a pretty good idea but you are never sure.

JON RAHM: Yeah, even getting the call from Luke, the captain himself tells you you're in, I don't know, seems so much more felt so much more today.

I think it's related to that, right. It's not being guaranteed and a hundred percent. It's just even if it's a small percentage, it's a percentage that it may not happen. As somebody that has high expectations, I don't like that feeling.

Again, it's very, very rewarding. Not that I need any extra motivation for the Ryder Cup. That was a very nice feeling.

Q. It's going to be your fourth Ryder Cup. You've got a lot of experience playing in that environment, expect it to be hostile. I wonder how you used to cope with those conditions and how you expect to cope with them at Bethpage Black, and what is the difficulty about playing in that environment?

JON RAHM: I'm not going to lie and say that I've been perfect with handling my emotions with the crowds in the past. But I think the more I've experienced, not only in the Ryder Cup, but in regular events, as well, not the easier it gets but the better I understand how to handle things.

Last time at Whistling Straits, I think fact that it's a team event knowing that I'm going to have the home crowd against me, feeling that, it's what happens in any other sport, right, in Europe, the U.S. and every country in the world when you're playing rivals and you go in an away game, the crowd is going to be against you. I think just understanding that I know that's going to happen and I know I'm going to hear a lot of things that I don't like.

But as part of this sport, right, I feel like the Ryder Cup, when it comes to certain things is one of those times where you do feel similar to some world stages. You think of a final of a Champions League, if somebody were to be able to host it in their home country, there would be a very big disparity on the crowd.

I try to base myself on that, knowing that, okay, starting 95 per cent of the fans out there want me to lose and they are going to try their hardest to cheer against us and say things we don't like.

But at the same time, there are some creative people out there that are fun and if you can use some of the funny things they say, though they can be hurtful in a good way, you can almost use that energy to help you out.

So I'm really looking forward to it. Plus, I'm going to say, the best people in New Yorkers a lot of times are fairly similar in character, and usually when I've gone to that part of the country I've gotten along very, very well and I've done really, really well in the northeast, as well. So I'm looking forward to it.

Q. Curious, every time the Ryder Cup comes around, there seems to be this battle to claim underdog status and make the other guys the favourites. Looking on paper, it seems fairly closely matched, and you guys have got the Masters Champion, the LIV Champion, the Champion of THE TOUR Championship. How do you call it, who is favourite? Are you guys quite happy to go in there and actually front up to the U.S. and say, you know what, actually, on paper, this is possibly ours?

JON RAHM: Oh, man, the on-paper thing in sports, especially in golf, it doesn't always tell the full story, and it's so hard to guess in this sport, right.

If I had to say because we're playing in the U.S., we're always going to be the underdogs. It's a hostile environment in a sense for us when it comes to golf -- lost my train of thought, sorry. (Talking to child in the room).

CLARE BODEL: You were talking about the hostile environment.

JON RAHM: Yeah, so I feel like that we're the underdogs because of the environment we're in. New York can be intense. They want to get the Cup back. Just because of that, I would like to think of us as the underdogs, at least myself.

Q. Another one on the atmosphere that you're going to face over there. Luke spoke a lot about the preparation. Has there been any specific techniques or measures that he's taken? I know he's spoken before about not going out and inciting the crowd. I'm not sure what that looks like exactly. But what has he outlined to you guys so far?

JON RAHM: Well, he has given us the tools we need but we are all very different personalities, and some people in the world of sports somehow do better when they actually get into it with the crowd and when they incite the crowd and they can feed off of that. Other people do not.

So it's different for each one, right. He stayed in contact with some of us for quite a while and he gave us a lot of options and things to read about and things that we can practise. It's nearly impossible in our day-to-day events to get ready for it because you don't ever really feel like you're going to have that many people against you in a single session in any regular golf event.

So the most you can do is mentally try to get ready and prepare. But like I said, since we are all different, he's given us different tools to understand how we need to react. It's a personal thing, right. So each one is going to need a different thought process.

Q. Do you identify as the guys within The European Team who would benefit from being called very rude things?

JON RAHM: I don't know. I don't know. I really, really don't know. I don't know if anybody really ever loves it, but I think in the moment, you can use it as a way to channel some energy into the game. I wouldn't really know.

It's hard to say who will love it or not. Sometimes it can be the unexpected people you can think of. Some of us that are maybe a little more calm and can use that energy to their advantage, I don't know. I can give you examples in other sports, but in golf, I'm having a hard time finding from the people who are qualified for this Ryder Cup.

Q. You of all people don't need to be told about the importance of Seve to the Ryder Cup. Just wondering, how important can he be in an away Ryder Cup?

JON RAHM: That may be such a great question for Ollie to answer since he lived a lot of those things with him away. I think channelling the spirit, we saw what can happen at Medinah the Sunday at Medinah and understanding the energy that can be brought and what can be done on the golf course with his mentality. I think Seve is unanimous, is that the word? Ingrained in the DNA.

Q. Synonymous.

JON RAHM: Sorry, I've been doing a lot of Spanish lately so my English is getting worse. He is fully engrained into the DNA of the Ryder Cup. So the most we can channel that spirit.

And a lot of it does fall onto the captain, and Luke did a fantastic job when it comes to that in Rome and again having Ollie there in person and telling you the stories makes it even more real.

But I think it's going to be really important, that grit and determination that somehow getting it done no matter how you are playing tee-to-green, is very important, right. I think somebody earlier mentioned the '95 Cup at Oak Hill, and that might be one of my favourite videos that I've seen online. I think it's 40 minutes, but you can see most of the front nine of Seve against Tom Lehman and Seve is nowhere near the fairway the entire day and somehow is all square through nine holes with a chip-in miraculous shots and recovery shots and things like that.

Even though he lost the match, the fact that he is all over the place and he didn't on the 12th hole is a miracle in itself, and how many times he's been able to do that and then actually get the win, it's impressive.

So it is going to be a fight every second of the day. You've just got to realise and remember that fight on every shot and hopefully the outcome is positive.

Q. I just want to go back to the Star Wars affiliation that Nick mentioned. I'd like to know where it all started.

JON RAHM: It's a wedding gift from a friend. She painted it for us.

Q. Where did it all start for you and what level of nerddom are we talking about here?

JON RAHM: Not as much as you would think, but I do have a Darth Vader behind the computer screen a little bit away but it's there.

I started when I was young, unlike a lot of the fans, because I was young enough but old enough at the same time to see it, my first introduction to Star Wars was the Phantom Menace, which for the hard core fans might not be the best way to go in.

But I was young, and seeing the second trilogy, Episodes 1 through 3 and the light saber fights and all this before I even understood it is what got me in, right.

One of the characters that is, again, maybe not the most liked as a kid, it was my favourite, Jar Jar Binks. So it's how I got into it, right. I was a kid and that character is actually really, really fun.

It was actually during COVID, Kelley had never seen the movie, and I made her watch all of them. And we watched the newest trilogy that Disney put out together and I got a new appreciation for the original trilogy. But obviously I'm always going to be a little bit biased towards that second one since it's what got me into it.

CLARE BODEL: Okay, on that Star Wars interlude, we can let you go. Thank you so much for your time.

Our last player in the room before we go to Luke Donald is Ludvig Åberg. Welcome from New York. It's going to be your second Ryder Cup and your first away Ryder Cup. Wonder if you can tell us how you're feeling right now.

LUDVIG ÅBERG: Yeah, feels amazing. First off, to be a part of the team. They say once you make one team you don't want to miss it, and that's very true. I felt that same way the Monday after Rome, and I felt like I want to be on that Bethpage team.

Obviously it's going to be a little bit different having my first experience in Rome at home, home crowd, and this one being away. But just as excited about it. I think it's going to be amazing. I think it's going to be a great stadium for golf, and yeah, looking forward to it.

Q. Just wondering, going back to your famous win against Scottie and Brooks, you're probably the last person who reduced Scottie to tears. Have you ever spoken to him about that, or how often do you think about it?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: We haven't talked about it. I know we actually played a practise round -- this was last year at Pebble, Pebble in '24. We played a practise round together and he beat me on a hole and he started celebrating, which implied to me, kind of going back to that match in Rome, which I thought was a cool touch.

But Scottie's great. He's an unbelievable player and an unbelievable ambassador. I think I was just very fortunate to come out on top together with Viktor that day.

Q. Would you expect to be reunited with Viktor Hovland?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: I'm willing to do whatever Captain Donald says. I think we have a great team of 12 players and the personalities, especially now, basically 11 out of 12 players are coming back from Rome, we have a great chemistry. Would I love to play with Viktor? Absolutely. But I'll also be open to do whatever Captain says I need to do.

Q. You had such a great debut in Rome individually. Wonder how you hoped to better that and top that this time around.

LUDVIG ÅBERG: Yeah, you want to win points, right. That's why you're there. That's why we have been picked by Luke, is just to get points for the team. I think when we play for something that is bigger than yourself, something that is bigger than playing for your individual performances, I think it means a little bit more.

Yeah, absolutely, I want to perform and succeed and I want to win matches. Ultimately that's what you want to do as a competitor, and on that stage, there's nothing else that you want to do, right.

Q. Is there more pressure and responsibility this time around than last time, a rookie that had just turned pro?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: Yeah, I felt tons of pressure obviously, last time, as well, sort of justifying Luke's pick. I was aware of it, too. It was not necessarily a controversial pick but it was definitely out there with just having turned pro about three months earlier.

So I felt a ton of pressure to be able to live up to that and to be able to perform and sort of justify Luke's pick.

This time around, I'm a little bit more experienced. I've gone through a lot of those environments, and obviously Rome for me was an amazing week. I felt like it kick-started my career a little bit. This time around, it's going to be different. The dynamic is going to be different in the whole environment and the whole team feel, I guess, just because it's an away one.

But I'm just as excited to go play.

Q. I wanted to get an idea of how important the team



bonding session was two years ago, and what you think you'll gain from the session you guys have scheduled for this year?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: It was amazing. For me, again, going back to that being my first couple of experiences and interactions with those guys, it was really cool for me because I had only seen those guys play on TV. I didn't have a relationship with them. But for them to open up, be vulnerable, tell them about very personal things felt like to me, hey, you're one of us, you're a part of it, and I felt very welcomed from the start.

I think that's what team sport is about. It's about leaning on your fellow players and your fellow competitors, and that was an amazing experience, and I'm sure we'll do something along those lines again in the next couple weeks.

Q. Almost on a similar theme, but I just wonder how important the Wentworth week is going to be for this European Team in terms of the competitive reps that it will give you. We obviously saw how rusty a number of the Americans were going into the first morning in Rome because of the relative inactivity. How important is that week?

LUDVIG ÅBERG: Yeah, absolutely. First off, Wentworth is one of my favourite tournaments. I think it's an unbelievable golf course. It's such a cool event and environment. On top of that, last time I played it two years ago we were paired together and we played the practise rounds together and we had dinner at night together, and I think that's really important.

I think that's really important to just sort of get those moments, not necessarily on the golf course all the time but also dinners at night where you can talk about different things that are not necessarily related to golf.

But then you also get the competitive reps, like you said, playing together in a tournament setting. I think the more you play together with your partners and with your teammates, I think it's just going to benefit you, and I think we learned that in Rome and the weeks leading up to Rome. I think it's a great thing to do that again this year.

CLARE BODEL: Welcome, Luke. It's been an exciting day and we have our complete team. Give us a sense of how you feel now that you have your 12 players set for Bethpage Black.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, obviously delighted with how it's panned out. Quite unusual, I suppose, to have such continuity from two years ago but I think it's hard to argue

with these 12 guys. I'm extremely excited to have them and move forward now as a team.

These last few weeks are always never the most fun or a bit stressful for a captain but excited where we are, and the preparations have already happened and will continue to happen for Bethpage.

Q. There seems to be a lot of positive messaging from yourselves and your players about the crowd and almost embracing it and when you're talking about the New York crowd respect hard work, effort and grit, can you win the crowd over as well as the Ryder Cup?

LUKE DONALD: I think he can only be ourselves and be authentic to ourselves. I think if you look at New Yorkers, they appreciate that. They appreciate you going out there, fighting hard for your team. They will be very passionate and supportive of the U.S. We are quite aware of that, and we'll be ready for the noise.

But again, when I took this role on two years ago again, I knew I had to come at it from a different angle. This wasn't going to be the same challenge that it was in Rome. Different challenges require different strategies, and certainly this has been in the back of my mind for the whole captaincy since being appointed for a second time.

Q. Message seems to be: Nothing to fear out there.

LUKE DONALD: Well, I mean, for me, in my individual career, if you're prepared and you're ready, we understand what's going to happen to us. It's our reaction to that that's really important. So we all have fears. We all have anxieties and we all find Ryder Cups pressurised. But these are top athletes that understand how to walk towards that fear.

But yeah, again, you want to embrace what a Ryder Cup represents and then part of that is embracing the crowd and embracing that atmosphere, and I think certainly these guys will be ready for that.

Q. Perhaps the most prominent New Yorker in attendance, on Friday, at least, will be President Trump. Have you factored in the great Donald into your planning preparations, team meetings, etc., and what impact he might have on the day and how that could impact an already amped crowd?

LUKE DONALD: I mean, you know, President Trump obviously loves his golf and for him to be there means -- it just shows how big the Ryder Cup is; that the President of the United States would want to come and grace us with his presence.

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

Again, we're all expecting the crowds and the energy and the environment to be very loud, be very spirited. You know, I think he'll add to that. But again, there's something that we've been expecting. We know he was going to come for a few weeks, we heard, and we'll be ready for it.

Q. I thought you were the great Donald. Curious, the makeup of your team but the final picks that you had were influenced by the fact that it's going to be in New York and not a home came where it might be easier for a rookie to move into part of what the Ryder Cup is.

LUKE DONALD: I think it was reasonably significant. You've got to look at history, the past people who have performed well in America. You have to understand who you are playing against, what course you're playing, and what the environment is going to be like.

So I think understanding all of that had a big factor in choosing the guys that I did. They are very adapt to play in week-in, week-out with a lot of these guys. They understand that they can go head-to-head and they are familiar with these guys. They know their games, and I think they feel like they can compete with these guys.

So, yes, that was significant in my thinking of why they deserved to be on that team.

Q. Of all the phone calls you had to make, was Matt Wallace's the most painful? Obviously we saw him in tears yesterday.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, they are all very difficult for different reasons. Yeah, I called him 10 or 15 minutes after that emotional interview he did in Crans, and I felt very emotional for him. It just shows to me what the Ryder Cup means to these guys and how they are trying to desperately make the team and be a part of it.

You know, Matt has made no secret of that over the years, and he's come very close a number of times. I think that call was tough but to be honest they are all pretty tough. I think these guys all really wanted to be on that team.

Q. When you listen to Jon Rahm talk about that you have been providing the players with different tools to try to deal with what's going to be happening at Bethpage, and you've talked about the fact that you're going to have to do things differently than you're going to do them in Rome, can you give us some insight into what any of that means? What are you doing differently? What tools are you providing the players?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I'm looking at it as an overall

strategy for what's required at Bethpage, I think for me looking at Rome and how well it went is one thing but tackling an away Ryder Cup is different.

For me, I wanted to up the communication, obviously not just for the 12 that make it, I didn't know what that were, but the communication amongst a group of players that I thought was going to be on that Ryder Cup Team or have chances to be on the Ryder Cup Team, and just talking a lot about the environment that we're going to face.

You know, again, I think the more you can talk about it, the more you can get it in their heads, the more they can start to prepare and be ready for that environment. Upped communication, especially about the environment.

But then, also, these are the greatest kind of days of our lives. We really unbelievably enjoy the weeks of Ryder Cups. They are so different. And so for me, as fun and as good as Rome was, I want to make this an even better experience for them. So think of new ways for them to really enjoy the week.

Q. Can you outline a little bit of Diane's contribution? I'm led to believe that she was behind some of the jokes that were put on the players' pillows in Rome. A, is that true, and B, what other things does she do and will she be doing in Bethpage?

LUKE DONALD: I think we always look at the Ryder Cup as one big family. We are not just 12 players, vice captains. We look at the caddies. We look at the backroom team. We look at the families of the players. We want to create an experience that will be very memorable for all of them, and Diane's role is obviously very important in terms of that. She is really, really good at trying to make a week fun and show that we care and show that we spend time on thinking about them, the personal touches.

You know, but her role this time is slightly different being an away Ryder Cup, lady captain, she obviously had a big role in creating the event, the gala event that we had in Rome together. She implemented the first shutting down of the Spanish Steps in 40 years. What she did was incredible, the lengths she went to. That is obviously a little bit more now on Jillian, Keegan's wife, to organise the gala that the joint players get together.

But I think the role that Diane has is just as important in terms of making sure everyone has the best week ever.

Q. So much comment over the last five days has suggested Keegan has helped or emboldened the U.S. by not playing himself. Do you agree with that from



your point of view, or were you hoping he did pick himself to play as the captain?

LUKE DONALD: Well, I think, you know, obviously there's been a lot of intrigue about whether Keegan would play or not. There's sort of a big story line -- that was obviously a big story line at his press conference on Wednesday with his picks.

You know, again, we understand Keegan in whatever role as a playing captain or captain, is going to bring a lot of energy and spirit to the Ryder Cup. He loves it and is very passionate about it, and now whatever role he plays, captain, he'll be very good at it.

I think obviously today is a little bit more about my picks, my team, so I don't want to go too much into it. But I think he's going to be a very prepared captain, and we've got to be ready for that.

Q. You appointed Paul McGinley as a strategic advisor. What has he brought to your captaincy so far? Can you give us any kind of inkling of what have been the tenets of what he's been telling you, without giving too much away of your strategy?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, lots of regular communication with him but lots of regular communication with lots of other people, too. I think as a captain, you always want to immerse yourself in as much information and pick out bits that you think are really helpful.

I think Paul has a very good strategic mind. He thinks things through. Obviously proved himself as a very, very worthy captain in 2014. Yeah, my first great partner in 2004, playing in the four-balls, he was great to play with.

But yeah, I think I'm always getting messages from Paul. Just have you thought about this, have you thought about that, you know this might be something to consider. All kinds of things like that, which again, I appreciate so much. People care about the Ryder Cups and they care about our chances this year and giving ourselves opportunities, and whether it's Paul or other people, those learnings that I get from them are really invaluable.

Q. Can you reveal anything he's told you that you hadn't thought of?

LUKE DONALD: There's a few things, and there's always that, "Yeah, I ticked that box a year ago, Paul." He's happy but he knows I'm on the ball.

But yeah, absolutely, you're always learning from people, and I'm not going to go into specifics but he's been very

useful to have in our camp.

Q. You've spoken about the importance of continuity with 11 out of the 12 same players but do you lose unpredictability if you need to spring a surprise somewhere if you need to?

LUKE DONALD: Just because we have a very similar team doesn't mean we are going to roll out the same pairings or the same lineup in foursomes and four-balls. I think over a two-year period, these players do change. Their profiles change, and we'll adapt to that.

This isn't certainly a question of rinse and repeat from Rome. Again, I've mentioned this many times, the strategies and the thought processes and I'm trying to come at in this one is quite different to what we did in Rome. So again, it's nice to have a continuity within the team, the memories, the experiences that we got to celebrate together.

Again when it comes to this Ryder Cup, it doesn't necessarily mean we are going to have the same partnerships.

Q. Did you watch the Americans announce their picks last week, and if you did, can you explain why your boys look so joyous, and the Americans looked liked they were sitting through a policy board meeting?

LUKE DONALD: I did watch it. I think that's part of my job. We are all interested as spectators and fans. They do their's in a little bit different way where the six guys are always on the screen. So it's probably not that easy to have a smile on your face for a total of an hour's time.

But yeah, very happy to obviously see our guys look very interested and excited about the challenges ahead for the Ryder Cup.

CLARE BODEL: Thank you very much for your time, Luke, we'll let you get on and thank you for joining today.

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