

Betfred British Masters hosted by Sir Nick Faldo

Wednesday, August 20, 2025

Sutton, Coldfield, England

The Belfry Hotel & Resort

Luke Donald

Quick Quotes

CLARE BODEL: Welcome to the interview room here at the Betfred British Masters. We'll talk about the venue. You played the Pro-Am. How are things looking out there?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, looking great. We had a really enjoyable evening last night with some of the legends. So Nick, Sandy Lyle, Ian Woosnam, Sam Torrance, just listening to stories, and obviously when you think of The Belfry, you think of some of those Ryder Cup moments. Great to be here. Looking forward to the week.

Obviously half an eye on my own game but half an eye, obviously, probably a full eye or two on the Ryder Cup but it's fun to be here.

CLARE BODEL: You mentioned all those legends here. This is a venue that has a link to the Ryder Cup, and like you say, the points race ends here. Does it really feel that we are almost there?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, we are. Obviously a lot to play for this week. And yeah it's been a long journey but we are finally near the finish line. We are excited, obviously to, watch this week, watch next week, and finalize the team.

Q. Just talk in general how you see your team shaping up at the moment. How many players, feel free to name them in, contention for the wildcard picks?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I'm very happy with how things are shaping up. I think we've got off to a very strong start with all those witness in the U.S. We've had many, many performances in recent weeks of every time I feel like I turn on the TV, there's a bunch of good, strong European players contending: Justin obviously winning a couple weeks ago; Tommy coming close many times, and playing really well and goes on and on.

Obviously excited about the five that are locked in. There's a bunch of guys on that team that are still performing well, the Viktors, Ludwig, Sepp, Shane, Fitzy has been playing really well.



But you've got some other guys that are trying to force their way on to the team, like Marco last week, really tremendous performance, looks very much in control and tough circumstances against a crowd that was. Harry Hall has been playing great. There's many others, as well, that obviously are still really on the radar. It always happens in Ryder Cups. People make a push at the end and want to be part of the team. Even though it's a headache for me in terms of how many players are giving themselves a chance it's really a good headache.

It's a good opportunity for me to see all these players and how much they really want to be part of it. Yeah, I'm excited to see how these next couple weeks turn out.

Q. Harry Hall, tell us, what consideration -- (indiscernible.)

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I think Harry, what he said recently -- certainly I've had many, many conversations with Harry, starting from the end of last year, and invited him to play the Team Cup. He wanted to concentrate on the U.S. and establish himself over there, which was fair enough. I've had a couple dinners with Harry. I've texted him many times as recently as after The Scottish Open. I played with him specifically at the Scottish and he was part of the barbeque for the players at The Scottish Open, and I texted with him and called him as recently as last week.

He knows exactly where he stands. He knows he's playing well. Absolutely I've been in contact with him. I think his answer got misconstrued.

Q. You mentioned Bob in the past. When you go back to Rome, can you just talk about how he's grown over the last couple years, maybe helped by that?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, absolutely. I think sometimes you see players that play in Ryder Cup and they are not really ready and it probably has a negative effect on them. I think Bob took a little time to get into it Friday and Saturday, really helped adjusting obviously, but he really grew in confidence with that relationship and held his own on Sunday, a rookie to get three points was pretty stout. I think it just gave him the confidence to know that even though he maybe didn't quite have his best that week he

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can still compete, and he's gone on to win the Canadian Open and Scottish Open. He's a top, top player.

You look at his stats, out of the 12 guys, statistically in Rome he was one of the weakest, and now he is one of the strongest. He has improved by leaps and bounds. You can see it in his game and you can see it in the belief he has in himself. It's just really nice to see the Ryder Cup potentially have that effect, getting him to kick on and take his game to the next level.

Q. Players in contention for the wildcard --

LUKE DONALD: Again, it's really hard for me to say because I know people could make a push. You have someone, if Marco plays this week, I don't know if he's playing in Crans, I think he told me he is. You get someone that wins three tournaments in a row; things like that happen.

I never like to promise players anything. I knew you mention the top six, you're guaranteed to make it, that's always been my mindset when I was a player. I want to do everything I can to qualify automatically. I don't want to be at risk of what we are thinking and what the vice captains are thinking. Go out there and earn your spot.

Q. The headlines with Bradley as a playing captain, you must be glad you're not in his position at the moment?

LUKE DONALD: Well, if I play well this week, who knows. But no, it's not something I've had to worry about. We've talked about that and it will be interesting. We will know in a week's time if he'll be a playing captain or just a captain.

I think they certainly talked about from the beginning that they had a plan in place that this could be something they do where he is a playing captain. Logistically they have that figured out. It's you have to him now.

I've been a good friend of his for a long time and I'm sure he'd love to play and I'm sure he's balancing up those decisions now.

Q. In the captain's agreement, is there a clause?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, Kerry Haigh and David Garland looked at the captain's agreement, and I met with them back in Turkey; and there's a chance if Keegan could play and if he does, is there a chance you could give off the captaincy to a vice captain? And that's a fair enough statement. At that time Keegan, had not won in Travelers but he was still a top 20 in the world and there was a chance he could be a playing captain.

We do something similar with the Team Cup. Justin and Tommy, once they come off the course, they take over as captain. It's something that easy to agree to.

Q. Can I clarify, he can just designate one vice captain?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, just one.

Q. If the teams are similar to Rome, which most of us think it will be, is that an advantage, the continuity?

LUKE DONALD: Well, I would say we formed a good group of guys and bonded. We shared something very special, and those memories will kind of always be with us and you can feed off those for sure. Having some continuity is good but also having fresh blood, having rookies, that could be good, too. It's not cut and dry.

But certainly from a continuity standpoint, they understand how I work. I understand them quite well. Those are all positives for sure.

Q. Your plans for Bethpage, when do you actually get there?

LUKE DONALD: I will next be there the week before we are planning a practise trip Monday, Tuesday, the week after Wentworth.

Q. I know you had been speaking to Sergio Garcia about potentially returning to the European Team. What do you make of his season today and being part of the team?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I've had many conversations with Sergio. We've talked a couple times. Sergio's form since Augusta, he said it at the PGA, even if he gave me a pick, I probably wouldn't take it. I'm not playing well enough. It's improved a little bit, but I think, you know, what he brings in terms of his Ryder Cup pedigree is one thing, but his form would need to show a little bit more improvement, especially this following week.

Q. You mentioned the Monday, Tuesday, after Wentworth. Do you just stay over?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, well, some of those guys have places in America. For me, it would be more ideal to stay in the United States rather than go back and forth than deal with jet-lag.

Q. What's your view on the players not wanting to interact with the fans --

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LUKE DONALD: I'm going to have obviously all those conversations once the team is set, and I've had conversations with certain players already to just kind of mentally get ready for that cauldron, that atmosphere. That's something I've been thinking about since day one of the captaincy. That is going to be a major feat how we react to the crowds, and certainly less is more -- (indiscernible) -- just using it the right way.

Q. So basically two practise rounds, how do you see that going?

LUKE DONALD: The plan is nine holes on Monday and 18 holes on Tuesday.

Q. And the guys that haven't got places to stay, do you organise that?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, we've got lots of plans.

Q. It could be a two-week road trip if the guys are not going home?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, there will be groups hanging out, maybe not the whole 12 together. Some people will want to go back to their homes but there will definitely be a chance for some of them to hang out for a two-week period.

Q. Is that just because the way it worked in the calendar, that date, or because it works just before it all?

LUKE DONALD: We went quite closely in the calendar to the Ryder Cup but was slightly different. We did it between Ireland and Wentworth. It's obviously impossible to do that with a Ryder Cup in America. It just seemed to fit the right dates. It was straight after Wentworth.

Q. A marked contrast to what the Americans did last time with arriving on the Monday not having played in five weeks. That must be pleased to you knowing your boys are going to be going well rested?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I think our schedule works quite well. Obviously having the Irish and Wentworth, speaking to some of the guys that are already qualified, their plans are play one of those. Most of the team will likely be at Wentworth, I would have thought.

Again, it's good to be playing in a routine that you're accustomed to playing at your highest level. Yeah, I'm happy with how much rest they will be getting before the Ryder Cup.

Q. How do you feel overall -- compared to two years ago at this stage the way it's shaping up?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I do think so, you look at the Ryder Cup points, a lot of the guys in Rome are playing well. They have been in Ryder Cups before and they know how to perform. Away Ryder Cups are different. They are a different pressure. They are a different atmosphere.

But, you know, again, I've had a little bit longer with my captaincy so think things through. Didn't seem quite as rushed with the last one but I feel very comfortable with where we are, and I feel we'll be prepared for the championship.

Q. Just on the crowd, you played the Team Cup at the start of the year. Is there anything specific you've done --

LUKE DONALD: I have a great team around me that I rely on for sure for advice. I've done a lot of reading. I'm not going to go into specifics exactly what I've gone into for this preparation. I can save that for after Ryder Cup.

But I think, as I said, we're in a good spot.

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