

# Curtis Cup

Press Conference

Thursday, 29 August 2024

**Catriona Matthew**

**Lottie Woad**

**Sara Byrne**



**CURTIS CUP**  
Sunningdale 2024

ED HODGE: Welcome, everybody, on the eve of the 43rd Curtis Cup match tomorrow. Delighted to be joined by Great Britain & Ireland captain Catriona Matthew, two members of her team, Lottie Woad and Sara Byrne. I'll kick things off and just ask all of you, how excited are you to get going tomorrow?

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, really excited. We've been here now a few days. The players are ready. Today everyone is just kind of desperate to get started, going through the motions today. Everyone knows the golf course, knows what they're trying to do. Yeah, we are ready to go first thing tomorrow.

SARA BYRNE: Yeah, absolutely over the moon to get going tomorrow. It's been a good couple of days prepping, and I think obviously we have such a great team. We're all really good friends. We're having fun out there. We're really, really looking forward now to getting going tomorrow.

LOTTIE WOAD: Yeah, looking forward to starting tomorrow. Been fun these last few days practising, but I think we're all kind of ready to get going now and looking forward to tomorrow.

**Q. How is it one of you girls has picked up an American accent and the other hasn't?**

SARA BYRNE: I'm assuming am I the American accent? Yeah, I get that a lot, unfortunately. Four years in Miami didn't do me justice with the Irish accent, but it'll come back out eventually.

LOTTIE WOAD: That makes me feel great because my friends always tell me I have an American accent, so...

**Q. Lottie, this must feel like a very, very exciting time in your life right now, obviously, with this match and what you did at St Andrews last week. How has the**

**transition been since coming down off the back of that top 10?**

LOTTIE WOAD: Yeah, that Open was obviously a very fun week. Got to play at the Home of Golf. Definitely different conditions this week to that, so the last couple days it's been getting back used to playing with not a 30-mile-an-hour crosswind. Just kind of going back to basics on a few things, getting used to the green speeds. But yeah, all good to go now and just looking forward to starting.

**Q. Obviously those conditions in St Andrews, they can bash a golf swing about a bit. I guess there has to be that kind of adjustment.**

LOTTIE WOAD: Yeah, a little bit. When you're playing wind for a week, it can mess up a few things. It causes you to go back to basics. Had a good couple of range sessions, so feel like I'm back to normal now, which is good.

**Q. Lottie, last week you were probably having to apply sort of wind skin preparations and now it's sun lotions; is that right?**

LOTTIE WOAD: Yeah, got a lot of windburn last week. You can't really avoid that. But this weather is perfect, so yeah, I feel like I got a little burnt today.

**Q. What do you put on when it's as windy and wet as it was last week? It was horrific.**

LOTTIE WOAD: Yeah, I didn't have that many layers on, to be honest. Kind of just wore a thermal and a tee shirt and I was all right. Can't really avoid the windburn, I don't think. I put on sun cream every day and still came off the course red hot in the face. Just kind of got to deal with it.

**Q. So many of the girls are nowadays taking their jackets off for every shot they play and then putting them on again.**

LOTTIE WOAD: Yeah, it was cold. It was also quite slow, so you were kind of just waiting between shots a lot, and



... when all is said, we're done.®

you don't really want to get cold between shots, so I see why people were just taking on and off layers, but I don't really bother.

**Q. I'm just wondering, there's obviously a lot of thought that goes into who drives which holes and whatnot in foursomes. Could you take us through that decision-making process and who ended up where?**

SARA BYRNE: I think as a team, the pairings are going to come out eventually, but I think we all just want to play to our strengths. Some holes are better driving holes, others are longer irons, others are putters, so it's kind of figuring that out within the pairings and whatever feels comfortable with each other.

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I think this golf course compared to some, something like Gleneagles, there's very much a difference between who's going to be putting and who's hitting the iron shots. Here there's not probably as big a big difference as that. There's a little bit of strategy off the tees and just tee shots people like. So it's more that kind of thing. The par-3s are two of each, the par-5s are two of each. There's probably not as much difference as to which way you play as at some courses.

**Q. Sara, just wonder what kind of impact to the rest of the team what Lottie did last week at St Andrews can have? Does it have an impact?**

SARA BYRNE: Yeah, definitely. I think obviously what Lottie has been doing the last couple weeks and honestly the whole year, it's kind of pushing us on, as well. I think we're all there to catch up with her and kind of do what she's doing, but it's also bringing confidence, as well. We know she's coming in having a great year, and I think we're all coming in after having a good year, so I think that's just pushing us all on and giving us the confidence to go out there this week and do what we can do.

**Q. Catriona, I remember famously in Toledo when you were leading the Solheim Cup team there was a really good showing from the Europeans at Carnoustie just before that, and you said how much of a springboard that was for the whole of the team. Presumably you're kind of working off that vibe a little bit?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Absolutely. We went into that one, Anna Nordqvist had won, and there was another two or three of them up in the top 5 or 10. As Sara said, it just filters down the whole team. I think it gives them that confidence. If you've got the No. 1 player in the world, it gives the rest of the team that confidence.

They've played a lot of golf with that player, so they know

on their day they can perhaps beat them, so there's not a huge difference. So they're not going in looking at the Americans thinking, oh, they're just up here and we're down here.

I think it really does give confidence, and I think the whole team have been practising well, they're playing well. As I said, we're just itching to get out there and get on with these matches. But I think we're quietly feeling confident here as a team.

**Q. Catriona, in the days when you played in the Curtis Cup, I think the girls weren't always entirely happy with their uniforms. What is the case today?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Well, I think they're quite happy, but they're the team. I think the uniforms are nice. I think we've been looking good so far this week. Yeah, I think we're going to continue in that vein.

**Q. Sara, Beth and Aine watched as fans in 2016. Could you have imagined then that you'd be here eight years on?**

SARA BYRNE: Maybe in our wildest dreams probably because just having that experience in 2016 and obviously seeing Leona, Olivia and Maria bring that trophy and keep it in Ireland, I suppose, since it was down at Dun Laoghaire, but we were so young, and thinking back to that, looking up to those three girls, being like, wow, this is the coolest thing ever. We've just been saying, the fact the three of us are doing it together now, it's really, really special.

I think I played with Beth my first time when she was 11 or something. I was like 13, 14. I think we've literally grown up from the very bottom to reach this moment. I think it's been a really, really special week for us, and we're just taking it all in and enjoying it.

**Q. Do you think that closeness can help this people?**

SARA BYRNE: Oh, absolutely. I think that runs -- not even just the three of us; it runs throughout all eight. We've all known each other for a very, very long time, and I think it's kind of showing this week. I think we're all really, really close, and just having the vibes and the aura around us, it's really, really good, and I think it's going to make for a great week.

**Q. Catriona, you've played in three of these and experienced every single result. Can you talk about what you learned from those matches and the impact they had on your career?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah, I think the first one I played in was over in the States, and at that time you probably -- we didn't have as many of them that played over in the States. It was very new for us. We had quite a young team, and we do hold that dubious record of it was the biggest loss.

But we did go back the next year down at Hoylake and win and then drew the next one.

I think playing in the Curtis Cup, I'm trying to tell them, it's really no different from playing in the Solheim Cup. Curtis Cup you're at the top of the amateur game. This is the thing you want to play in. The Solheim Cup is just you're in the pro ranks and that's what you want to play in.

I think as Sara was saying, we've got great team atmosphere, which I think is crucial. We want to try and be as relaxed off the course because it's going to be -- we all know there's going to be the pressure and tension once you're on the course, so to try and keep them relaxed off the course and having some fun just is really crucial, I think.

I think I've learnt over the years just playing in team situations that that's what you need. They're all desperate to go out there and play and be under that pressure and under that wanting to win their point, so when you're off the course you've really got to try and relax.

**Q. Just as when you played in the Solheim, the Americans are usually ranked a bit higher. That's the case again this week. But is that underdog tag something you can feed off this week?**

CATRIONA MATTHEW: Yeah. I mean, I think World Rankings in probably amateur and professional golf perhaps don't reflect the true nature sometimes of where the players should be ranked. Yeah, our players, I've been out watching them all year, and obviously saw a few of the Americans, as well, and our players are every bit as good, obviously Lottie being the best of the best.

Yeah, I think 18-hole stroke play anything can happen. As I said, I think we're okay we're going to be ranked underdogs, but we're going in there with confidence.

SARA BYRNE: Yeah, I think they might be ranked ahead of us, but I think honestly in match play and on the day, anything can happen. We're not that far apart, and we can definitely give them a good run, and that's what we're going to do this week. Again, it's match play; anything can happen. I think we're confident in our team and we can back ourselves a lot.

LOTTIE WOAD: Yeah, I definitely think the rankings aren't going to really matter. I feel like the most Solheim Cups we're usually ranked behind the Americans, and the last two results have obviously gone to Europe. Just going to try and use that, and we know with it being four-ball, foursomes, you're not playing on your own, and I feel like we're a lot more used to playing in that format, as well, with all the team golf we play over here.

I think that's definitely going to help.

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