

The Walker Cup

Press Conference

Saturday, 2 September 2023

Mike McCoy

Stewart Hagestad

Gordon Sargent



THE WALKER CUP
ST ANDREWS 2023

JONATHAN COE: Good evening. We'd like to welcome back representatives from the United States team. We have Captain McCoy, Gordon Sargent and Stewart Hagestad.

Captain, can you talk us through the emotions of the day.

MIKE McCOY: Yeah, it wasn't the day we were looking for, but saw a lot of good golf. The afternoon kind of started the way we were hoping, and we just didn't close some of those matches we were -- we had a couple 1-up, 2-up leads, and we just -- they kind of slipped away, and we didn't flip any of the all squares.

But we'll regroup, and we'll have a plan for tomorrow, and we'll be ready to go.

Q. What was the message for tomorrow?

MIKE McCOY: Win some points. We do have to -- we expect the wind is going to blow a little bit like it did this afternoon. The golf course is going to play more difficult.

But we've got a talented group of players, and I think they're ready to step up and give us an opportunity tomorrow afternoon.

Q. Gordon, you went 2-0 today. How meaningful is it to go 2-0 when you know Captain is going to rely on you this week?

GORDON SARGENT: I mean, yeah, it definitely gives me a lot of confidence knowing that I'm playing some good golf, and it's nice to kind of get some points for the team. But what we're all looking at is the overall score, so I'm not really focused on that. We'll just go regroup as a team and then go back at it tomorrow.

Q. Stew, how special is that feeling on the first tee? I know it's your fourth time now, but I know it doesn't get old.

STEWART HAGESTAD: Yeah. Just because it's your fourth time doesn't make it any less special. It's the Home of Golf, and you have the opportunity to play for your country and to play for Captain McCoy, who I've known for a very long time and someone I've looked up to as an idol and a mentor and more recently a friend.

To represent your country is about as special as it gets, and this, as it's been said a lot, the highest honour in amateur golf, and it's no less than honour this year than it is any other year.

Q. Gordon, can I ask you about the birdie on 18 and particularly the tee shot. How satisfying to pull that out when you really needed it?

GORDON SARGENT: Yeah, I mean, I was driving it well all day. Kind of had like an interesting obviously front right pin, kind of don't want to be short. Not the best spot.

So I just kind of aimed left and hit a teed-down cut driver and hit it exactly how I wanted to and it ended up like 25 feet past it and then two-putted for birdie.

Q. From the tee did it look like it had a chance of going in?

GORDON SARGENT: It looked like it might go in, yeah.

Q. Stew, you were part of this team four years ago, and you guys were two points down going into the second day. Any similar feelings, and do you anticipate maybe Captain leaning on you a little bit to just maybe give the guys some perspective going into tomorrow?

STEWART HAGESTAD: Similar but different. You know, I think it's obviously quite fresh, a time to go decompress and take a little time off, go have dinner with the team.

I think everyone is just so kind of in the state of just like hey, you threw everything you had at it today, go take a minute to go relax, then you can kind of assess the day and you can kind of figure out maybe what worked or what



didn't work.

Hey, they've got a great team, right, and we've got to bring it tomorrow. They're very familiar with this golf course. The St Andrews Links is obviously here, and my sense is it's the Home of Golf, so it's a place that everyone in this part of the world is almost put on a pedestal in a great way, in the sense that this is a place that kind of serves as a lot of the core tenets of a lot of other venues in the world.

For us to come over here and to try and bring it with the best of Great Britain and Ireland's players, we have to bring our best. They played great today, so they deserve a tremendous amount of credit.

Q. Just a follow-up, just looking at the other nine guys, and you've been through it before, but does it give you confidence knowing that you can see that all these guys care just based on how they were acting tonight?

STEWART HAGESTAD: Yeah, I mean, you're playing for your country, right. We don't need to really pick this apart. You have the opportunity to represent not just the USGA and the United States but every amateur golfer in the United States that plays competitively. If that doesn't get you fired up, I don't really know what will.

As I've said a couple of times, it's obviously an honour to be a part of this team. I don't think we have to question anyone's -- how much they want it or what they've put into it or anything like that. They've earned the right to be here, and I would offer a tremendous amount of credit to Robby Zalznick and a lot of the Walker Cup players that have been there in the past that have offered support.

There's no issues there. Just play better.

Q. Mike, I don't know if you had a chance to put your pairings in yet --

MIKE McCOY: Not yet.

Q. Can you talk us through what your plan is for foursomes? You don't have to say who, but you have to obviously do something different than you did this morning.

MIKE McCOY: Yeah, we need a better morning. We know that.

I think Caleb and Ben James played well, and they got beat. They were several under par. They really ran into a pretty hot pairing.

I'm going to keep them together. I may even give them another crack at it, I think. We'll figure that out, though, shortly, but you're right, the morning is really important. So we're going to mix a few things up.

Q. I guess the other benefit is that if you believe your 10 guys are as good or better than their 10 guys, at least you are getting 10 guys in singles tomorrow instead of eight, so that does give you a little bit of an advantage, but being this far down, which is like the first time since 1989 or something like that, what's your No. 1 thing you'll talk to the players about tonight?

MIKE McCOY: You know, I think really remind them of the opportunity we have tomorrow.

People have made big turnarounds. Just ask them to give us their best tomorrow and play without fear and play with a discipline.

We made a few mistakes off the tee. We drove it in some places we shouldn't have driven it. Maybe we lost a little discipline. So we'll talk about that.

But I think we're just going to ask them to bring the game that earned them the spot to play here. The wind is going to blow, and it's going to be a little different. It was tough this afternoon, and we were in a position to have a pretty good afternoon.

I'm not totally dejected because I think these guys -- we had our moments out there where we had a chance to really have a pretty good day. We'll just look for that tomorrow.

Q. Gordon and Stewart, obviously not the score you'd want at the end of the day, but how much did you enjoy being out there on this course and this atmosphere today?

GORDON SARGENT: I mean, yeah. Being my first Walker Cup, pretty special to be on that first tee and hear your name announced alongside the United States.

Like Captain said, we've got a lot of positives to take away from the day. Not necessarily the result we wanted, but I think we all know that it's not necessarily out of reach. There's still 14 points out there tomorrow.

If we go and just kind of stick to our game plan, I think we'll be fine.

STEWART HAGESTAD: That was awfully well said. Since the question was individual in nature, I guess I'll

answer it individually. But it's been said a handful of times, it's the Home of Golf. It's St Andrews. That's the first opening ceremony that I've cried at. To be in front of the R&A and to look back down 18 obviously at the Road Hole, the Old Course Hotel -- by the way, amazing kudos to whoever got that fly-by over; that was unbelievable. So you deserve a ton of credit.

It was extremely memorable, and then obviously today, as Gordon said, it's not a secret, it didn't go the way that we would have hoped. But at the same time, it's still the Walker Cup, and it's the 100th year anniversary.

Good, bad or otherwise, when we look back in 10, 20, 30, 40 years, it's pretty cool.

MIKE McCOY: Yeah, I would say I played a lot of amateur golf for a long time. It was a tremendous atmosphere. Even though it wasn't the day we wanted, what a celebration of amateur golf. I mean, to have the crowds like that, a beautiful day, guys that worked hard as kids trying to get to this point.

I kind of went out and reminded them, this is supposed to be a fun day. You're playing in front of this great crowd at this magnificent venue.

It wasn't the outcome we wanted, but it was a special day. They played terrific, and I give them a lot of credit. They're tough and they're gutsy, and they've got a lot of heart.

We're going to have to step it up tomorrow and try and make this thing a match.

JONATHAN COE: Thanks, guys.

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