

# The Walker Cup

Press Conference

Sunday, 3 September 2023

**Mike McCoy**

**Gordon Sargent**

**Caleb Surratt**

**Ben James**



**THE WALKER CUP**  
ST ANDREWS 2023

JONATHAN COE: Good evening. We'd like to welcome representatives from the United States team. We have Captain McCoy, Gordon Sargent and Caleb Surratt. Captain, we'll start with you. How does it feel?

MIKE McCOY: It's pretty good. It's a pretty good feeling.

We had a great day, and it was -- these fantastic players, they're the ones who did it.

JONATHAN COE: What was the message last night and at lunch today to get these guys to where they are now?

MIKE McCOY: You know, last night we kind of mixed the pairings up a little bit, and we knew we needed a strong morning. We were going to go out -- our goal was to sweep the morning. We didn't quite sweep it, but we got the points we needed.

Then as far as lunch goes today, it was just one shot at a time, guys, just play golf. Just play golf, one shot at a time.

JONATHAN COE: Gordon, what's it mean to go 4-0 for you and you know Captain is going to rely on you this week to be a horse?

GORDON SARGENT: Yeah, obviously getting off to a good start in foursomes. Dylan and I went out and got a point, and we didn't necessarily have the morning as a team we wanted, but just to get off to a good start individually and just kind of keep the momentum rolling was huge.

Then yeah, obviously the difference between one half point and one full point is a big deal. To go 4-0 is really special, and it definitely means a lot.

JONATHAN COE: Caleb, you kind of emerged as a vocal and energetic leader out there for your team. Was that the

plan coming in, and how did that happen?

CALEB SURRATT: To be honest, it really wasn't the plan. I think it was just a lot of focus on just trying to play my own golf, knowing that nine of the best players of the world behind me were going to do the exact same.

Part of not saying the letter I this week kind of meant becoming that vocal leader at some points of today, so to be able to step up not only in the golf part but to be able to play that role for our team and our country, it's a huge honour, and I'm very grateful for it.

**Q. Mike, can you contrast the feeling of giving that speech today and lifting this trophy and having it sitting right in front of you with -- not to bring up bad memories, but 2015, and how important was it to kind of finish your Walker Cup career now as a Captain on a happy note?**

MIKE McCOY: Yeah, you know, 2015 was tough. We felt crummy for our team, felt crummy for the captain. We just got outplayed.

This is a great feeling. I tried to put a lot of effort into this for two years and tried to do anything I could that would help make the team successful. We had a lot of support. Ben Albert, a friend of mine, he knows amateur golf in America better than anybody, and he was a sounding board for me in terms of the players, and he knew their parents, he knew their coaches, and through that, I was able to get to know them better, as well.

I learned a little bit about what made each of them tick, and it just worked out.

But there was a lot of effort by a lot of people to make this happen.

**Q. Gordon, you had three matches come down to the 18th hole, and that may have been the difference in winning the Walker Cup and some of the wins that you had on the 18th hole and flipping a couple matches there. Describe how important some of those were this morning, making that putt to seal that victory, and**

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**then winning again this afternoon.**

GORDON SARGENT: Yeah, I mean, I wouldn't say that was the difference in winning the Walker Cup because I've got nine other teammates.

But yeah, this morning Nick and I went out and we felt like we kind of had -- we kind of felt like if we played our game we were going to be where we wanted to be, and we did that for the first 12 holes and then gave kind of two away on 13 and 15.

But then yeah, to just -- Nick hit a great shot on 16, and to make birdie there, go 1-up and finish it off on 17 and 18 was huge, especially just because that was keeping the momentum rolling.

We had won the first match in foursomes and the match behind us was going to win, so it was kind of big to keep that red on the leaderboard and get that full point.

**Q. Caleb, what did it mean for you for Captain to put you out four times and out first three of those four times, the confidence he instilled in you?**

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, it means everything. It really means a lot less to me and just a lot more to the fact of -- out of the 10 guys, four people are going to play four times, and to be selected as one of those is just such an honour.

To have the trust from Captain to go out there three times in a row as the first player off and try and get us off on the right foot was just an opportunity you dream of since you were a kid. It is something that I have been dreaming of. So thank you. And I'm very happy to capitalise off of that.

**Q. Mike, David Ford ended up getting the clinching point, the winning point, if you will. Considering how he's kind of felt this entire week, can you just describe his grit and strength and tenacity to be able to go out there in the anchor match and get one of these points?**

MIKE McCOY: Yeah. David, we checked in on him. He never complained once. He was always willing and ready to go.

He can really play golf. I was kind of at the back of the lineup today watching as much as I could, and Robby was up at the front, so I got to see David hit some tremendous golf shots.

I told him, I don't know where he finds the nerve to hit some of those little soft shots. I said, it was like they were in slow motion.

But he's very talented, and he's got a lot of heart.

We put him in that 10th spot for a reason. If it came down to that point, I knew he could get the job done. I'm happy that he was part of winning that last point.

**Q. Gordon, can you talk a little bit about how useful the local caddies were this week, particularly here at St Andrews, the Old Course, and also Alan Tulleth, your caddie, he was given the week off by DP World Tour Nathan Kimsey to be here this week.**

GORDON SARGENT: Yeah, it kind of meant a lot that Alan wanted to be here. I'm not going to say I never got mad or anything, but he was great. He was very vocal, which I kind of liked, and it was cool to see that even though he's Scottish, he was caddying for the USA people and he was definitely on the USA side.

I think all of us kind of think that the caddies were another -- they were just fans for us, which obviously we were kind of outnumbered, so it was nice to have those on our side. You could tell they just wanted the best for us, as well.

**Q. How satisfying for you personally to be World No. 1 and produce the goods when your team probably needed you throughout all four sessions?**

GORDON SARGENT: I mean, I don't think it would be any different whether I was ranked No. 1 or like a thousand. I think it's just getting four points for your country means a lot, and obviously you've seen the celebrations and stuff, just how much it means to all the guys on the team.

I think you don't really focus on those four points. You more so or less focus on the fact that we won the Walker Cup and we're going to have a good time.

**Q. Gordon and Caleb, you mentioned that you were maybe outnumbered, but can you talk about the support that you did get from the Americans that were over here and just the atmosphere in general this weekend?**

GORDON SARGENT: Yeah, I mean, I think we both kind of embraced the GB&I crowd a little bit. Just kind of using it as motivation. Obviously it was kind of cool to see the number of people out there, and 90 percent of them weren't rooting for the USA and they were cheering pretty loudly when the GB&I did something good, so you could kind of tell what happened in the match in front of you or behind you.

I think for me especially, it gave me motivation. One thing was we enjoyed the silence out there because that means

that GB&I wasn't winning holes. Yeah, just to kind of have some fans out there, and obviously at the end it was a cool moment just seeing the USA chants and all that stuff.

CALEB SURRATT: Yeah, I would say obviously it was very cool being able to finish with those fans that we had there, but I think I can speak for all nine of us when I say just to capitalise off what Gordon said, I think one cheer from a teammate is worth a thousand from a crowd on the other side.

Regardless of how many fans we had out there, we knew we had each other, and I would rather celebrate with those nine guys than 10,000 people every single day of the week.

**Q. Captain McCoy, in 2025 Nathan Smith is going to be the next Walker Cup captain. What are some of your takeaways from your experience as a Walker Cup captain just briefly that you might pull Nathan aside and share a couple insights? I'm sure you'll have plenty of time to do that.**

MIKE McCOY: Well, Nathan has played on several teams, so he kind of knows what it's all about. I was happy that he was here this year. He's a great friend. We'll be at Cypress Point cheering him on in '25. I don't know, there's not much I can tell him.

I do hope that a couple of these guys on this team hang around and help him again in '25. I think there's a few that could if they chose to. Some of them are going to at some point go on and have pretty great careers playing the game, but if there's an opportunity to play on another team, I'd sure encourage them to hang around, and I know Nathan would love to have them.

**Q. Mike, usually you would think when you're 3-down after one day and there's only two days in the Cup, you would think that you probably are behind the 8-ball considerably. What did you think about last night, and what did you think you could express to your players, not to be rah-rah, but just to get them back into the matches?**

MIKE McCOY: Yeah, we had a team talk around the table. We all got around the table, and I asked everybody some pretty straightforward questions, was there anybody hurt, anybody feeling bad, anybody that -- because we were trying to figure out our morning session.

We had a plan, and we wanted to -- I wanted to give everybody an opportunity to play three times, but we got around the table, the guys really said let's put out the best teams.

Our leader, the leader in the room was Stewart, and he stepped up and just said, look, I'm not -- I'm not a great foursomes player, so I'm going to sit. That was pretty gracious on his part because he had won the match -- I was planning on using him because he was playing so well.

When Stewart is out on the golf course, you know somebody is going to have to bring a lunch pail and a hardhat to beat him. He's tough.

We left the room, and we really didn't know who we were going to sit. We came back in, and we kind of had -- Robby and I spent a little time and talked it over and we made a few changes, and we believed in Nick and Preston, and we just -- Caleb and Ben, had all the confidence in the world.

We gave our national amateur champion and our McCormack Medal a chance to go out there and show us, get that point.

We took a chance. We knew we needed a good morning to get back in the match.

It was really just pretty straightforward. The guys really demanded it, frankly. The guys demanded it. They didn't want people out there playing just to get their turn. They wanted the best teams on the golf course.

Stewart led the way, and that was pretty gracious of him.

**Q. I understand that there was a ping-pong match this week in the team room. Double question, but who won the match, and what were the vibes in the team room and how did those help you play well, Caleb?**

GORDON SARGENT: Highlight of my week, by the way.

CALEB SURRATT: Well, to start off, that question, we can clarify that that match was not to determine the champion ping-pong player of our team, it was actually to determine the worst player on our team, so that was between me and Ben James. I almost didn't sleep that night thinking about having to eat a salad the next day because I've never had a salad in my life and neither has Ben.

I was fortunate enough on the 18th hole to step up and shove a salad down Ben's throat, so that was really enjoyable watching that happen.

**Q. Ben, how was the salad?**

BEN JAMES: I mean, I would think like eating a salad, my

mouth would feel clean, because it's good for you, but it felt awful. It was like spider webs were in my mouth. So no salad for me.

**Q. Mike, yesterday was relatively calm with the conditions. Today the wind was up a little bit. Do you think that kind of helped your team, maybe a little bit of the talent advantage, accentuating that?**

MIKE McCOY: You know, I thought it might. I thought it might. But you're playing these guys who are probably a little more familiar -- they're certainly more familiar with the golf course.

But our guys play in a lot of wind. It blows in America, too.

I felt like we might have an edge if it really came down to some certain skills. Not a big edge, but I was confident that these guys could play in any conditions. Happy we got it done.

JONATHAN COE: Thank you, guys. Congratulations.

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