

Curtis Cup

Thursday, June 9, 2022

Ardmore, Pennsylvania, USA

GBI Team

Merion Golf Club

Elaine Ratcliffe

Caley McGinty

Hannah Darling

Lauren Walsh

Press Conference



different format, and playing with players from Ireland and Scotland, we're not used to playing with each other and just sorting out pairings within that as well. So I think yeah, definitely helps a lot.

Q. How have you found the practice so far? There seems to be a very good spirit around the team. Everyone seems to be having a ball really.

CALEY MCGINTY: Yeah, we all get along really well. It's always a good time, but we've been preparing well. We're being smart about it, just getting to know the golf course because it'll test you and you need to know it, so we've been putting some good work in.

Q. Hannah, from your point of view, what are your thoughts coming into the match, and obviously disappointment at the end at Conwy but a lot of positives and a good performance for much of that week. How much does that help you coming into this week?

HANNAH DARLING: Yeah, I think Conwy was such a great week and we all played so well, and I don't think the score was actually as reflective of how good of a week it was. We played very well and it was a lot tighter than it showed, I guess, but we're all coming into this week, and yeah, we're just having such a good time, and we're having fun, and I think that's what it comes down to in team events like this. If you have a good team dynamic then things take care of itself.

We're all prepared really well and we've done what we need to, so ready to get going tomorrow when it kicks off.

Q. Lauren, from your point of view, obviously it's a strong American team on home soil here and such a prestigious venue. How much of a challenge is it for you guys to rise to that and do what you can to make it difficult for them?

LAUREN WALSH: Yeah, I think as the girls and Elaine have mentioned, we've really put in the hard work when it comes to preparing for this golf course and we've treated it with a lot of respect, and it is just a spectacular venue.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for joining us for the Great Britain & Ireland press conference here at the 42nd Curtis Cup match. Obviously great to be here at Merion. Elaine, if I could start with you, could you give me your feelings, back into the Curtis Cup here, wonderful venue, and obviously looking to try and take the trophy back to Britain after Conwy?

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: Yeah, I probably can't add much to that. We are at a spectacular venue. We've been treated really well. The golf course is immaculate, plays beautiful. Yes, I intend to take the Cup home. I've got a great team, six played 10 months ago. We've had two great additions with Emily and Amelia.

We've got a great team spirit. We're enjoying being here. We're loving every minute of it, and I can't wait for it to all start.

I was a bit nervous putting names down on paper. I didn't realize how nervous I'd be, but that's done, handed in, and I think we're ready to go. Well, we are ready to go. We are, we're ready to go.

Q. Caley, how much does the experience of being in this match help when it comes to it, because it's such a big competition, it's so many good players on show. How much does the experience help you coming into this week?

CALEY MCGINTY: Yeah, I think it's huge just having the experience from last time, just with everything else going on around it, too, it's a lot to manage, and just being able to prepare for each match as you would to play your best golf amongst everything else, obviously match play is a



When it comes to the U.S. Team, I think seven of us play in the college circuit over here, so while the U.S. names might seem big, we play with them week in and week out, and when it comes down to an 18-hole match, anything can happen. As we said, we're ready to go, and yeah, excited for the next couple days.

Q. What was your first impression of Merion when you got to play it?

HANNAH DARLING: Wow. It's just such a beautiful place. The course, you don't really -- I mean, we play a lot in America and there's a lot of courses similar to this, but just some of the visuals on the course, and it's just in such good condition.

LAUREN WALSH: Yeah, when we see the greenskeepers out rolling the fairways and everything is so well manicured, there's nothing out of place out there, and honestly it just sets up for such a special match. Yeah, yeah, it's honestly spectacular.

Q. Have you played here before or is this the first time for each of you?

HANNAH DARLING: First time for most of us, all of us, I think.

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: I was here in November so just saw it closed, and then these three also came in May, so we feel lucky. This is my fourth time in six months. It doesn't get much better than that. If anybody played a course like this, they'd be -- just want to play golf every day, wouldn't you.

Q. We certainly do from the sidelines. For the players, do any of you have any sense of the history of Merion, the U.S. Opens and other international competitions that have been played here and what are your thoughts about that?

HANNAH DARLING: So when we came actually in May, we went to the --

LAUREN WALSH: The archives.

HANNAH DARLING: The archive room. We saw all the history there. The one thing that stood out for me and gives me goosebumps every time you think about it is the guy that designed the course, he was booked to be on the Titanic coming back home because he was visiting in the UK to kind of look at different courses over there, and should have come home on the Titanic and decided to stay a few more days or whatever and look at Sunningdale, and

obviously we know what happened to the Titanic. When I seen Sunningdale and just that look, I don't know how that happens, but for me, that almost started it and then there's obviously been so much more happening afterwards on the golf course. Yeah, that for me was huge.

LAUREN WALSH: Yeah, it's a special club to be a part of. There's been so many incredible tournaments hosted here. For us all to be a part of the Curtis Cup here in 2022 is very special, and I think something we all take good pride in.

Q. Were you watching in 2013 when Justin Rose brought home the trophy?

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: Yes.

LAUREN WALSH: Yeah, I remember watching some of it on TV. It's cool to be here in person now.

Q. I take it none of you have a 1-iron?

HANNAH DARLING: I wish.

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: We were supposed to do that when we were last here but the rains came and it didn't happen. I used to carry a 2-iron.

HANNAH DARLING: All right, Elaine.

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: I didn't say I hit it.

HANNAH DARLING: Just carried it. We get you.

Q. Curious your thoughts on the wicker baskets?

CALEY MCGINTY: It's really cool. It's so different. When I was here the first time I was throwing my golf ball at it just to see what happened. It's kind of cool because you don't really realize in normal golf how much you actually pay attention to the wind at the flag, and it makes it a little bit harder not having that visual there with the wind, but no, it's cool. It's fun.

HANNAH DARLING: Yeah, it's very iconic. Some courses, the Old Course at St Andrews has the swell can bridge. The thing that's iconic about the course is the course itself, but it has the wicker baskets on the flag which is very cool, and if you see that you know you're at Merion.

Q. Curious how the team Snapchat or group chat looks on a regular basis?

LAUREN WALSH: With everything thrown in there.

CALEY MCGINTY: Yeah, we have a lot of funny pictures in there.

HANNAH DARLING: Yeah, the group chat picture.

LAUREN WALSH: We have a lot of great team members, and we've really had a lot of fun this week, so I think we've been capturing a lot of pictures of that fun and appreciating it in the group chat I'd say.

HANNAH DARLING: Not only pictures in the group chat, we also have some mental images of what's been happening. We've had some banter so far.

LAUREN WALSH: It's been good.

HANNAH DARLING: We have everything in there.

Q. Did you have to change kind of how you wanted to approach your lineup or even the groups that you had in your team when you knew it was going to be this golf course versus let's say Conwy?

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: No, no. I think having come here in November and seeing what a great golf course it was, I knew we needed players that played good golf, if that makes sense, and could strike the ball well. I felt very comfortable about the players that we had at Conwy were also good golfers.

There was no switching or thinking that somebody should come because of how the course is. I think it's a fair test of golf. I think it's a cracking test of golf. I feel very fortunate to be in a position of picking golfers that can play. So I've always felt comfortable that who we would select would be able to play around here because it's such a fair golf course.

The only thing that I'd say I have done differently -- not done differently, but what I didn't come here with was set ideas of pairings. I knew what pairings we'd had at Conwy, and that was great experience for those that played together, but coming this week, being a different golf course, being also different -- the players are different than they were at Conwy because they hadn't ever played in a Curtis Cup at Conwy. They have now played in a Curtis Cup. Some of them have played ANWA since. I've been very open about seeing what I think are the best pairings for this time and this golf course, if that makes sense.

Q. So I guess the question is what did you learn from Conwy that you're applying here?

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: What did I learn? A few things I think prior to the event. We've looked at a few things

slightly differently. We've thought about nutrition. I was aware that we flagged on the second morning and then possibly the last afternoon, so we've looked at nutrition. I'm trying to think -- we came and practiced here, and I've sought advice on how to play this course because of knowing the type of course that it is.

But there wasn't a lot of things to do differently from Conwy because I think we took it to them and we did a lot of things well, so it's been about tweaking I would say as opposed to changing.

Q. When you said you sought advice, from whom?

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: I sought advice from a couple of caddies. I luckily know Fooch, who caddied for Justin Rose, so know him from when I played on the Tour --

Q. That's unfortunate.

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: That is unfortunate if you know him. So yeah, him, and then also a lovely gentleman, Johnny McLaren, who caddied for Luke, so was in the last group, as well. He's having a sabbatical this year. So through Martin Slumbers, Martin knows him really well, and I didn't realize he was good friends with Fooch, as well, so I spent some time with him going through the course. He's been very generous with his time, and just found it really, really interesting to see what I thought of the course and then see how they are, how they saw it.

Luckily it is straightforward because what you see is what you get, but it's been lovely to seek advice from both of those.

Q. Ladies, just from your standpoint, obviously this isn't the Old Course at St Andrews or things like that, this is a high-ball hitter course predominantly. Do you feel comfortable with that or do you feel like you might have to attack it a different way?

HANNAH DARLING: I think we're all in this team because we're good players, and when you play a golf course, I don't think we have to change our games at all, and I think that's something you might think by, yeah, the Americans are -- they're ranked very well, but I think something we do well is we play our own game, and I don't think we have to go into this week thinking we have to do anything differently to beat them.

Yeah, most courses in America are high ball flight, that suited, but you hit a low ball, you can still get around and you can still beat people around here, so I don't think it's a case of us thinking we need to play any differently. We're all good players, and we'll play our games around here and

we should have a good chance.

LAUREN WALSH: Yeah, and I think just going off that, a lot of us have had success over here even in the States, and while the Americans have their rankings, we've all had success in the college circuit around here, and a lot of those golf courses are very similar style of golf that we have to play here. We're very experienced when it comes to this type of golf, and as Hannah said, we're here to play our own game, and we have the experience, and yeah.

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: The course feels like home. You can see holes in it from Sunningdale, from Wentworth, from some of the courses over in Norfolk and Suffolk. We have some wonderful heathland courses. I think the only thing we don't have is something quite spectacular as this, as in they're all at one place. We luckily played Pine Valley on Saturday and that's a similar example. There were so many holes that brought back memories of playing some beautiful courses at home, but the one thing both Merion and Pine Valley have is it's under one roof, which makes it so spectacular and makes them such we feel venues to play.

Q. When you talked to Fooch and when you talked to Johnny, what was one of the biggest things they told you about attacking this place?

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: It was not attacking it, it was stay under the flag. Full stop. If that makes sense. I didn't mean to bite you --

Q. It's the basket, not the flag, though, right?

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: Right, but it was -- yeah, under the hole is good.

Q. How have you found it with being only one year removed since the last match, and does that add any extra competitive spice to the match because it's still in your memories? Quite a few of you played in it.

HANNAH DARLING: Yeah, for us, six of us in our team played it last year. Yeah, we got beaten; that's under our skin. We've got a little something there that obviously gives a bit more motivation. But I think any match between -- in a Curtis Cup, you always want to beat them.

I think with six of us returning, it's definitely going to be interesting.

LAUREN WALSH: I think the excitement, as well. It was only 10 months ago so all year when we saw each other at tournaments, we were all excited to get the opportunity to come back and have another go at the Curtis Cup.

I think with it being so close, I really personally found the excitement was really built up around it.

Q. Yeah, good chance to bounce back.

LAUREN WALSH: Definitely.

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: It's still raw. It's still raw.

HANNAH DARLING: It's probably been the quickest 10 months ever. It feels like last week almost we played Conwy, so we're definitely ready to go.

ELAINE RATCLIFFE: You're just taking on a bit of my speech.

HANNAH DARLING: I'm sorry.

Q. Lauren, how much did you learn from the Curtis Cup that will help you this time? Winning away from home is difficult, but what will you have to do this week to beat the USA?

LAUREN WALSH: Yeah, I think I learnt a lot from my Curtis Cup experience last year. I don't think I had really played much four-ball matches, so just gaining that experience, and as Caley mentioned earlier on, there's a lot more that goes on at the Curtis Cup besides just the golf. There's a lot of media or like signing stuff that we have to kind of take care of, and luckily everyone at Merion has been very welcoming and very supportive.

Just the whole experience around it, dealing with all of that while still making sure we get our business done on the golf course, I've taken a lot from that. As we've said, this golf course is all about hitting fairways and stay below the pin. That's what we're going to do well this week to bring it home.

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