

BMW PGA Championship

Wednesday, 10 September, 2025

Virginia Water, Surrey, England

Wentworth Golf Club

Luke Donald

Press Conference

BRIONY CARLYON: Delighted to welcome two-time BMW PGA Championship winner to the Media Centre today.

Luke, obviously you're looking forward to this week and playing in front of some home crowds here in England but also I'm sure as the European Ryder Cup Captain, you've had a few extra things on your mind. So give us a sense of what you're looking forward to this week.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, I always love coming to this event. This is our biggest event on the DP World Tour. It holds special memories for me, how much success I've had here, how close it is to where I grew up, a lot of memories even as a kid coming out to watch players like Ernie Els that inspired me into this game.

I love it. It's well-attended. Obviously the crowds are amazing here and it's a great atmosphere, and obviously we're very close to the Ryder Cup, as well. So great to have so many of our team here. Being together in one space is always important in the leadup and the buildup to Ryder Cup.

Q. Will Sepp be joining you for the trip?

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, he's going to be there Monday, Tuesday. We'll be all together again, which will be great.

Q. Will we get an idea of your pairings then?

LUKE DONALD: Will you get an idea of my pairings? Well, you can read into it however you want. There will be lots of different groups, different pairings playing together. Again, these things are never always set in stone. We always have a plan in place and another plan if things go in a different direction.

So we'll try and have a lot of options for the week. But obviously myself, Edoardo, the other vice captains, we've already had many conversations about that and started to figure it all out.

Q. You said that you are going to change around from



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Rome. What is it that makes you think that you can mix-and-match a bit more this time?

LUKE DONALD: Again, I think players change. It's two years since Rome, and so excited about the continuity and having a team that is very similar to Rome. I think that's a massive benefit for us. But players change.

Just, again, I've said this before: Look at someone like Bob. He's become a much better player in the last two years. I didn't see a similar option for foursomes but potential there is this time around because of the way he plays the game now.

Again, you have to always consider sort of those things that not everyone is playing the same. People shift whether you are a good driver or approach player or a putter. Those things move around in your career, and so you adapt to that.

Q. We saw last week at The Irish Open, the excited youngsters watching the golf, and you referenced coming here yourself as a youngster. Were there any stand out moments when you came here?

LUKE DONALD: Is there any specific ones? Not that I can think of on the top of my.

Head. Yeah, I remember just running around as a kid, kind of in awe of how good these players were. To me, Wentworth was this sacred place that had this tournament with all these special guys. Just watched a lot of those players.

I think you always -- you'd go home and want your Mum and dad to take you to the course and practise. They were sort of inspiring. I can't think of specific moments. But I remember watching a lot on TV, as well, all the Match Play events here and Faldo finishing, Seve winning, all those great European players.

I think that was always something that in the back of your mind, it made you feel like you wanted to be like them.

So that's again having an event where I was close enough to go and my parents could take me was pretty cool.



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Q. The dinner last night, how much of that was social and how much of that was strategy?

LUKE DONALD: Oh, mostly social. Again it's a nice opportunity this week. We have so many of the players here, the caddies, obviously, and partners and wives. The partners and wives weren't be on the practise trip. So again, it's just a good opportunity for us and be together.

Yeah, a little bit of strategy was talked about but it was mostly an event to get together.

Q. Can you give more details of Bethpage and any more plans, and the time between Bethpage and Ryder Cup, what the guys are going to be doing?

LUKE DONALD: Well, we plan to play nine holes on Monday and 18 holes on Tuesday. We'll go into the city for a fun dinner Tuesday night. Because we don't get to go into the City during the week of the Ryder Cup. It's obviously on the doorstep, but it's just far enough away and so busy that week. It's nice to experience where we are, that New York kind of vibe.

So between the event, yeah, some people are sticking together up in New York. Some people are going to work with their coaches. Some people are going home. It's not all 12 together doing the same thing. I think it's important; you don't want to -- they are together a lot this week. If you are all together next week and the week after, maybe that's a little overkill.

Some of them will be together playing some courses up in the New York area, but it's really up to them. As long as they are not flying back to Europe and have to deal with jet-lag, I don't really mind what they do. Yeah, they all good plans in place.

Q. Have you booked a Manhattan steakhouse?

LUKE DONALD: I cannot reveal that right now.

Q. Just wondered if you can talk to us a little about your memories as a player at Medinah -- now as a captain, how involved will you be in the advice you give to the players about having to contend with the crowd?

LUKE DONALD: I think there's a few guys that played with away Ryder Cups on the team still in Justin and Rory. Their experience is important and the experience of our vice captains having gone through that and experienced it myself. Obviously good experiences from my standpoint, 2004 we won quite easily and 2012 was obviously the comeback.

Yeah, I certainly enjoyed playing in an away Ryder Cup. In a way, you've got a little bit less pressure. The home team is meant to win. So I don't mind that. As long as you're prepared for getting a little bit of stick from the fans, I think that's okay.

I think everyone deals with it differently and individually. For me it was quite motivate to go know that probably we were thing in dog but we weren't expected to win, and it fueled me to play well.

So again, these are things we've already talked to some of the players and will continue to talk to them. But it's important that we have a good amount of experience in that team room with people that have dealt with it and we will certainly share that and learn from it.

Q. It seems as though whoever drives the captain's buggy is a bit of a black prince. Who is going to drive your buggy in Bethpage?

LUKE DONALD: My caddie is going to drive my buggy. I think that's mostly been away. Two years ago it was Rafa who was my caddie then. So Sam is my caddie now.

Q. Can you give us one example, possibly two, of things you've altered this time as a result of what you learned last time?

LUKE DONALD: Well, as I said, I think this is a different challenge. Some of our advantages from Rome are certainly not advantages anymore.

Again, I think a lot of my thinking revolves around crowd management and how we react as a team. But also, I try to approach this in a little bit of a different way in terms of communication amongst the players. You know, instead of just wait until the team is formed, and then sort of get my messaging across, that process started 15 months ago.

So again, those are probably the things that I felt like could be improved from Rome and hopefully they will see some good results.

Q. What would you say are the unique challenges that Bethpage as a course presents?

LUKE DONALD: My vice captain, Edoardo, was there a couple weeks ago and had a look at the course. There wasn't too much rough at that time. Obviously they have had three weeks since he was there, so they could grow it a little bit.

But again, I expect the course to be set up with minimal



rough, fast greens, and we'll get a little bit of a sense on Monday and Tuesday how the course is playing. It's always up to the home team how they set that up. So we might get there with greens at nine on the Stimpmeter. Who knows? That's their prerogative.

But I think we've had plenty of event at Bethpage, U.S. Opens, PGA Championship, FedExCup events. There's enough data there to understand what the course requires. Long driving is a benefit. Good putting is a benefit. Iron shots outside of 150 yards. Again, all kind of information that we have, and again, that's part of the process of how we put the team together and the pairings.

But Monday and Tuesday will be nice just to kind of see how the course is laid out. Obviously you can't grow rough in a week. So we'll see what sort of length it is by then.

Q. Are you able to share with us how you will be affected by presence of Donald Trump? I understand he's coming on Friday.

LUKE DONALD: Yeah, we were told that he's coming Friday. We don't know the details yet. I think the tours are talking about with The PGA of America to get more information. I guess he will want to be on the first tee. Again, we understand that he's coming and both teams will be ready for that.

Q. Just to follow that up, what does ready for that mean?

LUKE DONALD: Just to expect that he's coming. I think, obviously, The PGA of America is obviously organising this. There was some delays at the tennis. I think you're probably all aware of that, but hopefully they have learnt from that.

It's a big process, obviously, to get a president to come to an event. There's a lot of security and everything. It takes some work, I'm sure. The PGA of America's job is to make sure it's seamless, and he wants to be there to probably greet the players, and I think the crowd is probably going to be loud no matter what.

Again, I think just as long as we know that the president is going to be there, it's not like he's just going to turn up and we didn't expect it. We know he's going to be there, so it's fine.

Q. One other thing. You talk about the crowds. Usually caddies are in the background all the time you're playing but in this particular situation, I guess a caddie can be beneficial to help a player through or stop someone from interrupting what's going on the

golf course, like yelling or screaming or whatever. Have you thought about how you might talk with the caddies about how they might participate with the process?

LUKE DONALD: We will have a unified approach amongst the players, the caddies, the wives, everything. Obviously we've been told by the PGA of America, that's a strong amount of police are going to be there. They have their protocols in place, too. A lot of conversations over the last six months, and they have assured me that it's going to run smoothly.

BRIONY CARLYON: Well, Luke, thank you for your time and all the best this week.

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