

Senior PGA Championship

Congressional Country Club

Bethesda, Maryland, USA

Tuesday, May 20, 2025

José María Olazábal

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: José, welcome to the 2025 Senior PGA Championship. What are your thoughts on Congressional and the opportunity to play in another major this week?

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: Well, first of all, it's fantastic to be back at a golf course like Congressional. I played here, what was it, '96, '97 I think it was when Ernie won, and then I saw Rory winning in 2011. Obviously the golf course is playing different to then. We played yesterday nine holes, and I have to say that the golf course is going to be demanding; let's put it that way.

I was really impressed with the greens and the surroundings of the greens. It doesn't give you any room for error, and the greens were really firm yesterday. I don't know if they're going to keep them like that for the rest of the week.

But as I said, it's fantastic to be back at a place like this, Congressional. Great golf course and great venue. Having the PGA here I think is fantastic.

Q. As a Ryder Cup expert, this is going to build up to be a Ryder Cup --

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: '37 is it?

Q. '37. What do you think?

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: Well, I'll tell you what, as I said, I think the greens are quite severe. Let me put it that way. For a Ryder Cup venue, obviously you can set up the golf course to an event like that, being match play. They can obviously do whatever they want to the golf course.

But it's open for spectators. That's going to be great. They're going to be able to see pretty much everything. I think it's going to be a great venue, yeah.

Q. Have you been able to tell Luke what the secret is for winning on American soil?

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: I think he has that figured out. No, well, we will see. Obviously this year is a Ryder Cup year. It's a massive test for us playing away, especially in New York, Bethpage Black. We know the crowds are going to be loud.

But we need to be prepared for it. But nevertheless, it's a great challenge to have, one we are looking forward to, and hopefully we'll make things tough on the U.S. Team; let's put it that way.

Q. Is there one memory of 2012 that will be with you forever, any one particular shot, one match?

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: I mean, there were so many great moments, I have to say. That 7-iron Luke hit on 17 after Tiger put it close to the hole, that's a great moment. The way Poulter finished the afternoon session and his match on Saturday, birdieing the last three holes. The putt that Jim Furyk hit on 16 playing against Sergio, it was in all the way, and we still don't know how that ball stayed away, and that gave the opportunity for Sergio to turn the match around.

I don't know, there are so, so many moments. But maybe the whole round of Sunday, I think that was fantastic, how we turned things around, how the players went out there with no fear and played such great golf.

Maybe those moments in the locker room afterwards when we were all together, hugging each other and crying, maybe that moment was really the most special one, all together enjoying that moment. It's something that I have cherished ever since.

Q. Going back to your game, you keep winning that fight against your body, and I understand you feel like a bulldog. What do you expect here this week?

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: Well, it's going to be tough. My game is not at its best. My iron play is a little bit off, and especially around here, as I said, the greens being so demanding. You need to be on a perfect side of the flag, have great distance control. If you mis-hit it a little bit, if



you over-club or mis-hit it a little bit, you end up in a very difficult spot where it's going to be very difficult to up-and-down and save par.

It's going to be a great challenge. I'm looking forward to it. I'll try to do the best I can the first two days and see what I'm capable of.

As I said, we're going to have to play great, great golf this week if you want to put a decent score.

Q. One last thing about the Ryder Cup. I know you've been resistant for a while to take a big role in the Ryder Cup, and especially to come to America. What convinced you this time?

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: You know, I know I don't have many Ryder Cups -- many more Ryder Cups in me. I'm getting to an age where I think there is room for the new generation there. We do have more and more young players in the team, players that I follow on TV, but really they don't have any chance of spending any time with me maybe except at the Masters and that's it.

But having said that, what brought me to this year's Ryder Cup I think is the huge challenge that we're going to be facing. It's always very difficult to win away from home. New York, we know how loud New York can be.

Coming from Rome where I have wonderful memories, it was a lot of fun being there with the team, being alongside Luke, and Luke being the captain again this year. I think the combination of all those things made me decide to be part of this Ryder Cup.

Q. It's interesting because kind of almost out of the blue, the focus has been on more than ever about trying to win in the United States for the European team. I'm not saying that you didn't want to before, but it seems like that discussion to the point where you're thinking about a different process, a different way of thinking about things when you come here versus what you did in Rome. Why do you think there's all of a sudden this huge fervor to try to find a way to win here?

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: Well, because we love challenges. The game of golf is full of challenges, and I really believe that winning away the Ryder Cup I think is one of -- well, if not one of the biggest challenges, I'm pretty sure it's up there, and as a player, as a past player, to be able to do that, that will be a huge achievement.

You know, the fact that we know how difficult it is to win away, that actually pushes us to try even harder and do

whatever is needed in preparation-wise to be able to have the best chance possible to do that. You know, it's pretty much like when you are facing a major event; as an individual, that's the biggest goal you can face, and you try to do the best you can to achieve that goal.

Well, in team event, obviously Ryder Cup, it's the same scenario. New York makes it even more special.

Q. Keegan Bradley hasn't made a decision yet if he wants to go foursomes or four-ball to start. As you know, Seve was pretty good at that when he made his decision at Valderrama. What do you think benefits the home or away team?

JOSÉ MARÍA OLAZÁBAL: I think at the end of the day you have to play good golf, period. Obviously playing foursomes, it's more difficult to get into the rhythm of swinging and playing. But I don't know; it doesn't matter. Whatever they decide, we will have to adjust and do the best we can and be as prepared as possible.

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