

The Presidents Cup Media Conference

Tuesday, September 28, 2021

Captain Trevor Immelman Captain Davis Love III

Quail Hollow Preview Visit

STEWART MOORE: Welcome, everyone. Thanks for joining us here. We are excited to be here in Charlotte at the Quail Hollow Club for the 2022 Presidents Cup captains' visit. We're fortunate to be joined by Captain Immelman and Captain Love who will be here for a few days in Charlotte, and we wanted to spend a few minutes with the media here to kind of preview the '22 event and get to know the captains a little better, so we'll have a little bit of a fireside chat up here and then once we're done we'll make them available as well as Johnny Harris, Adam Spering for any one-on-one needs anyone might have.

Guys, thank you so much for being here. We made sure the sun was a little bit extra toasty. The left side of your face is going to get a little redder than the right.

Take me back to when you got the call, when you were named the captain of the 2022 Presidents Cup here at Quail Hollow. What was that moment like? Who delivered the news to you? Just take us through that.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Well, first of all, it's awesome to be here with everybody. I like the sun; feels good. You know, it happened on Sunday night down in Australia, and our team was battered and bruised on that Sunday. But you know, as usual, we shook it off and had a great night.

At the end of the night we all reconvened and were telling stories about the week, and the team just organically started talking about who they thought and wanted to be the next captain, and that was how it happened.

For me in the moment, it was extremely humbling to have your peers and friends want you to do something like that and lead their team. It was an amazing moment. We enjoyed the rest of the night, and it's been a fantastic experience to far.

I'm really excited about getting things going next --

STEWART MOORE: Especially following in the footsteps of fellow country man Ernie Els I imagine, it's got to be



special.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: For sure. Ernie did a fantastic job down in Australia. He really I feel like for the first time gave our team an identity and something to try to build off of. You know, we almost got there.

We're going to have a lot of work to do playing against a very strong American team, but we look forward to that opportunity.

Q. Davis, not your first rodeo getting the captain's call, but what was this one like?

DAVIS LOVE III: Very different. The PGA of America has kind of a system where they do it for the Ryder Cup, and obviously since 2014, starting in 2015, we kind of had a rebuilding program for the Ryder Cup, but we turned that into more like Team USA golf. We are fortunate that we get to do this every year.

We just finished the Ryder Cup last week, if you realize --

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Nobody here watched that.

DAVIS LOVE III: We just got done with it on Sunday, and the guys said, Are you going home, What are you doing, and I go, No, I'm going to Presidents Cup. Midnight it starts Presidents Cup year. So that's the way our guys look at it. They get to do it every year, they shift gears, but we are trying to build Team USA golf year-round.

So starting in 2015, we had a little bit different approach. We had more input with the PGA of America and the PGA TOUR. We're using one to get ready for the other.

Commissioner Monahan, unbeknownst to me, was going to let Tiger call me, but we'd had a lot of discussions, and I wanted Tiger to do it, he wanted me to do it. We talked about other guys that could do it. So my phone is ringing, I'm driving down the road at home in my pickup truck, and it's Tiger. I said, I guess I'd better answer this. He said, Can you talk. I said, Yeah, I'm about home, I'll call you later. He goes, No, now. I said, Yeah, sure, what's up. I thought something was wrong. He goes, You're the Presidents Cup captain for '22. I go, Wait a minute, I thought you were going to do it. He goes, No, we've talked about it, you're going to do it. And I said, On whose

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authority are you calling me. He said, Well, you can call Jay if you want.

But that was a cool way to do it. Just like Trevor, I hadn't heard that story, that was a neat way for it to happen. But the same thing; our group of captains made that decision.

Then Jay had the best line. He goes, Well, we know you're going to be Presidents Cup captain, and you're going to do it in Charlotte because that's where you were born, and you have such great ties to North Carolina. So it made sense.

Again, we're both just honored to be captain. I never saw myself as a captain. I always saw myself as a player or somebody that wanted to help out, not really be the leader.

So I'm excited. There's so many great things. The Harrises just made us honorary members of the club. We both have great ties to this club, to this state, obviously to this golf tournament and this golf course, so it just couldn't be better, I think, for either one of us to take the captaincy at this time.

Q. You mentioned the golf course. We see it every May at the Wells Fargo Championship, stroke play, leaderboard, but from a team competition standpoint, when you're looking out there over the golf course in match play, what makes this a great venue for the Presidents Cup format?

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Well, first of all, I think the fans is what's going to make it great. The tournaments that we've played here have always been so well supported, and this area being such a great sporting part of the United States with so many teams, pro teams, college teams, NASCAR, it's just a great sporting environment in this area, so the fans are going to be tremendous.

The golf course has always been one of my favorites on the PGA TOUR, and I believe from a match play standpoint, it's going to be extremely exciting. The way the routing is planned out, I see like a seven- or eight-hole stretch where we're going to have drivable par-4s, we're going to have par-5s, we've got all these holes with water in play. It's going to be fantastic to get the crowd really revved up supporting their home team, and I just can't wait.

I struggle to think of a better place to hold a team event like this.

Q. Davis?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, when I first heard they were going to change the order of holes, I'm kind of a traditional golfer,

traditional architect, and I don't like changing par-5s to par-4s. I don't like changing greens that were around for a long time. Obviously Johnny has made a couple changes here to the golf course, and they just get better and better. But 18 has always been 18. It's always had a creek on the left and a hard hole, and I was like, I don't get that.

Then I started looking at the map. In fact, I had the team send me the map when I was on the airplane today because I had lost it in my email somewhere, and I was like, drivable hole, par-5, water on the left. It's going to be exciting.

I hope that we finish a bunch of matches on 18 or 15, whatever you call it.

Now we've got Bryson, I don't know how many drivable holes we have.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: All of them are drivable.

DAVIS LOVE III: Maybe not the par-5s. But I think it's a great golf course, as Trevor said, for the fans to watch golf.

Last week was a hard golf course to get around and watch. This one is an easy course to follow a match or to find a great place to watch several holes. The Green Mile is going to be an incredible place to watch the pressure points of the match.

We know that they're going to come through here. We don't know if they're going to finish at 16 or 17, but they're going to come through here probably. So it's going to be an incredible venue, and as I've said a couple times since I was named captain, my son made it hit home to me how great this is going to be, all the reasons Trevor gave, the sports town, the fans, our ties to North Carolina. The players know the golf course. They're used to being in this clubhouse, they're used to being in this town, and I think it's going to be a home game for both of us.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: I won't go that far, but I see where you're going with that.

DAVIS LOVE III: Your guys have played so many rounds here. There's no course advantage. We'll have a fan advantage probably, but I've found in the Presidents Cups, both home and abroad, that it's more friendly fans.

Ryder Cup can get a little bit ugly at times because it has a long history of that, but North Carolina fans are great, as Trevor said, so many great sports teams and so many great fans here. I think it's going to be partisan but fair.

Q. You mentioned the Green Mile. Just to clarify the

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re-routing, so we're going to play Nos. 1 through 8 and then from 8, you're going to go over to 12, so you'll go behind 9 tee, go behind 11 green and then you'll play 12 through 18. So the Green Mile, instead of 16 through 18, become 13 through 15, and then the three closing holes are 10, 11 and 9.

The Green Mile, right? There's only so many three-hole stretches on the PGA TOUR that get a nickname. This one is well earned. What's so difficult about it? We kind of know visually but from a player standpoint you guys represent some of the best players in the world. You're both major champions. Some of the shots are terrifying. Trevor?

TREVOR IMMELMAN: There's just nowhere to hide on those holes. You just have to step up and hit a great shot. There's just no room to bail out. 16 is an awkward tee shot because the dogleg goes in the opposite direction to the slope, so it's very difficult to hit the fairway, and I always found the second shot there tough to judge the distance down the hill with it being exposed and with whatever wind there is. 17, that always proves to be one of the harder greens to hit from a par-3 standpoint on the PGA TOUR.

This hole right behind us, which will be the 15th, once again, you've just got to absolutely lace a tee shot down there and then be able to control the distance up the hill to an extremely undulating green.

Just really demanding. I think it was a brilliant idea to put those three holes in the meat of the back nine. I 100 percent foresee a couple of those holes you can win with a par, no problem. It's going to be great stuff.

I think the way the whole course sets up with, like I touched on, the drivable par-4s and par-5s that are reachable with water, it's going to be an amazing fan experience. As athletes, that's one of the things that we thrive on is being able to show off in front of big galleries, and so those players are going to just have the time of their lives.

Q. You've been around here a few times, Davis.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, there's no bail-out. Not only on those three holes, on the Green Mile. There's no bail out. 7, the par-5, if you don't hit a great drive, you cannot go for the green. You have to either miss the water, miss the bunkers, and then you have to hit it on the green. If you miss the green, you might not get it up-and-down. There's no easy out on a lot of these holes if you're trying to make birdies or eagles. Like Trevor said, some of these holes if the wind is blowing could be won with pars.

It's a great match play course, especially those three holes,

and I think the players -- like Trevor said, the players love to get out and show off, and there's not going to be a better stage than these three holes on the Green Mile.

Q. Often overlooked, too, 14 and 15 will be 11 and 12, you've got a drivable par-4 and a par-5 that's gettable in two, so setting up some drama leading into the Green Mile.

Davis, you spent a week with this young contingent of emerging American stars, not even emerging anymore, they are stars. As you look across that landscape of professional golf, from a U.S. Team standpoint, who are you most excited about one year from now?

DAVIS LOVE III: 1 through 12 last week, I'm excited about those 12. Then we had a bunch of guys that could have played on the team.

Steve did a great job of picking a group that fit well together. There was a lot of reasons to pick the next six guys that he didn't pick, but there were better reasons to pick -- and you saw it. They just bonded together real well.

I'm really excited about Scottie Scheffler. People may have been unsure about that pick, but what he did in the match play, he knocked off two big-name European players there, obviously had a great Sunday in an individual match. He can stand up with anybody.

Then the young group -- our old guy Dustin Johnson doesn't look very old, and that crew is just -- I think it was Jordan or Justin said it in the press conference: A lot of us have been playing together since grade school. It's a group of guys that are young and they've played a lot of golf together, they hang out together. I think we had an average World Ranking of 8.9 or something last week. I mean, you just can't get much better than that.

Now, obviously we've got a year of points, a lot of points in the next season. We won't get exactly the same 12, but we've got a core group that we can count on.

Q. Trevor, an exciting year for the International Team; obviously Hideki, you saw Abe Ancer finally break through, Louis Oosthuizen nearly winning every major. You guys are surging. Who are you most excited about with a year to go?

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Well, there's a number of players I'm excited about right now, and for the last year or so we've had a squad of about 20 or 25 guys that we've often tried to get together to create a bunch of camaraderie and have a good time together, get to know each other a little better.

The hurdle for us is quite clear. We represent a large portion of the world. Last time in Australia we had eight different regions represented. So we have to try and bridge those gaps from a communication and culture standpoint, so those are the things that we work really hard on.

But man, all corners of the globe are really producing some special talent. We've got some youngsters, Joaquin Niemann has been playing some great golf since he got on to the PGA TOUR. He's in his early 20s. On the other side of the planet you've got a guy by the name of Sungjae Im from Korea. He's come on to the PGA TOUR and really impressed people with his ball-striking. There's a number of guys, Abe Ancer, Cameron Smith. These are guys that came into Australia as rookies and performed quite well.

We understand what a huge mountain we have to climb. The American team showed last week exactly what their potential is, playing some really fantastic golf, and they're going to have a lot of confidence and the crowd behind them here.

You know, that's what gets you excited as a competitor, to have that opportunity to go up against the best, so it's going to be a lot of fun. Can't wait.

Q. Not every part of being a captain is enjoyable, right? At some point you have to make some captain's selections. You've done this a few times, Davis. What is that like? You're making a few phone calls where it's making a player's year, and then you're probably making double that probably letting some other guys know that they're going to get to watch from home. What's your experience been like? And Trevor, what have you heard from other captains how best to approach that?

DAVIS LOVE III: There's not a best way to approach it --

TREVOR IMMELMAN: I'm listening now, too, by the way.

DAVIS LOVE III: The best strategy is to get the hard ones over with first and then you have the good ones after. Steve was calling us after every one for reassurance this past time. He had some really, really tough phone calls, obviously one here to Webb Simpson, who would have dearly loved to have been on that team, would have fit in great, was playing well. It's just hard.

I mean, these guys are not only guys that are going to be in your team, they're our friends. They're people we play with all the time.

It's just really hard to tell somebody that you're -- especially the first couple out, the guys that are right on the bubble. It's just hard to tell them that they didn't make it. I've gotten the phone call before, and I've had to make the phone call, and it doesn't get any easier. I've made a few phone calls because of logistics for other captains, and it really is not good.

But it makes you feel better about your team once you get it over with, and you say, all right, the hard part is over, now we can go play golf. But if he needs any advice at all I'd be glad to help him -- Ernie is going to help him. Ernie has done it. All the guys have done it. It's disappointing to have to leave people off, and I think that's the hardest -- it's the same thing he'll find sitting people out. Who do you sit out? He's going to have 12 of the best players in the world, and he has to tell some of them to watch while the other guys go play. That's hard, as well.

Trevor is one of the nicest guys in the world; he won't have any problem doing it.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, it's going to be tough. I just picked up a few tips right there. Every captain that I've spoken to, whether it be our past captains or past European or American Ryder Cup captains have all said the same thing; it's the hardest part of the job. But it needs to happen, so you've got to find the best way through it.

Davis has got six picks. I've got four. So he's going to have to make a few more calls than what I am.

But yeah, it's probably the hardest thing that we're going to have to do, but once you get through that, you can turn the page, so to speak, and know which 12 you've got to come to the tournament with.

DAVIS LOVE III: Even Jack Nicklaus the first year he was captain tried to chicken out on it. He said, Let's just go with the top 12 point earners and just be done with it, so I'm thinking the same way. I could get out of a lot of phone calls.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: I've been on both sides of it as, well, as a player. I got picked by Gary Player in 2005 and I've had calls from other captains telling me that I'm not quite making it this time. As a player I've experienced both sides, and it's amazing the emotional difference between being told that -- asked to join the team as a pick and then on the other side of the coin being told that you haven't quite made it.

It's a tough one.

Q. Davis, I'm not dating you here, but you've been

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around for a few Presidents Cups. We go back to the early '90s and discussions that you had with Commissioner Finchem at the time about this new event that would be similar to the Ryder Cup, that would pit the U.S. against internationals. What was it like back then when this started in '94, and from a player's point of view, what are thoughts on it, kind of being there from the ground up.

DAVIS LOVE III: I've been very fortunate to be on the board of the TOUR a lot, seen a lot of things, a lot of ideas, like moving the World Golf Hall of Fame down to Florida. The First Tee was an idea in the boardroom that Tim spearheaded.

But I was on an airplane with Hugh Culverhouse from Tampa and Tim going to a board meeting, and Tim says, Hey, I'm going to have this idea brought up at the board meeting about having a Presidents Cup opposite years of the Ryder Cup, and I said, Well, that sounds good; when are you going to have it? He goes, oh, September, same as the Ryder Cup, and I go, Well, I have a hunting trip to Africa planned in '94. Mr. Culverhouse said, Well, you should go hunting. Tim said, no, no, no, he's not going hunting.

I think it was like a year. It happened quick. So I was lucky enough to make the first team and see the beginnings of it.

But he did -- I think he's going to be here. He did promise that we were going to play at RTJ, we were going to stay in the cottages and it was going to be nice and friendly and everybody got to stay home.

Luckily it grew. Next thing you know, we're in Canada and Korea and South Africa and Australia, and it's become one of our favorite events.

Obviously we're kind of partial to it because we win it a lot more than the Ryder Cup, but it's incredible how much it's grown since 1993, and it's become a favorite of our fans and of our players, and it's a big goal for our players to make these teams. I'm just glad that I saw the start of it, and now I'm -- hopefully this ends my Presidents Cup career. I've been at it a long time. That's what I told Tiger, I said, look, somebody else needs to take over. You should do it or we should pass it on. But what an honor to see it come this far since 1993.

Q. Davis, you were there at the beginning. Trevor, now fast forwarding 2015, 2019, there's kind of been this surge of the internationals and you guys are on the cusp. Just some thoughts about being so close to really -- you haven't won too many of these, but it feels

like we're a lot closer than we were 10, 15 years ago and certainly back in the '90s and just the excitement for that.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, actually I did feel like that until Friday last week, and then I saw how the Americans played over the weekend, and man, that showed me that we absolutely do have our work cut out.

You know, yeah, it has grown such a tremendous amount, and for us as international players, those weeks during the Ryder Cup you would always sit at home going, man, I want something like this, I need a piece of this kind of action, team play, representing something bigger than yourself, match play.

Thankfully you guys came up with that idea on that airplane because we love it. We're all in on it. Yeah, we've got to find a way to play a little better and match up with these guys.

Really thankful the way it's grown and the way it's planning out. I think the next one is probably going to be the best one yet.

Q. No one here has really had the experience of being that team room. You guys spend a lot of time by yourselves on the road, probably spend more time with your caddie than maybe anyone else on earth. It can be a lonely game, but during the Ryder Cup, certainly during the Presidents Cup, you get time, the camaraderie in the team room; what's that like bonding with the guys during the week and building friendships that might theoretically last a lifetime?

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, it's things you remember forever, just to have the opportunity to let your guard down for a week and really get to know people and get to know their families and meld together for one common goal. It's extremely exciting, and it's so enjoyable. You spend most of the time just laughing, laughing at each other. You start to see people's personalities. We've got a guy on our team Louis Oosthuizen, the guy loves to dress up and sing karaoke. Do you know how entertaining that is for seven days? It's just so awesome.

At the end of the week, you wait so long, and it feels like time stands still, and then the tournament starts, and it's just over in the blink of an eye, and at the end of the week you're just walking around giving people hugs saying, I've got to get on this team next time. I had such a great time this week. That's what makes it special.

Really that's what makes golf special is the relationships you make over the years.

Q. Davis, your thoughts?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, yeah, it's hard to explain that the week is still great if you lose. It doesn't seem to make any sense. But it's still a great experience. I've been on obviously both sides of it a lot.

It's a week like no other. Like you said, we've individuals and we have friends, obviously Jordan and Justin are friends and Patrick and X-man are friends, but they were all four together for seven days -- well, nine days, we had a practice round the weeks before. Those guys spent so much time together and had so much fun laughing. Somebody put up a post on Instagram of like six pictures of the European team just laughing at every stage. They didn't have a great time with the score, but I saw Rory supporting guys out on the golf course, I saw guys following Rahm around. It's amazing the bond that the Ryder Cup or the Presidents Cup bring to our game.

I mean, when can I say that I was working out in the gym with Brooks and Bryson? That just doesn't happen on TOUR. They don't ever invite me to go work out with them.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Wait, they were working out together?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, and that's the thing I've been saying for six or eight months, Stricker has been trying to say in the media: It's not going to be a problem. I keep saying, if we had a whole bunch of really good hunting dogs and we didn't keep them in their own kennels, they're going to get in a fight. We have a bunch of guys vying to get on the team, playing and competing against each other for the FedExCup.

Eventually, especially today with social media, somebody is going to get in an argument. I sat with them at dinner together at the TOUR Championship. I sat with them at dinner during the week. They hit balls, talked to each other on the range. I think Steve has said it: They offered to play together. They worked out in the gym together, and it was fine.

They're going to be better friends because of it. I'm going to be better friends with Patrick Cantlay than I could have ever imagined after one week with him. I didn't really -- I knew him. I knew he played pretty good golf sometimes, but I didn't really know Patrick Cantlay. Fred Couples and I got to know Patrick Cantlay, which will help us for next year.

Yeah, it's the greatest week, and it is hard to describe how much fun it is. I think the biggest problem I have with the

perception of the U.S. Team is that we don't get along, and we get along incredibly well, maybe too well, and we try too hard and sometimes we lose because we try too hard.

I think Trevor's team has really learned from what we learned from the Europeans. They had a system that we didn't understand. Once we figured out what they were doing, we said, wait a minute, we're not organized. We don't have a system. So we figured it out, and over the last couple Cups, these guys have figured it out, and what Trevor said, he had an event here, right, during the -- didn't you have your team get together here?

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, mm-hmm.

DAVIS LOVE III: He's ahead of the game. They're building their team. We learned it in 2014, 2015. We have fun, and we always get along, but we haven't built a program to win, and I think they're catching on a little too much frankly.

Q. You guys both talked about earlier, and candidly I'm a Charlotte native so this market is incredibly special, and I think we've looked at Charlotte evolve over the last 20 years, the major sporting events, the Wells Fargo Championship a staple, two PGA Championships, the upcoming Presidents Cup, and you look at the success of the Panthers, you have the Hornets, NASCAR, FC, certainly major college sporting events, and the fans turn out. This is a rabid sports event market. Just looking one year out, what do you think these crowds are going to look like at Quail Hollow? We talked about the bigness of the ballpark and the space for people. It's going to be robust.

TREVOR IMMELMAN: Yeah, I think it'll be better than anything we've ever seen. You've just got to take a look at this hall right behind us. It's a natural amphitheater. It's stadium golf really, and people are going to be able to pack in. It's going to be loud and rowdy and fantastic.

DAVIS LOVE III: Obviously the Harris family, this club has evolved into a venue for major championship golf. I mean, it wasn't we're going to have a little pro-am here. We're going to have one of the best PGA TOUR events on the circuit, major championships and now the Presidents Cup. It's built for it.

Every time you come back there's something bigger, better, grander. I hadn't seen the changes to the entrance. It's going to be a great venue. We've said it over and over again. The fans are going to be great.

One of the first things I said when we started talking about clothes, I said, we might need some Carolina blue like

Tiger had down in Australia. That might help us along a little bit. I think the fans are going to be great, and it's going to be an incredible spot for both teams. I think the excitement level is going to be up like nothing we've ever seen.

Q. There's going to be a few UNC flags out there, don't you think?

DAVIS LOVE III: I think so. A lot of "Go Heels."

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