

RBC Heritage

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Harbour Town Golf Links

Davis Love III

Press Conference



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THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome five-time winner of the RBC Heritage, Davis Love III to the interview room. Celebrating, I believe, his 58th birthday today. Davis, if we can get you to comment on being back at a place that you love on a very special day.

DAVIS LOVE III: Thank you. Yeah, Patrick Cantlay just said he short changed me on how long I've been on TOUR and then he came back with that he only thought I was like 52 or 53. So I told him he's now my favorite Ryder Cupper Presidents Cupper.

Yeah, it's always fun to come back here, been looking forward to it for a while. I played a practice round at the Valspar with Zach Johnson and I said, You need to play some tournaments and get ready for the Masters and I need to play some tournaments and get ready for Hilton Head because that's my major for this spring.

So I've been kind of pointing towards this, I've had an up-and-down last year with being able to play, had a hip replacement last summer and then a stiff back a little bit from trying to play too much after a hip replacement. And so I'm kind of bouncing back again and been excited about getting ready for this. So it's always great to be here.

THE MODERATOR: You mentioned the Presidents Cup, some exciting news announced earlier today, if you can elaborate for us.

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, we're announcing today that Zach Johnson, who is next year's Ryder Cup captain, will be assistant captain with me for the Presidents Cup.

And then our all-time quarterback captain, Fred Couples, will also be assistant captain. And I was assistant captain for him and we obviously played a lot together. I was going to try to add up, to be prepared for this, how many times Fred's been to the Presidents Cup, but it probably would have taken me a little while. I know he played in all of the probably first five or six and then he's been captain three times and assistant. So Freddie kind of is the Presidents Cup.

And then the three of us over the next few months will kind of sort out how many more we need and who that's going to be. Obviously we're starting to watch points now a lot more that we've started the major season and guys are starting to rack 'em up. So I just switched hats to come in here. Again, we're wearing a lot of hats. Zach's already working on Ryder Cup and helping me with Presidents Cup, so we're continuing a great kind of run we've been on since 2014, 2015 winter when we kind of learned that we needed to get more organized.

So I'm very excited to have those two guys and they add a lot, obviously, to our team and they're trusted by the players, so excited to get going on it.

THE MODERATOR: We'll open it up to questions.

Q. What role will Tiger Woods have for you?

DAVIS LOVE III: Any role he wants. We had to pry him off the couch a little bit last winter and spring to get involved in the Ryder Cup and then once we got him going, he was very engaged and loved it. So, you know, obviously it's been a long year and a half for him, so that's one thing that Fred and Zach and I need to do is get him in the loop and say, All right, what do you want to do?

I mean, if he says, You're not captain anymore, I'm going to be the captain, we'll probably have to talk about that one. But anything else, if he wants to be co-captain or assistant captain or player -- he's just been, since I think it was the 2015 Presidents Cup in Korea when he was calling us just non-stop and texting about pairings and what was going on -- and it was a huge time change and we couldn't figure out if he should be asleep or watching on TV -- and ever since then he's just been involved. So whatever he wants to do.

And the coolest thing about this captaincy for me, and I've been blessed to be captain and assistant captain a bunch, but the coolest thing was that Tiger called me and said, You're the captain. After a lot of discussion, should it be Zach, should it be Tiger, who is going to be the next Ryder Cup, who is going to be the next Presidents Cup, and through all of that I was pushing obviously for Tiger,

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because he had just won and had been a great captain. And I felt, like Jack Nicklaus, Tiger should just kind of do it as long as he wanted to.

And then he calls me and says, All right, you're captain in Charlotte, it's the right thing to do at this time, you're going to be Presidents Cup captain eventually, so you should do it in Charlotte. To have him make that phone call and be a part of it really makes it even more special.

I've been very, I've had some great phone calls like that both captain and assistant captain, but that was the coolest one probably.

Q. When you play a round here these days and what comes, what comes to your mind? Do you remember shots that you were successful at like from '91, '92, does the 2003 chip come back?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well today I, and well yesterday, I scouted the new tees that I'm not involved in the renovation work here, but our architect that works for our firm, Scott Sherman who came up under Pete and Alice, so I was checking out Scott's work and then pointing out to like Poulter yesterday and to my amateurs today, this has been a change over the years. And somebody, I think it was Poulter commented that, Isn't this cool how we go off 1 green and right into 2 tee and we go off 2 tee and right into 3 and now 15 into 16 or I mean 16 into 17. So I'm seeing how much farther back we are.

I used to walk up on every tee, starting with Herman Mitchell here in 1986 and '87, he just hand me a 1-iron, like on every hole. And the only day he let me hit driver on 18 was it was into the wind like howling into the wind was the only time he would let me hit a driver on this course, basically. And now I have to hit driver every single hole, it doesn't matter, I just walk up and pull out a driver.

I should have hit 3-wood off 18 today because it was blowing, howling straight down.

But so many great memories. I told my amateurs on 18 tee, I have a story about 18 tee, and I said, I have a story for every hole for you, I just wish I could play the next nine. I handed them off to Sepp Straka on 1. But just so many great memories.

And we were talking at the Masters last week, Why do you win Hilton Head? Well I finished second at the Masters and I had some good runs at the Masters. And I finally realized that my luck or my good putting or my time always seemed to happen this week or at THE PLAYERS or at Greensboro, it just never really happened at the Masters. I got unlucky in a couple of seconds that I really could have

won when I played well.

So, you know, Greg Norman, his bad luck happened at majors and not Doral. You know?

So this place has been a blessed place for me ever since I came here. And I was at dinner with Arthur Blank last night and he said, I was here in '69 and watched Arnold Palmer. And I was like, I was here too, I was watching my dad, I was five.

So it's been a great place for me my whole life and something about being relaxed here, you look at the other guys, guys that have won majors, they do play well here and they come off the Masters and go right in and win. So a lot of multiple winners and a lot of big names have won here because they're getting ready for this season of Masters, PLAYERS and big tournaments.

Q. Keeping with the theme of you being coming here so long, just can you take me through your recollections as you have them of the evolution of the range net at on the driving range and it's 20 feet --

DAVIS LOVE III: The range net was growing a little bit and it got perfect and then Bryson showed up a couple years ago and then the net didn't even work for that.

You know, we're working on a design project where they want to put up a net and we're fighting it like, Please, no, let us come up with a solution rather than a net.

But then I started thinking, Well, my two favorite driver ranges was here and Augusta trying to hit it over the net. And I went, Well, wait a minute, maybe that's not a bad idea, because it's a goal.

But, yeah, when it went first up and then it went the next level up and then it went Bryson up has been an incredible -- but that's -- my son or half these kids out here, they fly it 340, so the net -- I don't even know, if it was down wind, I don't know, half these guys could still hit it over if they wanted to. You can hit it -- you can hit a drive that will stay, but they can also hit a drive that will go over it.

So those poor people, the ones that land in the road and bounce on those people's house over there, they got to be tired of it in April.

Q. Do you maybe take the last two, three swings of your driver and give it a whack?

DAVIS LOVE III: I'm trying to hit it halfway up the fence right now. They don't have to come and tell me to stop. They used to come and tell me to stop. I got scolded at

Augusta a couple times.

There's one in at Wyndham too, that, now I can't probably can't get over it anymore either. But it's fun. I would like to know from the guys that pick up the balls how many go over on to 8.

Q. Presidents Cup question for you, it seems like there is a merging of the captancy lines of succession between the Presidents Cup and the Ryder Cup as in the same people are doing both. Question, is that intentional, is that a strategic idea?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well our, and it's a big group when I say "our," you know, it's that first meeting in winter of 2014 and 2015 after losing the Ryder Cup for the, whatever, third time in a row, it started with Raymond Floyd. It was a big group of guys, all the way down to Rickie Fowler was the young guy and we had Tiger, Striker, Lehman, Phil, just right on down the list.

And we all sat there and said, We got to do something different. And we, it was a Ryder Cup meeting, but we don't look at it that way, we look at it as we're a team that plays every year and it goes Ryder Cup, Presidents Cup. So one thing that Phil was really adamant about was consistency and continuity from year to year. And we can use an assistant captain at the Presidents Cup to get him experience for the Ryder Cup to get him experience for the Presidents Cup captancy down the road.

So you can see what Zach Johnson has done. We've moved him from player, player, player, immediately to assistant captain. And now, you know, it's been awkward the last few years, Ryder Cup, who is going to take which year. And Zach was looking like a Presidents Cup captain first to get him ready for Ryder Cup and then Rome became a spot, an away game for somebody to be a great leader and it turned out for us that Zach made the most sense for that one. But he could do it because he had been assistant a few times.

So it's really important. And, again, we love both competitions, Presidents Cup we've had a better record, so we're trying to take that record and apply it to Ryder Cup. Why do we play better in Presidents Cup. But, yes, to answer your question, yes, we just do it year round. We're already working on food for Italy, while we're working on food for Charlotte, while we're working on clothes. And so Zach and I have done this together a lot and it's pretty seem less. Stats count for this year just like they did for last year, things we learned over the last couple Presidents Cups and Ryder Cups are going to really help us in Charlotte.

Q. I ask this follow-up a little bit tongue in cheek but Jack Nicklaus had to suffer '87 through being the first captain to lose on home soil in the Ryder Cup and he did it at his home. Do you believe in historical parallels and I guess the real question is, you're at home, is it in your head at all, does it motivate you any harder to prepare for this one?

DAVIS LOVE III: I'm going to say I live in Georgia, but I was born in Charlotte. But here's where we are is this team that we're going to put together has zero record, this is one thing we've been big on, is Steve had this "one" was his theme. One chance, one team, one, hole No. 1, one match at a time.

And I said that in 2016 when the guys are under so much pressure to win a Ryder Cup, I said, You guys don't have a record, you're a brand new golf team. And I screwed up a little bit and said it's the finest team ever assembled. I didn't, I was saying that, if you asked me what I'm going to tell my team, I'm going to tell them they're the best golf team ever assembled. They might have been, until last year's Ryder Cup team was pretty dang good too.

But you tell them that they don't have a record and you don't want them playing for the captain or for Charlotte or for any other reason, other than this is your chance to play in the Presidents Cup and to get a win. And here's all the reasons why this is, you're the team to do that.

So I don't look at my record, I look at trying to get them prepared to play and that's our job as captains is to not be involved, just give them, and again, what came out of those meetings is giving this team the best chance they can to succeed. So we were going to try to take luck out of it.

Q. Having been part of so many of these teams and seeing sort of different generations come and go is there something about the latest group of youngsters, three guys 25 or younger among the top 4 in the world that is different than previous generations? I mean they don't, they seem to just come in and make themselves at home instead of growing into it.

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, well they're coming out ready to play. Jordan and now Scottie and Justin Thomas and they're coming out not scared. I mean, it took me a long time to get comfortable hanging around Tom Kite and Ben Crenshaw. Justin doesn't have any problem hanging around Tiger Woods, he's idolized him and watched him and he wants to learn from him, but they have become friends, he's not intimidated by that. I was intimidated by Raymond Floyd when I came out on TOUR.

And that's the difference. I was trying to learn how to grow

up on TOUR, these guys are coming in -- I mean Scottie Scheffler, and I've known Scottie for quite awhile, he is as mature and grown up 25 year old as you want to be around. And, but Jordan said it, I think it was Jordan said it last year, We played against each other and have known each other since high school, since junior golf. And they all get along well, they're all on the same program now.

You know, we had older guys and younger guys that were on different programs on a lot of teams and didn't know each other and didn't hang out.

They're in the gym, they're all doing the same things all the time. So I think they, unfortunately Coach Bill Self said that, This might not be my most talented team, but they're my most together team.

I think that's what we're getting, to your point, they all are together more. And that's been a knock on us, which I didn't really agree with, that we didn't care and we didn't bond and all that in Ryder Cups and Presidents Cup, I think that was not true, but it's gotten a lot better. They know each other better -- like Stricker had two or three things that could have maybe been issues and he goes, No, it's not going to be an issue, these two get along and those two get along and they're all on the same page, that's just fluff from the outside.

So I think now we have our most together team ever, even if we're one year to the next we're not as talented, they're all together.

Q. You seemed to indicate when you answered the question earlier that if Tiger wanted to be on this team as player he could be on this team. Did you see anything out of his game at the Masters that would suggest that he could or couldn't be on this team?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, because I didn't think he would ever play again and he proved us wrong. And then I didn't think he could walk 72 holes at Augusta, because that's one of our hardest walks, and then he proved us wrong again.

You know, I've seen and talked to him a lot over the last year and a half and I know what he was working towards, but, you know, he's unbelievable at over coming whatever happens to him, whatever, whether it's his swing or his putting or his body, he just can will his way towards his goals.

So he told me, when he told me I was going to be captain, that he wanted to play on the team. So I don't think that's changed.

Now, can he do it? I'll just say no, he's not going to play enough golf and he won't be able to do it, so then he'll do it. And what could be a better story than him playing the Masters, him playing The Open Championship and working his way back and winning a golf tournament and being at least in the conversation.

But, honestly, what we want is we want him involved, because look what he's done for some of the young guys, look what he's done for some of the old guys that are captains, he's really helped us.

So he's a big part -- it went from we didn't know who Tiger Woods was, you know, he's beaten the stew out of us and we didn't really know him, to now he's a close friend, he's a trusted captain, he's a mentor to the young players.

So we want him around in some way, shape or form at the Presidents Cup or even if it's like Ryder Cup, even if it's just is Zoom calls and on the phone and on text, we definitely want him involved.

And again, that's going to be his decision. I watched him at the Hall of Fame thing, you know, I was standing right beside him, I would have bet you that night he's not going to be able to walk 72 holes at the Masters. So who knows what he's going to be doing in September.

Q. And then actually Fred's been a good Presidents Cup captain but never got the chance to be a Ryder Cup captain. Why do you think that is and do you think it's something that could still be fixed?

DAVIS LOVE III: I'll be honest, I think it was by design. I think he was real comfortable being Presidents Cup captain -- and the Ryder Cup captaincy's a big job, you know, it's a lot of work. And I don't know if he ever got asked and turned it down, but I think he just liked the Presidents Cup and felt like he was, he played the first one and it was a big part of him. And I've had other players go, I don't know, I watched you be Ryder Cup captain, I don't know if I want to, that's a big job. It's a long two years.

Presidents Cup is more comfortable, I won't say easy, it's more comfortable, because it's staff we work with all the time and they run both teams and it's a little bit smaller animal than Ryder Cup.

So I don't know. Fred's good in the locker room, in a practice round, as a captain, I think he would have been a great Ryder Cup captain. He could still be Ryder Cup captain. We may have to fill a gap somewhere now. Our order's kind of messed up right now. So maybe Fred would be a great home game in New York.

Q. You said it was time to really start looking at the points. When you look at the 12 guys or the top 6 automatic, what surprises you and what's your overall analysis of what's going on out here?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, in all these years I've never really gotten hung up on it early in the year. You get e-mailed these points list week after week after week and I don't really start watching really until the Masters. There's a whole bunch of points to go, so I don't really pay much attention.

But back in, I don't know, December or January, my wife -- and Michael Bamberger likes it when I say Robin Love -- Robin Love said to me, Where's all the guys from the Ryder Cup team on the Presidents Cup list? What's going on?

I go, Okay, let me explain how the points work. They haven't played a whole lot lately and the fall guys have run up the points. And don't worry, Dustin and Brooks and those guys will start playing tournaments and they will start playing well and they will shoot back up the list.

I said it last year, we won't get the same 12 as we had last time. I mean that would, it never works out that way. You always have, there's some flip flop. But I think we'll have the core group. I mean, you know, the Cantlay, Morikawa, Dustin, Jordan, Justin, they're going to make some points between now and then. And then we're going to have new guys that run all the points up like Scottie and Sam Burns and Zalatoris, they're going to get their points too.

So I'm prepared for a different team. But that's what's great about it, you get the hot guys. The hot guys from last year might not be the hot guys this year.

THE MODERATOR: All right, good stuff, Davis, thank you as always for your time.

DAVIS LOVE III: Thank you.

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