

# The Presidents Cup

Tuesday, September 24, 2024

Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Royal Montreal Golf Club

**Mike Weir**

**Jim Furyk**

Quick Quotes

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon. Welcome to the 2024 Presidents Cup at the Royal Montreal Golf Club. On behalf of the PGA TOUR, we are thrilled to be back in Montreal for the first time in 17 years and looking forward to a great week of competition between the International and U.S. teams.

At this time, I'll turn it over to our captains for some opening comments, and then we'll take some questions.

MIKE WEIR: Welcome, everybody, to Canada, Montreal. As the international captain, I'm very, very excited to be representing those 12 players out there. Being from here, from Canada, from Sarnia, dream come true really to be here. Just excited to get this going against a good rival, good friend, Jim, Captain Furyk here.

It's really exciting we're getting close to being underway here in a couple days. Really excited that it's kind of on the eve almost now of getting started.

It's been a lot of preparation we've done for a couple years, and now we're finally here. So excited to get started.

JIM FURYK: I agree. Same with Mike, we've been friends for a long time, same age, played some college golf together, our whole careers together. Wonderful to be here.

I've got some great memories from the RBC Canadian Open, '06, '07. I realize this is Mr. Golf in Canada, right? The whole golfing world revolves around Mike up here in Canada, and it's well-deserved with the Masters champion.

But I always felt like I got treated really well here, being a two-time winner. We're very aware that we're in an away game. We're very aware that 99 percent of this crowd is not going to be pulling for us.

I'm excited about the 12 guys I got. I think they really like that atmosphere, and they have to be ready for it because,



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like I said, the whole world is going to be pulling for us.

So our mentality is a little bit -- we're a group of about 75, if you look at our team, our caddies, the wives, the physios, our stats team. You look at kind of a group of about 75, and we kind of feel like it's us versus the world this week. So we're thrilled to get out here. It's going to be a great competition.

**Q. If you can identify a few challenges for your team this week, what are they?**

MIKE WEIR: Some challenges? Jim has a great team. They have great players over there. There's always going to be difficult matches. I don't know if there's anything in particular. We don't know how the matches are going to shape up, how the matchups are going to shake out, so to speak.

Come Wednesday night, you guys will know. But golf's golf, and there are going to be challenging matches no matter what, the odd time there's a team that runs away with a match here and there, but most of the matches are always tight.

I think the golf course presents a great challenge to all the guys, but it brings in a great mix of players, I believe. That's what to me is a sign of a great golf course is that -- did you win here, Jim?

JIM FURYK: I did not.

MIKE WEIR: Like Scott Verplank, players that probably hit the ball the same, our length, won here a number of times, it's advantageous to long players too. It's a great golf course in that way, that all players can be relevant around this place.

**Q. Question for Mike. Can you explain to us a little bit how much the crowd can be impactful? And of course there's a need to stay calm and focused. How much does crowd affect that?**

MIKE WEIR: It's a big part of this competition, I believe, and a big part of team golf where you can ride some

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momentum and the crowd gets behind you, and you can really feed off that. I certainly did here in 2007, not only with my match playing Tiger, but just the other matches, you get the crowd energy, and you can raise your level a little bit. So it can be a huge factor.

We're certainly hoping the fans come out hard and cheer a lot for our guys. Hopefully it is a factor.

**Q. For Mike and Jim. A lot's been made about having the use of analytics in helping choose your teams. I'm just curious, when play actually begins, without giving away any state secrets, how will you use analytics on a day-by-day or round-by-round basis?**

JIM FURYK: I have a little bit to do, a lot to do with our picks. I think also in the pairings, matchups. I think there's a lot of different things that will go into it.

From a day-to-day basis, my guy will be on the golf course, depending where the par-3s following -- you can't follow four or five groups at a time. I think we rely on what our analytics teams see out there on the golf course.

But really, we both have great assistant captains. They're our eyes, our ears. I get a lot of information from those guys and rely heavily on what they see.

MIKE WEIR: Just to what Jim said, I think through the whole process for me these last couple years is relying on those numbers, relying on having the ear of my five assistant captains and talking to them throughout this whole process helps with the pairings, helps with the picks.

Same thing; once the guys get on the course, you start to maybe see some different things. As Jim said, as a captain, you're kind of rolling around a little bit more. So you have the guys out there to really keep a closer eye on maybe an individual match and give you that feedback. You can make the adjustments, if needed, so to speak.

**Q. This being a U.S. Presidential election year, this being a Presidents Cup, it got me thinking about role models. The question is who's your role model and why?**

JIM FURYK: Sure. I'm not sure how it got to politics. Role models as politicians or role models in the game of golf?

**Q. However you want to answer.**

JIM FURYK: We're going to pick the same guy. I think for him, it's Jack Nicklaus.

MIKE WEIR: That's one of them for sure.

JIM FURYK: I've heard the story about the letter, and it's an amazing story. I think I'm going to start with Jack because I played for him in three Presidents Cups. I saw how he integrated himself into the team and how it was amazing for us, for a much, much younger generation to get to know a legend, and the more he got to know us, the more he really got involved with the teams and the pairings and how we went about with our day-to-day preparations.

Kind of being around the greatest player of all time, or arguably the greatest player of all time, and spending time with he and Barbara, who's amazing, was absolutely wonderful.

I think Mike would probably say the same thing. The greatest thing for me about these events -- there's so many wonderful things about the Presidents Cup, the Ryder Cups, but it just brings together so many different generations. I have guys that are on my team that are very similar age to my kids, and I've also shared a lot of time with Jack Nicklaus, and have pretty much spanned about a 60-year gap in golf.

To be able to bridge those gaps and those generations has been wonderful, but Jack's been my idol.

MIKE WEIR: Yeah, to Jim's point, obviously Jack for me as well. For those of you who don't know, I wrote a letter to Jack when I was young lefty, and there wasn't many lefty TOUR players. I thought maybe I should switch to right-handed, and he said stick to left-handed. It's been a nice story. We've been able to go back and forth with it.

I brought that letter to Memorial, at Jack's event, and he's always gotten a kick out of that. They've been wonderful to me, he and Barbara, and just such a class guy.

I'll go on the international side. Gary Player, getting to know him through the Masters, being around him as a captain in South Africa for the first time, and being here in 2005 as well and 2007. So three times a captain, getting to know him a little bit better.

What you see is what you get from Gary. It's real. He really lives that life. He's really so positive all the time. He's got a big, huge heart, which I love, and he loves his guys. I've kind of tried to bring that with our guys.

Like Jim said, you have so many great memories of these teams, I certainly do, and memories that last a lifetime, friendships that last a lifetime. That's one of the special things about these team events.

**Q. Just a quick follow-up, do you guys feel an**

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## **obligation to be a role model?**

JIM FURYK: Yes.

MIKE WEIR: Yeah, I try to do my best. I fall short a lot of the times, but try to.

**Q. I think one of the challenges that you talked about for international captains you talked about, kind of uniting all the nations, languages, et cetera, under the shield banner. How would you describe the vibe of your team right now? It seems they've gotten together pretty quickly, but how would you describe the team's togetherness as you stare at the first day of matches?**

MIKE WEIR: It's something that's been a challenge for our teams over the years. What we already created with 2019 with the shield, and a lot of things we've implemented team-wise, just team dinners, guys playing practice rounds together, getting together with one another a lot more, that gap has shrunk quite a bit, and the guys really interact with each other a lot more.

I've learned a lot through some coaches that I've talked to, some Team Canada coaches -- Ken Hitchcock we had up here a couple weeks ago. We had Coach Cooper, Jon Cooper from Tampa in. He's going to be the next, obviously, Team Canada coach. Just talking to them, they get a bunch of different cultures on a hockey team. So learning from those guys and trying to implement some of those things into our team.

It's different than the U.S. Team. It just is. We have, obviously, all these cultural differences. Not that they don't have differences too, but ours is just some cultural things. It's gotten a lot better, and our guys have a great vibe going. I like where our team is at right now.

**Q. How does your Ryder Cup captaincy affect how you're handling it this time? Also, it's been brought up many times, but it just seems there's such a difference between the way that you guys have played in this event and Ryder Cup. Do you have any theories?**

JIM FURYK: I was asked that yesterday by the Golf Channel. The theories are difficult -- I was going to have a little fun. Brandel asked me that question and said that he's trying to explain it, and he said that he failed miserably probably in doing so. So I was going to poke fun and say that's the only time Brandel has ever said something like that, just joking around.

I told him the same thing, I said, Brandel, I could probably try to explain it, but I'm going to fail miserably as well.

I think a lot of it is our team room looks different in both events. I think the guys put a lot of pressure on themselves. They try a little too hard. They push in the Ryder Cup. They want to prove everyone wrong, and sometimes maybe when you try too hard, you kind of get in your own way, if that makes sense. That's probably the best I can do.

They used to always disappoint me in our era when we were accused as Americans -- it was easy to say we just didn't care. I saw grown men crying in the locker room after some of those events. That always frustrated me, but there's not much you can do about it.

I think in this event we play a little bit more loose, we play a little more free. The learning experiences, I think from '18, I think both Mike and I would say it's very instrumental, the more times you can be in those rooms, the more times you can be an assistant or a vice captain, the more times you get those opportunities, you grow, and you kind of learn the team experience, the bonding, and you get used to -- I didn't see a lot of golf in '18. I spent a lot of time on par-3s.

So I'll make some different changes. I'll run this team a little different. I'll draw from some good experiences that we've had in the past.

The biggest question I always get asked from '18 is would you -- if you had the chance to go back and do something differently, would you? First time I heard the question, I started laughing. My answer was very simple; how arrogant would you have to be to say, nope, we didn't win, but I wouldn't do anything different at all. Of course I would. I'd go back and change it.

So I'm trying to implement some of those changes and kind of put those in for '24 has been kind of a big push for me.

**Q. Having competed here as a player in 2007, I'm just curious what feelings you experienced when you first returned to this property as a Presidents Cup captain? And is there anything from '07 you learned as a player which might help you this week?**

MIKE WEIR: I think the first time I stepped back on property knowing I was captain, I guess well over a year ago, some of those memories, I guess, came back and made me reflect on how big the Presidents Cup has become since 2007, how much bigger it is. We have these beautiful team cabins, and the infrastructure of everything is so much bigger now. Shows the growth of the game and shows how well the Presidents Cup is doing and growing. That kind of stuck out to me as what I remember.

I don't know if my experience as a player really has any



influence on today's player. We might be able to give them a little heads up on certain shot out there, and hey, I remember the shot played this way, and Ernie was part of that team, Trevor, Geoff. So we all had some experience around here that we could share.

Not too much insight. Today's player, they need to get on the course, see the course, play it their way. Yeah, I don't think there's really a lot that I could give them golf course knowledge-wise that way.

**Q. How much, if at all, have you leaned into the underdog status, if your team has, in this competition?**

MIKE WEIR: I think it's just a fact, just dealing with reality. I think that's the thing for me, even as a player myself, trying to deal with reality and what's in front of you. No doubt, that's what's in front of us.

So we've got a tall challenge, but the guys are up for it, they're ready for it, and they're embracing that.

**Q. Do you flip it as a chance to do something historic, being the team that breaks the drought?**

MIKE WEIR: I haven't told them that. I'm trying to, again, keep them very focused and present on what's going on. We've got a lot of young guys on the team, and they're not remembering past defeats or anything like that. I guess they hear it from you all and they read about it, but they're not very focused on that. So, yeah, not really leaning into that.

**Q. I just need to lean into what my Japanese friends wanted me to ask, how Hideki and Shigeki are coming together as a group and if they're doing well in the team room?**

MIKE WEIR: Hideki's great. He's one of our leaders obviously. And having Shigeki here, who was key in 1998, going 5-0 as a rookie to win. Seeing him, we competed against Shigeki for many years, and to see his face again back has been great for us. Have you come across Shigeki yet?

JIM FURYK: I haven't seen him yet, but always a smile.

MIKE WEIR: He's just a great character. I think it puts a smile on Hideki's face. He's been the lone Japanese player here for all the times he's played. He might have someone from his team with him, but he hasn't had a teammate. There hasn't been two Japanese at the same time for him. So to have Shigeki here for him is great. He's been fantastic in the team room.

Everybody knows who Shigeki is. Even the young guys know who he is. We showed them videos of -- in Australia obviously they called him the "Smiling Assassin" back then. He's a lighthearted guy and fun to be around.

**Q. Mike, I know this is not your favorite perspective, but you talked about how big the Presidents Cup has become since '07, but I'm one of those people who thinks it would be elevated another degree if the International Team would win. As a captain, do you feel any responsibility with that? I know you were an assistant to Ernie in Melbourne, but did he ever talk about that? Especially for the home captains, do you have a chance to register something like we can make a big change to how people perceive this thing?**

MIKE WEIR: I would say that, no, I haven't thought about that. That's not on my radar, to think that just because if I win or lose or our team wins or loses that it's going to change the outlook. All of us that have been a part of this know how big it is. Jim knows how close it's been the last few years. It's a tight, intense competition.

Yeah, the score the last bunch of years has gone the U.S.'s way, but they've been very competitive matches. Here we are, like I said, it's much bigger. As Ernie's talked about a bunch of times, we're hitting somewhere around 6 billion people around the world with the International Team. Globally it's huge.

I think it's heading the right direction no matter what happens. Sure, it's competitive. We want to win. We're not putting any of that extra, we need to do this to elevate the event. There's been nothing from the TOUR like you guys had better win or something like that. There's been nothing like that.

It's just a great competition, and we're not adding any layers on top of that.

**Q. How did you get Cantlay to wear a hat this week?**

JIM FURYK: We finally had one that had that odd of a shape that it would actually fit on there.

I think a lot of it's our vendors. He wore a hat two years ago in Charlotte. We had the same vendors on the PGA TOUR, and he seems to be comfortable. If my guys are comfortable in hats, they can wear hats. If they're not comfortable in hats, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't work out too well for me, I'll just say. My head will turn purple after a day, but I want them comfortable. I think we would both say that the clothing this year, my guys love it.



MIKE WEIR: Yeah, same. The guys are happy.

JIM FURYK: Guys are comfortable this year, which is really nice.

**Q. Question for both of you. In all your years in the Presidents Cup in any role, what is the greatest moment of emotion or passion you've witnessed, whether yourself or seeing someone else?**

MIKE WEIR: I can start. I was going to say 2003 down in South Africa for me. I think watching Tiger and Ernie and not even participating -- in fact, Jim and I played that --

JIM FURYK: That was a nerve-racking day.

MIKE WEIR: It was just, Tiger makes that putt in the dark and Ernie makes it on top of him. Talk about intensity. I was just -- man, I just couldn't believe what probably those guys were going through in that moment. That was, to me, the most intense thing that I've been part of in this event.

JIM FURYK: That was a heck of a moment. I'll say that. I think getting Gary and Jack together. I've probably never been that nervous on a golf course. Like I said, we weren't hitting a golf shot. We were just watching at the time probably the two best players in the world. So cool moment.

You know me, I like to ride the fence and take the easy way out on a lot of questions. I think what makes this event so great is that you see players that are usually stoic that don't fist pump, that don't show a lot of emotion. They go bonkers. They run around the green. They fist pump. They're screaming at the top of their lungs. You can't hear them because the crowd's so loud. That's what makes these events so great.

I think that's why both sides and the players enjoy it so much.

**Q. Question for both of you. What are the subtleties about this type of tournament that you feel maybe you need to remind some of the guys that haven't played this type of tournament in the past or not so much that are important to look out for as opposed to a regular tournament on the PGA TOUR?**

JIM FURYK: So you're saying like a first-timer coming in?

**Q. Not necessarily a first-timer, but guys who haven't played it many times. What are the subtleties in a tournament like this that players need to keep in mind as opposed to a regular tournament?**

JIM FURYK: I would say it's just an extremely emotional week as far as there's ups, there's downs. The U.S. Team gets on a run, then the International Team gets on a run. It's kind of a roller coaster ride all week. These guys expend a ton of energy.

It's amazing how much they eat while they're on the golf course to kind of refuel those calories. A lot of it's probably just letting them know how much -- it's a marathon. It's a week long, and make sure that you save some energy for the end and pace yourself on the way.

MIKE WEIR: Not to copy Jim, but that's definitely what was running through my mind is just the emotional ebbs and flows that happen throughout the course of the week. They just happen. Like you said, a team in a session, they might get on a run, we might get on a run. But it's a long week and handling those moments, I'd say, is different than maybe a stroke play event, guys going out there -- just there are more intense moments quickly.

**Q. As well as you guys both know the golfers and their games, how much do the analytics actually come into play? Jim, specifically for you, as long as you've been doing this, do you have to chuckle sometimes at the analytics you look at now compared to how pairings were made years ago?**

JIM FURYK: Yeah. I think early in my career I was a guy that tried to break down the golf course for the team. I came up with kind of alternate-shot ideas. I enjoyed that side of it, although I wasn't really using analytics, and I didn't use analytics for my game for most of my career.

But the first time that we kind of brought a team on for the U.S. side was 2016 at Hazeltine, and I kind of sat through those first meetings with Davis as his assistant, and I think it's just a process that we've built up over time. I thought that our team kind of trusts -- our analytics team trusts us as captains now as far as what we see and the advice that we can give and vice versa. We've really kind of leaned on them and, I think, built a process that we're comfortable with.

I think each and every year I get a lot more comfortable with them and the information that they are able to handle for us, and there's things that I really enjoy and like and that are very, very useful in the process.

At the end of the day, we still -- I still feel like I've got four amazing assistants that their eyes and their ears and the information that they give me is extremely critical, and I think we're finding a way to kind of blend the two of those very well.

**Q. Just to follow that up, the Americans get to see these pairings every year, kind of form a core. Is a little bit more of a challenge for you guys from that standpoint?**

MIKE WEIR: I'd say so. Just having that knowledge base of seeing that every year, seeing what works each and every year is probably more useful, where we every two years maybe don't get to see that. So you have more information to help form those pairings and see what works and maybe what doesn't.

It's similar to Jim. We use -- we've been comfortable using our analytics guys, I think, since 2019. Ernie brought them on board, and they're familiar with me now and our other assistants.

Same thing, I lean on my assistants as well, lean on my gut on certain things when we're maybe on the fence. But it's very important. If you go back to what you referenced way back in the day, it's like, oh, Weirsy hits it a little bit shorter, maybe he gets the ball in play, or go with a longer guy like Ernie and put him in play. In four ball, then alternate shot, you maybe want two guys where it's -- kind of maybe a little bit of a guess. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it didn't.

It's nice with the evolution of sports in general, and all sports are using it. Talking to Marty St. Louis the other day, Coach of the Montreal Canadiens, talked about how they use analytics now for so many things in hockey. It's just throughout sports now.

**Q. You mentioned talking to Hitchcock and Cooper. I'm just wondering what some of your big takeaways were from those conversations. What really stuck with you about bringing a group together in such a short time?**

MIKE WEIR: I think one thing I'll share maybe is just the family aspect. I'll just say Team Canada, in fact. Even a coach from before told me some of the Team Canadas, these guys are all on different teams getting together for the Olympics. Some guys like each other, some guys don't, but they've got to blend for those couple of weeks.

I think when you involve the kids, the wives, the team, and make it all feel like a big family, that was something I took away that seemed to be a common theme with all the coaches I talked to. That's what we've tried to do. That's one thing I'll share that we've tried to make it -- everybody feel included and be part of it.

**Q. Were there any other coaches you reached out to**

**or are they the two main guys?**

MIKE WEIR: Well, Doug Armstrong, the GM of the St. Louis Blues, is a good friend of mine. He's from Sarnia. He's been with Team Canada now for a number of Cups, a number of Olympics now, and the Four Nations Cup this year that's upcoming. So he had some great insights too.

Those guys are great. Slats, Glen Sather, down in Palm Springs, we played in Palm Springs. Remember the old Edmonton coach, Glen Sather, with Gretz, Dr. Gretz. Just pick guys' brains here and there.

**Q. You're a captain here this week, and more than 20 years ago you won the Masters. How do you consider this win has influenced the rest of your life?**

MIKE WEIR: I think, Jim knows, when you win a major championship -- the pure golf fans know that you won L.A. or you won Palm Springs or you won certain events around, but you get more well-known from the casual golf fans everywhere you go because they see maybe a major on TV or they see that, so there's a little more recognition, I guess, when you win a major.

Was the question how it influenced my life, if I could ask again?

**Q. Yes.**

MIKE WEIR: Yeah, I think big impact. Personally, I think to go to the Masters every year, to know that I can be at that special tournament every year, bring my family, see all the greats of the game, talk about bridging gaps, all the different generations, that's just really special to be part of that.

If I'd have finished one shot higher, I wouldn't have had that. That's how close the margins are in this game, and I know that. I know I'm lucky and grateful that that happened for me.

Yeah, big change when you win a major championship.

**Q. In 2007 you were the only Canadian in the field, and throughout the years at the Presidents Cup, and there's been sometimes two, sometimes one, sometimes no Canadians at all. Three of them when you tee off on Thursday. Does it matter that it's on Canadian soil, or does it say anything about the health of golf in Canada?**

MIKE WEIR: I think it's more the health of golf in Canada. We have so many players now that are doing well on the PGA TOUR. I feel like the country, we love golf. We're



obviously known as a hockey country, but we love golf up here, as you know, and we've got a lot of great players, a lot of great talent coming up.

It shows what Golf Canada has done with their development program. That's really gotten on a certain high level. I think the Australian Institute of Sport and what Sweden was doing for a long time were the benchmarks. Now Golf Canada, what they're doing with their development is right there, probably even exceeding. So they've done a great job, and I think we'll continue to see more and more players get on the PGA TOUR and more and more different players being on Cups down the road. That's the way I see it going.

It's exciting to have three. That's the most ever. Hopefully that continues.

**Q. There's three Canadians in the field. You played here in '07 in this memorable match against Tiger Woods. I'm curious about the advice you will provide to Mac, Corey, and Taylor on how to handle everything out there in the heat of the moment.**

MIKE WEIR: I haven't had any individual talks with those guys. Not to say that I won't. I think they're ready for the moment. I think Mac is the only rookie on the team. Taylor and Corey got to play last time in Charlotte. This is at home in front of your own fans.

I guess for me I used the energy in a positive way when I was here in 2007. I didn't take it as pressure. I took it as just embrace it. I don't know if I'll ever have this kind of chance again to play in front of my home country fans. So I just tried to embrace it. That will probably be most of the message is enjoy yourself.

**Q. Jim, Keegan has also said himself that he didn't feel like he had some of the close relationships that could have gotten him on teams in the past. How have you seen him, I guess, just this week or as he's getting ready, or in the team room, what he's like also as one of the older players on your team.**

JIM FURYK: That's funny; what is he, like 38? He's just ancient. Things just started to hurt so much when I was 38.

He lives down there in South Florida amongst a lot of different players. He sees Pat. He sees Xander. There's a number of guys that live in that area that he practices around, spends a lot of time at Grove. I think we've got some good partners for him this week.

It's interesting, it started out knowing -- kind of always

reserved a spot. I think a lot of our guys have always kind of reserved a spot as a captain for the next, for the Ryder Cup, for the Presidents Cup. Zach was very thankful that he brought me on staff last year and helps to be around some guys maybe I haven't seen on prior teams that are now on this one. You get to know the guys a little bit better, see how the pairings work, see the inner workings of the team room.

With Keegan, I kind of wanted him to be an assistant captain, but he just had to go and play so darn good at the BMW and kind of lead from wire to wire and kind of earn a spot on the team in my mind.

So we've kind of taken those assistant duties away from him and focus on kind of integrating himself amongst his teammates, being a leader on that team with kind of a veteran status, and everyone knows he's the captain next year as well.

So it's been fun. It's been a good process. I've tried to mix up some pairings for these guys in practice and let them all kind of hang out and be together.

THE MODERATOR: Before we close, I would be remiss not to recognize one of our national golf writers Ron Green Jr., Global Golf Post, is not here this week. His father, Ron Green Sr., passed away last week at the age of 95. Senior was far and away one of the great golf writers of multiple generations. I would say he brought our sport and our players to life with his words.

Senior, you will be missed. Ron, you and the family are in our thoughts and prayers. Thank you.

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