

# The Ryder Cup

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

## Jordan Spieth

Media Conference



THE MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to the 43rd Ryder Cup here at Whistling Straits. We're with Jordan Spieth. Thank you for coming and spending some time with us. Welcome to your fourth career Ryder Cup.

It's been since 2015, 17-under par runner up. What are your recollections of that week, and did that give you comfort as you prepared to come here and represent the United States again?

JORDAN SPIETH: You know, I was riding a nice momentum wave at that point in time, and everything was going right.

I remember this 18th green is pretty special to me. I remember holing a bunker shot maybe my ninth hole Friday, foot kind of outside the bunker like a tough little shot, and then on the 72nd hole that was -- I didn't accomplish what I set out to that day.

It was difficult starting behind and the way Jason played. But I became World No. 1 on that green, so that was a lifelong dream of mine, so a very special place that I'll always remember that moment.

I wasn't fully aware of it at the time. I'm pretty sure that it was going to happen, and then I was told I think it was here, it was right over there, wherever the interview station was, that that was the case.

Yeah, I love the golf course, the setup of it. It's beautiful. It's on the lake, but you've got to control the ball in the wind. You've got to hit kind of different shots off tees, and then if you position the ball well, you have these green complexes that are kind of -- there's not a ton of slope, but they're subtle so you can actually feed the ball into hole locations.

Should be a really exciting match play course because you can get into trouble but you can also birdie just about every single hole with the right shot.

It's tough and fair, and then if we see it in some colder, windier conditions, it could be a unique test, as well.

Excited to be back here. I've said it before, if it were held last year I'm not sure if I would have been on that team, so I felt like I lucked out a little bit in that situation.

But pretty aware that I was going to be here for the last month or so. Felt pretty good after the Open Championship with my chances, and that was a huge goal of mine for the season, and a lofty one starting the year out. Just excited to get back out and experience the Ryder Cup again.

**Q. You and Patrick have been the most frequent partnership in a Ryder Cup. I don't know if you're aware of that or not. Does that surprise you, and is that possibly one of the maybe problems that has affected the U.S., that over all the years there hasn't been more frequent partnerships finding a recipe and sticking with it?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I would have thought maybe Bubba and Webb, but yeah, it's interesting. I don't necessarily think so. I think especially with this team with the amount of first-time Ryder Cup players, it's hard to call guys rookies here given the experience they have on the world's biggest stage in golf, so I don't really like using that term for these guys.

It's a wave where I was talking with Justin about it. We've known everyone on this team since grade school except for Dustin and Tony. I mean, it's pretty special. So you have a camaraderie. It's kind of more like a really light setting. Guys have known each other for a long time.

So I think that statistic to answer your question will probably start to not be the case going forward. I think you'll start to see some pairings that guys find a lot of success in and continue for a number of years given the average age and the caliber of players that are on this team.

**Q. With regard to Lee Westwood and Sergio, two of their veterans, what's your level of respect for what these guys have done over this amount of time in this competition? You're playing your fourth and these**

**guys have played so many. I'm curious what your level of respect is for what they've done.**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, I don't know their stats. Obviously they've won nine of the last 12 Ryder Cups, but I don't know individually. Clearly they've had a lot of success.

First off, to be able to play on the amount of teams they have year in and year out shows the consistency of high level play that they're able to have. I played Sergio in 2016 in a match with Patrick versus Sergio and Rafa, and it was a good alternate-shot match. Went back and forth and we had a lead that squandered, and then Patrick made a nice five-footer to tie the match on the 18th, so it was a good match.

They're just really good players, and they very much are very proud of where they come from, and it shows in this event via what I've seen on TV prior to playing and then playing against them on teams.

The fact that they both have been playing the caliber of golf they've been playing this year to make this team with the experience they have makes them very dangerous. I mean, you step on the first tee and you know you're going to play two of the best players in the world, play against two of the best players in the world regardless, and on Sunday a match against one of the best players in the world. They have extra incentive; we have extra incentive.

It's probably very helpful for them to have them playing really well and the experience, but I'm pretty excited about the idea that we've got youth and fire kind of with the guys in our locker room.

**Q. I know you don't like to use the term or refer to them as rookies on the team, but if any of them came up to you this week and asked you to explain the atmosphere on the first tee or how to handle that pressure, what would you tell them?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Well, I already kind of have to a couple of the guys. I've asked some of the assistants and even some of the other players just so that I was kind of on the same page, but I asked them kind of what it feels like in the middle of a match to them, what do you compare it to. Most everybody has said it feels like you're in contention in a big tournament or a major championship each match.

What I would say is, one, it's more of the adrenaline rush than the nerves. Like it's more of an exciting version of that than it is a nervy version of that, and embrace that because you don't really get that opportunity but once every couple years.

And then two, given that, you get to learn a lot from this event. You learn what you do well, but then like this tournament has propelled me into really good seasons the next seasons after I've played, given you get that kind of experience all -- maybe it takes two or three years if you're playing really well to have four or five times you're in contention in a major, but you get to do it three, four, five times this week.

So embrace that. Again, it's more of an adrenaline rush than it is a nervy feeling, but that's what it's compared to in my opinion.

**Q. Granted we're playing next to a lake and not an ocean and the rough won't be super long, but visually there are some similarities between this and some courses overseas. You mentioned having to flight it in the wind and using some slopes. Where do you put this course on the continuum of Hazeltine or Valhalla, like an Open Championship layout? Where does it rank?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it's an American links, isn't it? It's played from the air, though. You're not bouncing balls up to these greens. It's played from the air, but you also have to hit shots versus driving range shots.

You have uneven lies that you have to work maybe against them or with them, hold winds, ride winds. I think it's an American links. I don't think that -- I mean, we had Americans finish one-two at the Open Championship this year. I don't really think that it makes that much of a difference on the style of course.

I think our team, our captains, Strick and the vice captains, are trying to figure out ways that maybe fit the players specifically on our team as far as rough cuts and fairway cuts, where they are, and green speeds and firmness and that kind of stuff.

It's an aerial links, so you still have to play very similar golf to what we experience on the PGA TOUR for the most part.

**Q. What benefit if any do you think the whole team coming here ahead of time, what was the benefit of that? And secondly, who's the best ping-pong player on this team?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I was curious ahead of time, to be honest, about how it would be, and I thought it was extremely beneficial. I thought the commitment of guys to get up here was cool. It was very light. We were messing around. We were hitting shots. We weren't really like

chipping and putting to all the pins. It was more let's have some fun and play a match with each other and just kind of see -- get our feet on the ground, see the grandstands, see the setting ahead of time so that when we arrive today, you're not kind of taken aback. You've already been here. Feels just that little bit more comfortable.

We haven't -- we've only been here one night. I think everybody was kind of getting settled. I think Bryson and Berger were the only two that played, and I think Berger bested Bryson. I don't know how it ended up for the night, but I think he got him at least the first two matches.

**Q. The last few times Stricker has spoken to the media, he's hit the point that his goal is to out-prepare. Preparation, preparation. That seems to be the keyword. He is your fourth captain. Have you been impressed with that element of his captaincy, and do you feel that what he's saying is what he's doing in terms of this hard-core preparation?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Yeah, it sure seems that way at this point, yeah. Again, for having one practice session and being here half a day, I did a couple hours -- some of us came out for a little bit yesterday. For every meeting that we've had and everything we've talked about, it seems, wow, these guys, we didn't even need to have a practice round and they've got a lot of it figured out.

I think Strick would tell you it's a team effort with his vice captains, and there's a lot of experience on that board for us. We go out there and try and hit the shots, and wherever they put us and how often they put us there, we're trusting in them that it's in our best interest, but they're also very open to this team to voicing their opinion to them.

There's no ego with Strick. He's very much -- he'll listen to anybody about anything, if you're comfortable in a setting, if you're not. I think he's made the rest of the team feel that way ahead of time.

Certainly I think things can adjust, but as far as how prepared you can be on Tuesday for a Friday start, I would say it's probably the most that I've seen in the four Cups.

**Q. Being one of the guys who have done this a few times, what are your general feelings on having a set plan, you're playing this time with this person, kind of mapping it out versus deviating from that or adjusting on the fly. How do you kind of feel about this?**

JORDAN SPIETH: I've not been in a setting where there's been an adjust on the fly, so I'm not maybe the right person to ask that question to. I've started in the same pairing I've

finished in each of the Cups.

Certainly there's adjustments to be made. I think that's hard for me to speak to. That's really what the captains and the vice captains' job is, is where do we react and where do we keep our game plan.

So again, for me, I've just assumed I'm going to go out, try and win that first point, and roll from there. It's worked the last few, and I don't see why that should change from my point of view, and I think it's really just -- that's more of how they can speak to it.

But I've not -- Presidents Cups I've mixed and matched throughout a tournament, but not in a Ryder Cup.

**Q. Would you be comfortable if in between matches or whatever, we're going to switch things up on the original plan and do this?**

JORDAN SPIETH: Sure. I'd figure they've -- while we were playing they have a reason for it, and whether there's statistics to back it up or it's feel off of watching what's been going down, because you only know what's been going down in your group.

Yeah, you've got to be prepared to play them all, but expect to be watching as well and trusting they want people rested for Sunday. We know the Euros typically have a different strategy. They're going to play probably four or five guys five matches regardless and some of the other guys will probably play two or three, and you expect to see the same guys out that we've seen for a number of years now five times.

That's probably -- we've got a lot of depth -- well, both teams have a lot of depth, but I think we're going to rely on the youth and our depth to potentially strategize a bit.

THE MODERATOR: Jordan, thanks for your time. Enjoy your day. Thank you.

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