

The Ryder Cup

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Whistling Straits

Tommy Fleetwood

Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Good morning, and welcome to the 43rd Ryder Cup here at Whistling Straits. We are joined by Mr. Tommy Fleetwood. Welcome to what is your second career Ryder Cup.

It's been three years since Paris, and your European team is similar but different. Is the concept of momentum, can you carry something over like that over three years or maybe it goes back further with the recent successes of Team Europe? Can you have momentum from previous Ryder Cups?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I guess if you look at it like that, I think yeah, we've got a fantastic record of however many years in the Ryder Cup, so I think we always can draw on that and take from that.

I think probably what we do is we have a lot of experience in what has gone so well for Team Europe at Ryder Cups in the past, and I think we take that with us and draw from that. And then I'm sure any time a Ryder Cup comes around, it's a new challenge and a new group of players.

It's its own individual week, but I think what we take is experience and a lot of good times in recent years and a lot of things that we know have worked. I think that's what we do.

Q. Last Ryder Cup you and Frankie are this wildly successful pair, but he's not here this week. You recently played with him; I'm kind of curious if he expressed any thoughts to you about not being here, if it feels somehow a little lonely without him.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No, definitely not lonely with the guys in the team that we have. I feel massively privileged to be here with everybody that's part of the team and loving every minute. I think Fran -- of course, like players that -- anybody that hasn't played a Ryder Cup or when you have been, so you want to be part of it all the time and you want to be just adding and contributing something to the team.

So he would have loved to be here. Speak to him all the

time. He's a massive supporter of the team and he will be this week.

But for me, it's another Ryder Cup. It's with a bunch of guys that were in Paris. It's with some new guys but guys that you see all the time. And I think just being a part of Team Europe, everybody feels and is made to feel so at home and so part of it, and I love being in the environment that we create when a Ryder Cup comes around.

Q. You probably had more Europeans in Paris than you're going to see all week here. You're somebody who feeds off energy; are you going to be able to get yourself up and show the same energy without the fans out there?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think we create it ourselves and we do it with each other. Of course this is a different challenge, different atmosphere for us and something that I have actually never experienced before, so even though it's not my first Ryder Cup, it's my first one in America.

I'm still excited by the challenge and what the crowds, what an away crowd for us brings to it, and maybe the advantage that the Americans have. But I think really, really looking forward to going out with my teammates and going and fighting for this Ryder Cup together and either pulling each other up or whatever it is that we need to do to do that, but I'm looking forward to going out there with the guys and just creating our own atmosphere.

Q. Has there ever been a moment when you've looked back on Paris and thought, How the hell do I follow that?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No. It's memories that I will have and that team will have for a lifetime, and hopefully we'll do the same in this one.

You know, whatever happens in each individual event, whether it be a Ryder Cup or major or regular tournament, life goes on, and there's always the next challenge around the corner. That's just what this is.

Let's just create our own memories this week and keep

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them in the locker forever, as well.

Q. How much do you miss Francesco this week, and if there was a substitute for Moliwood this week, like a different version, would it be like Fitzpatrickwood, Weisbergerwood? I mean, it's not the same singing, but...

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think Moliwood was a great name. I think we had that one given to us. Listen, like Moliwood was in Paris, and we're obviously very, very close. I think people may be overly focused on it. It's not around this week, but also we have an unbelievable team, and I can't wait to partner up with whoever that's going to be.

Whatever the captain wants me to do, what sort of matches he wants me to play, who he'd like me to play with, who we fit well with, it's the same for all the guys. I had an incredibly lucky experience that in my first Ryder Cup as a rookie I had somebody like Francesco by my side who was obviously playing great and I was playing well.

But none of that really matters at all this week. It's completely different, and I'm just excited to play with whoever my partner is, as is the rest of the team.

Q. Everyone talks about how extreme the first tee experience is, and Paris seems to be the extreme example of that. How would you describe your experience as you walked over for your first match?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I had a really good experience of it because I think the first tee at the Ryder Cup you do hear from a lot of people. You hear unbelievable stories about how nervous you are, you can't put the ball on the tee, you're seeing three balls, like you just want to make contact.

Being on that first tee for me going into Paris, for 18 months my goal for the Ryder Cup was standing on that first tee on Friday morning, and I'd pictured it so much, I pictured what the crowd would be like, I could hear the roars, I could see the first hole because it was a golf course we were so familiar with.

I had a clear image of my goal for that year. When I walked on to the first tee I kind of achieved that goal and I had like a -- it was by far a calming sensation, but it wasn't like the horror story of not being able to put the ball on the tee or anything like that.

I was playing with this blue Nike 5-wood which was my favorite club of all time that eventually bent. I had a lot of things going for me on the first tee and I had a particularly

nice experience. I managed to pull draw one that just about stayed in the fairway. Yeah, that was a good experience for me.

Yeah, I think players that have played in a Ryder Cup can all say the same thing about first tee is an incredible place to be in golf. It's something that we don't experience ever except for once every two years, but at the same time we all strive and dream to be there and experience whatever that is, whether it is you can't put the ball on the tee, whether it is you feel like you're going to miss the ball, whatever it is.

You've dreamt of this your whole life, so thrive on it and enjoy it.

Q. I'm curious, do you think the essence of a good pairing is one where your games mesh together or one where your personalities mesh together?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I think, what is it, there's 24 players here, and I think they're 24 of the best players in the world. Games obviously do play a part. I think personalities probably, if I was to favor one more important than the other, I would probably go with that one just for the sheer level of golf that we all play week in, week out.

Obviously foursomes is a different thing altogether. You've got golf balls and whatnot and how people play. A lot of it goes down to if you play well, then you're a good team, and that's all you can really do.

I think, again, Europe is so lucky with the personalities that we have and how well we gel together and everything. We've always come out of it really, really good.

Q. I was going to ask you something different, but what have you done with the blue Nike 5-wood that bent?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: It's in the garage somewhere. It deserted me at Bay Hill one year where it just sort of bent.

Q. Did you bend it?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: No, I didn't bend it. It was just out of use, out of overuse unfortunately.

Q. We're hearing a lot about how they've set the course up to suit the kind of bombing game of DeChambeau. I just wondered whether you agree with that, if you could describe that for us laymen readers what that means on the course, and what Europe need to do to kind of combat it.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Well, I think for the majority of time and as a simple rule of life, if you're going to hit it 350 and straight, it's going to suit you most courses. Setting a course up like that is always going to -- Bryson has got an advantage for how far he hits it and for how relatively straight he hits it.

I got a sense when I was playing it yesterday I didn't think it made that much difference. That's sort of obviously first mind. I couldn't really see -- there was a few holes where it actually probably didn't feel like it was that much of an advantage. At the end of the day you've still got to play, and setting it up -- like when you ask a question and say set it up for Bryson, they have 11 other players, as well, so all of those have still got to play the same golf course, the same as us.

You know, I'm not really sure. I think on any given day, like everybody has to play and you have to play well. I think the wind is going to have a massive effect. We played it yesterday, and apparently we'll have a stiffer wind on Friday. It's hard to judge from nine holes of golf yesterday on the first day when you're sort of getting into it and getting everything ready and all of that, but we'll get a closer look today and see how that goes.

No matter how the course is set up for whoever, you still have to go out and play golf, and you know that's just what we'll all keep in mind.

Q. It seems like we have four days of practice and pictures and team rooms and then Friday morning hits and it goes so quick, warp speed almost. What are your recollections of that in your first Ryder Cup, and is it something you can even try to explain to the three first-timers you have?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Yeah, the week goes quick. For sure there is so much more to do than anything we do on a regular basis. It's an incredible week. I think it's definitely -- it's difficult to -- you have to be mindful of it's difficult to find a rhythm a lot of the time with the amount that's going on and what you have to do.

If you kind of have that in mind and know that, not be too hard on yourself out on the golf course on practice days, get your stuff done and work into Friday. Because Friday, Saturday, Sunday is what matters in the week, and I think, yeah, as soon as the week starts, it goes very, very quickly, and the pressure and the atmosphere lasts from the first tee all the way to the last on Sunday, which is unlike anything else that we get, as well.

We have amazing rookies in our team, as do USA, and I think for our rookies, we're not lacking in experience or

winning tournaments or handling big moments.

So yeah, the Ryder Cup is different, but I think the guys definitely seem very comfortable in the team room. They seem good at the golf course and everything, and I think they're going to be great.

Q. Did you find it hard to go to sleep at night because the buzz, the adrenaline was so great, or were you so exhausted you were out quick?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: They even each other out, I think. I'm always like the first ones to bed anyway, I think, so I'm always fine with that.

Q. For a long time in this event Tiger Woods would have been the scout that every European would have wanted. He's not here obviously this time. Who would be the American you'd most like to defeat this week?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I don't really care. Just whoever -- if I don't beat anybody and the team wins, then great. If I beat everybody and the team wins, then great. All we want to concentrate on is getting the points for Europe and then celebrating and moving on and having that.

We just want to go out and play and whoever your opponents are, they're going to be 12 of the best players in the world and you're just going to go out and have to play your game and hopefully get the points that we need.

Q. You're hugely popular wherever you go and probably one of the most popular player with American fans. Have you ever experienced being heckled or the crowd rooting against you?

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: Not very often. No, I think this is a very, very different experience. And yeah, like I say, this is my first Ryder Cup in America and I have not -- I don't have the experience of previous Ryder Cups. The away fans, they're all just part of the Ryder Cup. That's what it is. That's what makes the event so special. That's what makes it great.

I of course spoke to the guys, the experienced guys that have played a few, and you have to thrive off that atmosphere and play your game and enjoy it in a way. I'm looking forward to seeing what it's like. I'm looking forward to getting stuck in, and whatever happens, it's all just part of the Ryder Cup. Happy to be here and happy to be competing for Team Europe.

Q. I thought you might say Sunday in Portrush, but I'm glad you didn't.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: I don't remember that day.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you for the time. Have a great day and a great stay.

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