

The Ryder Cup

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Kohler, Wisconsin, USA

Whistling Straits

Brooks Koepka

Press Conference



JOHN DEVER: Brooks, welcome to the 43rd Ryder Cup. A lot of people have been asking about the first tee, first time out there but I wanted to ask about Hazeltine and your first match victory, the sense of accomplishment of putting a number on the board, I think you were with Brandt Snedeker and how good that feels for the first time to putt a tally on the American side.

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it was probably the most nervous I had ever been on the first tee. It was good. I went out, I didn't play the morning match, so I went out and watched the guys tee off and got to soak in the atmosphere which was pretty cool. I got chills, I think I was standing next to Tiger or maybe Davis and was like, how cool is this.

Yeah, it's exciting and to be able to go out in the first match that I played in and win. I thought Brandt was the perfect partner. I loved it. He was so perfect for me, energetic, didn't really care if I sprayed it, and he's a good putter. That's usually a good combo.

Q. Stricker was in here yesterday talking about how one of his main goals for the week for you guys was to reduce the number of obligations and to keep things more relaxed and calm. Curious if you noticed a difference compared to prior Ryder Cups, has it been easier?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I think so. I think COVID made it that way a little bit but I think he's done a good job of keeping everything kind of on the low because it is a busy week. We have a lot of things. I don't bring my physio just because I know I don't have time for it, little things like that.

But it's definitely a lot easier. I think pretty much everybody has kind of noticed that and it's been great. You can see maybe that's kind of why, I don't know maybe we'll see on Sunday, I don't know. But I think it's definitely a lot better this year.

Q. Strick was expressing that you feel 100 percent health-wise. How long have you felt 100 percent and

are there any limitations this week on how much you can play?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'm like glass, so I wouldn't say I am 100 percent: Left knee, right knee, broken, man.

I feel fine. I feel as good as I've felt in a long time. Over the past week and a half, I did a lot of work on it with Derek Samuel, my trainer. He was down with me for about eight days, so able to kind of work everything out and make sure it's fine but I feel good and I'm ready to go as much or as little as they want.

Q. No worries of going 36 in a day?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No. I'm good.

Q. Going back to the shot, statistically it's a format that the United States has struggled in, but is it a format you guys like going out and playing?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I do. I like it. It's just different. It's tough to build a rhythm. I think for me, I didn't play on any teams growing up, so I didn't play on any Junior Ryder Cup, Walker Cup. I didn't play any of that. So this is the first time I've done a team thing other than college, and I never played alternate-shot until I got here.

But I think some of the guys probably have that luxury because they have played Walker Cups and stuff like that so they might have a better idea. But I like it, it's fun. It's different. It's just tough to kind of build a rhythm. You hit one good shot and you're going to wait 15 minutes before you hit the next one.

But yeah, at the end of the day, it just who plays better.

Q. It seems obvious, but have you ever played alternate-shot before your first team event as a professional?

BROOKS KOEPKA: No, I don't think so. I don't think there were any junior events where it was alternate-shot. I think 2016 was the first time I played alternate-shot, I can't even remember -- I did. I think that was the first time.



Q. How would you describe Stricker as a captain and what are some of his attributes and virtues he brings to the table?

BROOKS KOEPKA: He cares very much. He's passionate, you can see that, maybe not outwardly but when you're inside the team room or talking to him personally, it's very obvious he has a big passion for the game and big passion for all of us as players, the vice captains. He just truly cares a lot. He's a softy.

Q. He's a crier, obviously, as we all know. Because of how emotional he is and because he's here in Wisconsin, how much do you guys want to win for him and see him bawl his eyes out on Sunday?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, it would be nice to see him cry. It would be awesome just because I know how much time he's put in -- as a captain you've got to put in so much time for at least a year and a half -- we had an extra year, I don't know time he actually put into it other than that, but it's at least 18 months of hard work.

Growing up in Wisconsin, there's a lot of things that just kind of are coming together where it would be the perfect storm if we were to win. Everybody knows that and everybody wants to play well.

Q. You said you have not played many team competitions, so I'm curious what the transition has been like for you going from golf as an individual sport to this team concept?

BROOKS KOEPKA: It's different. It takes a little bit of adjusting but once you get out there, it's same thing; it's competition. It's go put the ball in the hole as quickly as possible, and hit the best shot you can or if you're in trouble, get it back or your partner, or whatever. It takes a little bit of adjusting but it's tough. I mean, my whole life, I just played an individual sport and go to a team, so it is different.

But I enjoy it. I think it's fun. It kind of brings you back a little bit to college, to be honest with you. We're not playing alternate-shot or best-ball or anything like that but it is that team camaraderie.

Q. Why do you think Team USA are going to win this week? And what do you think are any of the potential strengths in your team and potential weaknesses in the European Team?

BROOKS KOEPKA: A lot of guys are playing well. Patrick has been really well. Berger has been playing

really well. A lot of guys, Jordan's playing great. You can see it, at the end of the day, at the end of the week, someone has to win and someone has to lose. I guess it's just who plays better.

It comes down to the eight guys you send out every day, are they going to play the best they can and if they play to the best of their ability, and if they do, that side is going to win.

Q. Can you describe your current relationship with Bryson DeChambeau?

BROOKS KOEPKA: We are on the same team together. We've had dinner almost every night as a team. I got here on Monday. Everyone who is on our team is interacting and everybody is participating in conversations and doing everything we need to do.

Q. Have you gotten to know anybody better this week that you maybe haven't spent that much time with in the past or do you feel like you just know all the American guys really well by this point?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I would say this year I know them a little better because it is a younger core group of guys. I would say the only guy that I probably didn't know from junior golf or amateur golf, college, all that stuff, was Collin. Maybe that was kind of the one. But the rest of them, I played since we've been 12 years old to now. So we already kind of have a pretty good relationship.

And it's just a younger core group of guys than it's been in the past. Coming into my first one, I didn't know Brandt that well. I didn't know Bubba that well. I was just coming out on Tour, so it was a completely different scenario.

Q. And have you stayed away from the ping-pong table given the knee?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I haven't played any ping-pong. I haven't been in the team room. Just chilling too much. I know the obligations are cut down but I've still got long days.

Q. Bryson the other day, he sort of intimated that there might be something with you and him beyond The Ryder Cup, it was very vague. He just sort of teased it. Wondering if you can elaborate it, if there's anything close? Is there going to be some sort of a competition or did he mean something completely different?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I have no idea. I didn't listen to the comments or hear what he said, so I have no idea.

Q. You've spoken about how you enjoy sort of trash-talking. With this kind of event, the atmosphere, is it going to be hard to keep your mouth shut or are you going to get involved in any trash-talking?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I'll trash-talk anybody. We do it in the team room. Everybody out here is competitive and everybody understands it and it's part of it. Doesn't matter what we're doing. Like I said, even if it's ping-pong. I haven't played ping-pong but the guys are trash-talking when you're playing ping-pong. You don't take it personal. It's part of it.

Q. On the interview in Golf Digest about The Ryder Cup and Zinger saying you should give up your spot if you don't really love it to someone who does, and I'm curious what you thought of those the comments and is there any concern that feeling is shared by fans or anyone else, based on what they read or think?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I never said it was negative. Y'all spun it that way. I never said it was negative. I said it was different. Like I said, I've never played any of these team events. I didn't play Walker Cup. Never played Junior Ryder Cup. Never played anything. I just said it's different. That doesn't mean it's bad. Y'all spun it that way.

Q. I realize that. I mean, do you love The Ryder Cup? Do you look forward to it?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, I enjoy it. I think it's a lot of fun to play. Like I said, I wouldn't be nervous on that first tee if I didn't care.

Q. Is there any part of you that's concerned that people will perceive that as they look at you playing this week?

BROOKS KOEPKA: I don't know, a lot of it, I can only do my job and then y'all report whatever your opinion or side might be. So you guys have kind already spun it negatively, so it kind of is going to trickle to the fans because you guys are kind of our only outlet besides social media. So it's how you guys take it and spin it, and you guys spun it negatively.

Whatever they think is kind of off what they read, whether you write an article, whatever you're doing. They read that stuff. So it's all kind of your guys' opinion, they are going to take that side a little bit more.

Q. You were talking about how well the American Team are playing as individuals, and in previous occasions, Europe have managed to be more than the

sum of their parts. Is there more to match-play tournament golf sometimes than just hitting individual form?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, maybe a little bit, but I don't think it's too much. Someone's got to lose, man. There's two teams playing and there's going to be a winner and there's going to be a loser. It just comes down to who plays better, and I think it's as simple as that. I think sometimes people look into it a little too much, whether it be guys playing a lot, playing five in a row out here or four weeks in a row, whatever. There's different things. They kind of depend but at the end of the day it's just who plays better. You can see a guy wins one week and the next week misses a cut. Or he's missed seven cuts in a row and goes out and wins. It's just you play good that week and you get a bunch of guys that play better than the other guys and you're going to have a winner.

Q. You would know Daniel better than most with your college ties. How far back do you two go and what can he bring to a competition like this?

BROOKS KOEPKA: He's fiery. I like it. I think he's maybe not on the outside, doesn't show it, but maybe more so behind closed doors and knowing him personally, he's definitely very competitive. He's funny. And I just like the fact that he's always ready to go. Doesn't matter, ping-pong, chess, I mean, it doesn't matter. He's ready to go and he's ready to kick your butt, which I think is awesome.

Q. You two would pair well together?

BROOKS KOEPKA: Yeah, we could. We paired at Liberty, I believe, the Presidents Cup. I think we paired there in alternate-shot but that was -- it was fun. I enjoyed it. I mean, I've known him for years and years and years, so it's pretty cool to look back. He was showing me a photo yesterday of us in college and us now, and man, we look so young. I feel old now.

JOHN DEVER: Brooks, thanks for the time.

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