

The Ryder Cup

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Kohler, Wisconsin, USA

Whistling Straits

Daniel Berger

Press Conference



JOHN DEVER: Good morning. Welcome to the 43rd Ryder Cup here at Whistling Straits. We are joined by Daniel Berger.

Daniel, welcome to your first career Ryder Cup. You had a great year and finished third in one statistic I want to ask you about, birdie to bogey ratio, third on the Tour. On the surface, that would seem to reflect to your game and might translate well into match play. Is that your hope? Is that the type of game you have?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, listen, I think, make more birdies than less bogeys is a good stat. Especially out here, you know you have to make birdies. I think bogey avoidance is going to be big and in alternate-shot that's going to be tough but hopefully the conditions are challenging and I think that suits Team America.

Q. A lot of folks feel you were built perfectly for this event. Why is that?

DANIEL BERGER: Well, I think I'm fierce. I'm competitive. I think I got a taste of the team environment at the Presidents Cup at Liberty National, and it brought out a different side of me that I didn't really know that I had, so I'm imagining that this is going to be times a hundred.

But I'm excited for it. I'm excited to represent the United States of America and to be a part of a great group of captains and assistant captains and teammates and guys that you're usually competing against on a day-to-day basis, and now you're working with them to achieve a goal which is something that, you know, as individual athletes, we don't get very often. It's a cool experience and it's something that I've looked forward to for a long time.

Q. What about the match-play dynamic? What about it do you love as far as just having one or two opponents, looking across the nose at a guy you have to take down today?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, I kind of equate it to tennis which is something I grew up playing. It's you against one

other guy. You don't worry about the other 151 players in the field. It's just one mission and that's to beat the guy you're teeing off against. It's a different environment from what we are used to.

I think I got better at match play having played the Presidents Cup, and then this year at the Match Play, I figured out some things that are going to help me this week.

Q. You mentioned statistics, is there one that stood out to you? Is there anything Stricker told that you maybe might have surprised you?

DANIEL BERGER: I don't think any of it surprised me. I think a lot of the stuff we went over I had known that those were kind of my strong suits. In the end, statistics are important but what makes a good team is how you gel with your partner and how you guys get along. That's a big factor in how the performance is going to go is how you and your partner team up together.

Q. What did you figure out at the Match Play, if you don't mind me asking?

DANIEL BERGER: I think that match play is such a different beast compared to stroke play. You're really looking at your opponent and you're strategizing based on where he hits it. I think in my younger years playing the match play, I was too focused on trying to play the golf course and not play the opponent, and that's the difference for me.

Q. Did you talk to your dad at all about the dynamic of his Davis Cup experience and going to an individual sport to a team sport environment in that sport?

DANIEL BERGER: A little bit. I talk to my dad a lot about a lot of his advice is not golf related. But one of my biggest goals was to make a Ryder Cup Team, him having played the Davis Cup which is kind of The Ryder Cup of tennis.

Yeah, they are just different sports, so it's tough to really equate the two.



Q. What gives you the confidence that Team America are going to win this week? What are the team's biggest strengths?

DANIEL BERGER: Everyone is playing great golf right now and that's really the key to winning points. I think there's not one guy that I wouldn't want to be paired up with. There's 11 other players you could throw at me and I would feel completely confident and trustworthy that if they had to hit a big shot or make a big putt, they could do it. That's a big key for us.

Q. What's the biggest thing you learned from your dad, what's the biggest advice he's given you?

DANIEL BERGER: Hard work, dedication, putting time in. I think I've said this before, I don't think I'm the biggest, I'm not the strongest, I'm not the fastest golfer out here but I'll outwork any of them and I think that's my biggest asset.

Q. Tony before you was talking about the changing culture of American golf. You have so many younger, fresh faces here. As you guys -- for you maybe looking in on this event from the outside before now, is it kind of mystifying to see the results and how USA hasn't had success here?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, I try not to focus on the losses and I've spent a lot of time watching some video of their successes, the '99 Ryder Cup where Justin Leonard made that putt and Team USA running onto the green.

I think it's definitely become younger. You look at all the faces on Team America and they are just very young guys. I think Dustin is the oldest at 37 or whatever.

The notion that rookies can't come out here because they don't have the experience can kind of be thrown out the window. All of these guys are competing at the biggest events, the major championships and winning big golf tournaments. That's what it comes down to is being able to perform at the height level.

Q. On the six rookies, is there any kind of camaraderie or dynamic among you?

DANIEL BERGER: If you're asking if there's like any rookie hazing, not really. There's the guys that have played multiple Ryder Cups - Dustin Johnson, Brooks Koepka, Jordan Spieth, that we are all looking for advice, but we know what we have to do and how we have to prepare to play well and that's what we are going to play well.

Q. You touched on it, but keeping your emotions in

check is going to be quite difficult, do you have anything in plan to do that?

DANIEL BERGER: I'm excited about it. The toughest part this week is waiting to tee off on Friday. I'm ready to go. I want to play golf. I want to play as many times as I can and I feel like that's the mindset for everybody. We just want to play. No one wants to sit. There will be occasions where players are sitting but I know they will be ready to go when their name is called.

Q. Do you remember the first time you played against Brooks in a tournament? I'm guessing junior golf probably?

DANIEL BERGER: Probably college golf, yeah. I don't think -- he was a little older than me. So he would have been in the older divisions or past me in junior golf stuff.

Q. Did you have qualifying rounds?

DANIEL BERGER: Yeah, we had qualifying. Brooks was really good in college. He was first team All-American and I was a freshman, so I definitely didn't have that same level of play.

I started to play better toward the end of my freshman year when ACCs, regionals, nationals. So yeah, he was a very good college golfer.

Q. Did you have any bouts in qualifying where you would go head-to-head on the course?

DANIEL BERGER: No, he was definitely a better golfer. I was there my freshman year. He was a senior. He was just a better golfer than I was. I feel like I kind of developed late. My second year in college is where I really started to pick things up and started to become better, and kind of the rest has gone the way I thought it would.

Q. How important is it to get off to a good start with the short 4 on 1, the par 5 on 5 and the par 3 on 3?

DANIEL BERGER: Those are key holes. In alternate-shot, those are going to be key holes. The tougher part of the golf course is on the back nine, so you're going to see some birdies early on in alternate-shot format, and then it's going to be kind of more of holding on toward the end. I just think that the back nine presents a lot more challenges than the front nine does.

JOHN DEVER: One more question about tennis and playing doubles: What similarities do they have that you drew from as you walk in that room or as you did a few years ago in Australia?

DANIEL BERGER: Well, I played in Liberty National in New York. But you know, tennis is a very individual sport. I didn't play much doubles. But I wasn't that great of a tennis player but people somehow think I am.

It comes down to being prepared and showing up on the first tee ready to go. I think the early practice session we did here on Sunday and Monday last week was a huge key for us.

I think like yesterday, I didn't play golf. I just walked and chipped and putted a little bit. I think I wouldn't have been able to do that had I not been here early to see the golf course. I mean, I played the course at PGA Championship in 2015 but that was a long time ago.

So we are all ready to go. We're ready for that first tee shot on Friday.

JOHN DEVER: Thanks very much, Daniel.

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