

The Ryder Cup

Thursday, September 23, 2021

Kohler, Wisconsin, USA

Whistling Straits

Steve Stricker

Opening Ceremony Quick

STEVE STRICKER: Pádraig, welcome back to my home state. We waited a long time for this, haven't we. Well, seeing all of you out here was definitely worth the wait. Neither Pádraig or I could imagine playing The Ryder Cup without fans.

It's such an honor to be up here representing The PGA of America, the great state of Wisconsin and the United States as Ryder Cup Captain. Being from Wisconsin, I'm so proud, honored and humbled to be part of this moment, to be part of this Ryder Cup Team.

So many people have come together to make this comment, and the message I have shared with everyone this week and the message I want to share with everyone today is we are all in this together. Obviously there is rivalry between the two teams and you want to win, but we are in this as competitors and ambassadors for the sport we all love, and that's why the Ryder Cup is such a special event.

Being in a team atmosphere, playing with guys you are used to try to beat every week is unique in our sport. I remember my first Ryder Cup in 2008 at Valhalla in Louisville, Kentucky, it was an unbelievable experience because the fans in Louisville really got behind us, the crowd was amazing. It was just an unbelievable atmosphere just like I know we'll have here the next three days.

From that point on, I knew I wanted to be a part of The Ryder Cup for as long as I was in the sport. An event as grand as The Ryder Cup requires an incredible effort to put together. There are so many people who work behind the scenes who make it happen.

First I want to thank my wife, my daughters, Bobbi and Izzi (tearing up). I had a couple beers to try to get me through that; I just couldn't do it (laughter). I love you guys.

To my vice captains, Fred Couples, Jim Furyk, Zach Johnson, Davis Love III, and Phil Mickelson, I can't think you guys enough for all the help and support you have



given me.

To my players, vice captains, caddies and partners, we are Ryder Cup family. I'm incredibly blessed to have you all part of this team, so let's make some memories this week.

I'm grateful to the The PGA of America, the Kohler family and the team at Whistling Straits for their dedication and hard work to help make this Ryder Cup a reality. I'd like to give a special shout-out to the professional staff and maintenance crew here at Whistling Straits for getting the course in absolute perfect condition. You all deserve a massive thank you.

To our sponsors and media partners, thank you for helping the world understand how special this Ryder Cup is. We all appreciate all you've done to support its growth over the years. The biggest shout-out goes to our fans. You, our fans, whether it's "we are Marquette" jumping around with tens of thousands of our closest friends at Camp Randall; the eruption when Bernie Brewer goes down the slide after a home run; celebrating the Lambeau leap after another Packers TD -- I have to tell you, I'm a Bears fan, but I still love the Packers (mixture of boos from the crowd). It's just when they are playing against one another; I'm a Packers fan when they are not playing. Don't turn on us now, please; or the beautiful pandemonium when the Bucks win the National Championship, the NBA (Finals) championship.

The world has seen how much we support and get behind our teams here in Wisconsin but what truly makes our fans special is that for as loud as we are, and for as much as we love our teams, we also respect our competition.

We know you will give us a terrific home-field advantage, but we also know that you will respect our friends from the European side. And that makes me so proud. Speaking of being proud, I'd like you meet our United States Ryder Cup Team (introducing player squad).

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