

The Ryder Cup

Sunday, September 26, 2021

Kohler, Wisconsin, USA

Whistling Straits

Captain Padraig Harrington

Paul Casey

Matt Fitzgerald

Tyrrell Hatton

Tommy Fleetwood

Rory McIlroy

Viktor Hovland

Jon Rahm

Lee Westwood

Bernd Wiesberger

Sergio Garcia

Shane Lowry

Ian Poulter

Press Conference

JOHN DEVER: We are grateful to be joined by the European Team. Thank you for visiting.

Captain Harrington, while I think there's little doubt that this week maybe did not go the way you had envisioned or planned, I cannot imagine that it changes how you feel about your team and the effort that they gave along the way.

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, exactly as you said. The team did everything asked of them. They worked great together, they worked hard together, there was great team spirit. Everybody tried 100 percent. We were just beat by a better team this week, a very strong U.S. team that seemed to play right up to their ability. Had a bit of momentum, holed a few putts, had the crowd behind them. Just a lot of things really tough to overcome.

Q. Lee or Ian or Sergio. When you play -- on the rare



occasions when you play on a losing Ryder Cup Team, what can you take from that, either from the experience of that week or something you parlay forward from there?

LEE WESTWOOD: How much it hurts and how much you despise it and how much you can't wait for it to come around in two years' time and win it back.

IAN POULTER: I've only lost one other one, and it's dismal. You know, watching the guys out on 18 enjoying themselves is something that you come into this week with visions of that happening for you as a team.

We've got a great team this week, and we were outplayed. Every session was difficult. They did their job, and they made it painful for us today, and this one's going to hurt for a bit.

But you know what, it's things like that that make you stronger going forward.

Q. Pádraig, you've been involved in a lot of these. Have you ever seen an opponent that just seemed to hit 1 through 12 right through the lineup with guys on?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, they obviously got it right this week, a very strong team, but you know, I'm happy for Steve Stricker. You know, he's one of the good guys in golf. If you're going to get beat by a captain, that's a good captain for sure.

He obviously got his plan right. Whatever their prep was, they did a good job, and they came out and started well and kept the momentum going. It was just a tough one to overcome.

I believe that, you know, we did our job, and it just wasn't our week.

Q. Given the youth and talent of the U.S. Team, how hard is it going to be to get this Ryder Cup back?

RORY McILROY: I said at the start of the week, it seems the way The Ryder Cup is going, the home team certainly

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has an advantage every time that we play this thing. That was apparent in Paris a couple years ago. I think it was pretty apparent this week, as well.

You go back to Hazeltine, same sort of thing. This is the pattern that we are on. But obviously I mean, the U.S. Team, there's phenomenal talent on that team. A lot of young guys, and I think the most important thing for the U.S. Team is a lot of young guys that are great players have bought into The Ryder Cup. I think that was probably missing in previous generations.

But guys like Justin Thomas, Jordan Spieth, you know, the sort of heartbeat of that U.S. Team, they really bought into the team aspect of Ryder Cups, Presidents Cups. And having guys like that on the team, yeah, they are going to be formidable opposition from now until I'm probably not playing Ryder Cups, whenever that is, in hopefully 20 years' time.

I just wanted to mention one thing, have you seen the name of the 7th hole this week? What's it called? Yesss! Shipwreck for the people in the back.

Q. What is it about this Cup that makes grown men cry?

IAN POULTER: It's pretty simple, it means a lot to be part of these teams. We play a selfish sport week-in, week-out, and when we have this team spirit that we have -- don't start me off (pointing to Lee Westwood) --

LEE WESTWOOD: I've already cried on the 18th green doing an interview. Carry on. Let it go.

IAN POULTER: Only we know what happens in these team rooms, eh, Tommy?

We have a good group. These things don't come around very often. It's special to put the shirt on. It's special. It's special to get around all these guys in a way that you would not imagine. It means a lot in Europe to represent Europe in The Ryder Cup, and that's why it hurts and that's why you see all the emotion that you see.

Q. You said yesterday you were having the time of your life. Presumably that has not changed despite the result. Can you tell us why it's been so special?

SHANE LOWRY: Yeah, it's just so hard to describe. I spent years trying to make a Ryder Cup Team, and I got here this week and didn't know what to expect. Obviously it's been -- I have probably done something that I only could have dreamed of, like I won The Open by six shots in my home country, and this week is by far -- sorry, Tommy

-- but this -- this week has been by far the best week of my golfing career.

Like honestly, to be able to share the team room with these boys, to be able to play for Paddy, it's just been so special. I said to the lads last night, I'm having the time of my life, and we're six points behind. What's it going to be like when we're leading?

No matter how long I play, for the rest of my career, I'll want to be part of this team. You just form a special bond with people that you don't -- not that you don't think you ever would, but you just have -- there's just something there that we'll always have.

Look, we got beaten by a better side, but I really enjoyed myself. I'm so privileged to be a part of this team, and I've enjoyed every minute of it. I don't enjoy getting beaten like I did today, but you know, I had a great moment on the 18th green yesterday and tried to do my bit for the team. We came up obviously a long way short, but it's just been an incredible experience and something that I'll remember for the rest of my life. (Team applauds).

Q. I think you said on TV, you will have no regrets or second guess yourself about anything this week. What will your abiding memory be of the three years you spent putting this team together and this week in particular, what will you take away when the pain goes away?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: My abiding memory (laughing) you know -- (team chanting 'Tommy').

Yeah, look, it's difficult being a captain. You know, you go from being a player and you wonder, can you give what you need to give as a captain. So that will probably be what I take out of it, what I think I gave.

I think I was -- I think I was -- did I what I needed to do. I'm quite a practical person, but I know I needed to be more than that when you're The Ryder Cup captain. I do think I managed to bring these guys together, and, okay, we didn't get the results we wanted, but I think we had -- I think we were a team, and that's the most important thing at the end of the day.

Q. When you've got Jon and Viktor, some really young guys, can you give us insight on the new wave for you the next two, four years, and I have to ask, Tommy, please explain.

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: Yeah, look, there are young guys in this team that will be the heart of the team going forward. Jon Rahm, clearly; Viktor, these are young guys

that will be there for a long time. But there's a good heart to the team.

Everybody keeps going on about the experienced guys, but there is a really solid heart on this team of players who are still coming into their peak of their careers. There's a number of people, like I don't want to start naming, but the center --

LEE WESTWOOD: Not going to name me here, are you.

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: No, you're not getting named. No.

IAN POULTER: Nor me.

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: There is a lot of guys in the middle their career now who should be moving on in their golf. They certainly haven't peaked yet. Europe, yes, we would look to young guys coming in over the future, but the heart of this team will be here for a few more years for sure. They haven't got to their peaks yet, so we should see some strength going forward.

There's plenty of guys here. And as much as it would be a tougher week -- well, we'll draw lessons from this week, but most of these guys were winning in Paris, so there's still quite a winning mentality there going forward.

Q. When it became clear that it was going to be close to being a record differential, was that on your mind?

PÁDRAIG HARRINGTON: I was not aware of it until it became close. And then I did actually have to ask. And when I asked, I was told, well, I was on -- I was involved in the last two that were records (grimacing) but on the right side of it.

Look, somebody has to. That's the way it goes. This was a very strong U.S. Team. Everybody here gave 100 percent, and pulled together, everybody worked together this week. There's nobody walking away from this week, and I will talk to each player individually: Nobody didn't give their heart and soul to this team. Nobody should walk away -- we don't owe anybody anything in that sense. They all tried. They all put it in. And you know, there will be more Ryder Cups ahead. Most of them -- as I just said before, most of them have the best part of their career ahead of them, there's no doubt about that.

So they shouldn't walk away from this in any shape or form feeling like, hey, they gave it 100 percent. That's all you can ask from the players; did they do their job. Yes, they did. It didn't go right, but that happens in sport. Just remember, you know, if you want to have these glorious

moments, you've got to put your head out there, and sometimes it doesn't go right. You get your head knocked off. That's just the reality of sport. If you put yourself out there, you'll have some miserable days, but also, if you put yourself out there, you'll have those thrilling days when you win.

Q. Tommy or anyone else who wants to answer, when you're playing against a crowd like this, is it not so much the name stuff that they shout personally at you, but the lack of any great, big European cheers? I know there were a handful of supporters, but didn't seem to be anything that they could make noise about and get any momentum going.

TOMMY FLEETWOOD: This is the first one I played in America, so it's different to my first experience. I think we had each other all week, and that was plenty for me and I'm sure for the rest of the guys as well. You know that's part of being in an away Ryder Cup, I guess, and there's guys that can answer that question a lot more than me.

But I love the chance to go out there and play with my teammates and do that together. Yeah, it was quiet when you did anything right, but you know, the idea was to try to keep them quiet, really. We just didn't -- we couldn't quite do it, but it was still -- like I never really felt like it affected my performance, or the other guys I'm sure don't because we don't have the home fans with us. I think the team itself was enough for us.

Q. For the veteran guys, I don't want to suggest for a second that you won't be back, but do you find yourself taking it in more just in case?

SERGIO GARCIA: I'm not answering this one. I'm not a veteran.

LEE WESTWOOD: I guess that's me, then, is it?

Poults? Listen, this match I played this afternoon, it might be the last match I've played in The Ryder Cup. I'd rather it wasn't, but I'm 49 next April, and the likelihood is it is. I got to share it with my son. Won my point. (Team clapping).

I hate this tournament. It makes you so emotional, but that's what makes it great as well. Everybody knows when they tee up in the links-style golf course, Ryder Cup, it's a lottery. You have a chance of winning but it's not guaranteed. Like roulette.

But they are special moments out there. You know, we get to represent Europe out there this week. It's a big place. The other team gets to represent the USA. Big place.

Represent a lot of people. If you haven't got pride and passion, then it's not for you. Don't even bother turning up.

Q. You showed some emotion in an interview afterward. Curious if that's something the team sport thing, feeling like you maybe let the team down, was that something --

SHANE LOWRY: He won his point today.

SERGIO GARCÍA: He didn't let us down.

RORY McILROY: I want to try to be as good a teammate as I possibly can be. That doesn't necessarily mean everything that you do on the golf course. It's things that you try to do, you know, not even this week but throughout the year.

But yeah, look, do I wish I would have played better this week and delivered a couple of points earlier in the week? Of course. Of course I do.

No one was more disappointed in the way I played than me. But you know, the captain last night said all we could go out there today and do is try to win our point, and that's all I thought about today was just to go and win my point, put blue on the board early.

You know, I feel like I was bestowed a very privileged position to lead the team out, and I was able to go out and put a point on the board in the singles, but I wasn't able to do the previous Ryder Cups. I had that opportunity in Hazeltine and Paris and wasn't able to do it.

I wanted to go out there today and show some character and resilience, and I did that, and that was the best thing that I could do for my team. I was emotional because it's a highly charged event and it sucks to lose, it really does. It sucks, and you know, listening to, "We're the Champions" out there and those guys celebrating, if we have an opportunity in Rome, hopefully I'm on that team and it will make getting that Cup back even sweeter.

Q. You were playing your fifth match today; how hard was that battle? And what did you see in Dustin today?

JON RAHM: I'll go ahead. Yeah, what can you do when somebody has five birdies in the first six holes? It's not like I was playing bad golf. It wasn't my best, but it wasn't my worst, either. Hitting good putts. They just weren't dropping in. I had my opportunity in the match from 7 on, from 7 till, let's say, 12. I had my chances. He opened the door a little bit, and I just didn't take advantage of it.

What I had been able to do the first two days, I wasn't able to today. I was making what I thought were good swings and good putts, and things just weren't going my way, simple as that. It got to a point where I needed pretty much a miraculous finish, and I didn't get it.

You know, he started really well. He played really good golf. I tried my hardest, as did everybody up here, right. I gave it my all, and unfortunately for today, it just wasn't enough.

PAUL CASEY: What did I see in Dustin? I saw classic Dustin. He played great golf. Tip my cap. Disappointed I didn't make a putt on the last to tie that match. I know he wanted 5-0 for the week. You know, just -- I mean, every single one of these guys next to me, we gave everything we could, and I'll go on record and saying this is the -- I'm so proud to be part of this team. I love these guys. (Team applauding).

Q. To Viktor, you played five matches and got one point. What do you think about that stat, and what did you learn from this week?

VIKTOR HOVLAND: Didn't really learn that it was hard to win points, but I feel like we all played some good golf this week. But you know, in matches you're looking for maybe some opportunities, some free holes here and there, and we didn't really get them.

You know, played some really good stuff tee-to-green. But you've got to make the putts at the right times to get momentum, and it just seemed like throughout the whole week, we weren't able to capitalize. I don't feel like we got out-played in that way. We definitely showed a lot of grit. Just didn't go our way. But it was such a cool experience getting to know these guys a lot better. Maybe a little too well.

But I can't wait to come back in two years' time and (laughing) -- and get even closer. Yeah, that's all I have to say.

Q. Obviously there's a long, beautiful tradition of Spanish pairs playing together since the European era started. I wanted to ask about your partnership, thinking back to Seve and Olazábal, etc., etc., when you are succeeding like this.

SERGIO GARCÍA: Without a doubt, obviously we've been very fortunate to have a lot of great Spanish players play in The Ryder Cup and doing so much for The Ryder Cup.

So I think for both of us to have the chance of playing together these last couple of days and do as well as we did

for our team, it was amazing. It's something that Jon and I were very excited about. I think the team was very excited about it, and you know, I just -- I enjoyed every minute.

To be there hitting some shots here and there, and watching what Jon is capable of doing, it was a treat. It was really fun.

JON RAHM: I can say those two days, those matches with Sergio, what it means, the history of the game, an admirer of what Seve and Ollie were able to do, to tee it up with him; he's living Ryder Cup history.

To be able to win those matches with them the way we did it, that is undoubtedly the most fun I've had on a golf course by far. I'm hoping I can keep playing good enough to be in this team again. I hope we can repeat it because that is something I want to do again, and it was --

IAN POULTER: I think you'll be all right.

JON RAHM: I don't want to take anything for granted. He hasn't missed a shot in 20 years. I hope it's going to be okay.

It meant that much to me. I grew up watching him play, watching Seve and Ollie, and that legacy is important. They had a great record. I think it was 11-2-2. We started pretty well so far. Not that we are going to beat it, but I hope that we have a chance to keep adding to that.

JOHN DEVER: Thank you, Team Europe.

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