

The Ryder Cup

Wednesday, 27 September, 2023

Rome, Italy

Marco Simone

U.S. Team

Sam Burns

Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: I'm joined by Sam Burns from the U.S. Team. It's your debut here at the Ryder Cup, and what a place to do it in Rome. How much have you enjoyed the experience so far?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, it's been an amazing week so far, getting to experience it with my teammates and captains and our spouses. It's been fantastic.

Q. You've gotten the call before that you weren't on the team; what was this call like and how did it feel after?

SAM BURNS: It was a lot better than the other one.

Yeah, it was really special. Coming into this year, making this team was very high on my goal list I guess you could call it. After the TOUR Championship, I wasn't really sure. I knew I was close and thought it could go a couple different ways.

So yeah, to get the call on Monday morning was really special.

Q. When was your last haircut? Were you growing it for this event? And did you do the USA yourself?

SAM BURNS: I've gotten lots of haircuts the last few months, just I haven't cut the back.

Not really in particular, I've just got to grow it while I still have it. I'm not going to have it forever.

Q. And the USA?

SAM BURNS: A buddy of mine.

Q. Did he do it with a knife?

SAM BURNS: He did it with a straight razor.



MARCO SIMONE
ROME, ITALY

Q. You've been a top ranked junior, top ranked college player, one of the best players on the PGA TOUR the last few years, but do you feel you've played better with a chip on your shoulder, and how do you kind of generate that for an event like this?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I mean, I would say it is nice to try and play with a little bit of a chip on your shoulder. I think it's easy to find different types of motivation, and I think coming into this week, for us, I feel like we have nothing to lose.

We haven't won over here in 30 years. We're looking forward to the challenge.

I know the European team is going to be tough. There's a lot of talent on that team, and they really want to win over here, and so do we.

I think it's going to be hopefully a great match.

Q. Lots of speculation about who's going to play with whom Friday and Saturday. You've got analytics, you've got friendships. What do you think makes a good partnership either in this thing or in Zurich? How do you prefer that you're paired together with somebody?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I think there's a lot of different things that go into it from a statistical standpoint or how well you kind of gel with someone. I don't know how much of a factor one weighs more than the other, but I think it's a number of different things that kind of go into it. I wouldn't say one thing is really more important than the other.

Q. You wore those colours in Charlotte at the Presidents Cup. That was a home game. What are you expecting from the crowd here, and how do you think it will affect you?

SAM BURNS: Well, I think our fans will travel. I know we'll have some support over here. I don't maybe expect to have as much as the European team will, but I'm looking forward to it.



I think it's kind of one of those things you have to embrace, maybe a little more of a hostile environment.

As a team, we're looking forward to that challenge. We kind of know and expect what is to come. It's going to be fun.

Q. Getting back to the chip-on-the-shoulder element, it doesn't seem like anybody on your team has a larger one than Brian Harman, who expressed it a lot after winning The Open Championship and had to go through a lot of stuff outside the ropes and whatnot. What's your take on his mental toughness, and what do you think going through what he did and succeeding at Liverpool does for him this week in this forum?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, first of all, Harm is a world-class player. If you look at what he did in junior and amateur golf and as a professional, it speaks for itself. That guy is really good with a golf club in his hand. He's one of the straightest hitters of a golf ball I've ever seen, to a point where if you're playing him, it just kind of gets old watching -- you don't even really need to watch. Harm, are you in the right centre or left centre? He doesn't hit it offline very often.

For him to go and do what he did at The Open Championship this year, I think that gives him more confidence. I know he has confidence in himself, and he has a great team around him. He's a great guy. I've enjoyed our friendship and learning from him and kind of getting to watch how he goes about things.

Q. How nervous were you when your buddy was cutting on the side of your head with a straight razor?

SAM BURNS: I wasn't that nervous. The worst thing that could happen was I get a little nick.

Q. Are you surprised at the attention it's gotten?

SAM BURNS: When you start shaving things into the side of your head, you're kind of asking for it, I guess. But it's been fun.

Q. A lot has been made of your friendship with Scottie and your place on the team. I'm wondering how disrespectful you find that.

SAM BURNS: Scottie and I aren't really friends. I don't know where people come up with that. We actually don't even really like each other.

I'm just kidding.

Q. I know that, but in terms of what's been said about it and inferred about it --

SAM BURNS: I don't know what's been said about it, to be honest. We're great friends. Our wives are great friends. I imagine we'll be friends as long as we're alive.

I don't really know what you're talking about, to be honest.

Q. From your point of view, you feel the way you've played you deserve a place on this team by right?

SAM BURNS: I mean, there's a points list that is used throughout the year, and I think I finished 12th on the points list. Obviously after that it's out of my control who's chosen. Yeah.

Q. I'm curious about you and JT were playing a match against each other today. What is his role or how do you view his role off the course? Not just on it; obviously he's been a great Ryder Cupper, but amongst the team can you give any insight how he galvanises or treats everybody?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, Justin gets along with everyone. Everyone likes Justin. He's been on many of these teams and has a lot of experience, and he's a great person to ask questions to. He's very open and sharing information and kind of what he's learned throughout his experiences in Ryder Cups and Presidents Cups. Obviously a world-class player, and everyone is really excited for him to be on this team.

Q. Did you win the press?

SAM BURNS: I did not, no, unfortunately.

Q. Going back to the Walker Cup, the past Ryder Cup, when Zach's name pops up on your phone, are there feelings of anxiety, or what are you thinking when you see that happen?

SAM BURNS: Yeah, I knew I was going to get a call one way or the other. I think for me, throughout the year, it was just trying to process how do I respond to something that necessarily doesn't go the way I want it to. Kind of always checking your heart of, okay, if I don't make it, can I be okay with that.

I think that was something I kind of battled with all year. Just at times I felt like yeah, I think I'd be all right, and other times it felt like, no, that would be the end of the world, which kind of showed me that maybe it meant a little too much.

So really just kind of going through the process of how can you be content with either scenario.

Q. Are you going with the new putter this week?

SAM BURNS: It's not a new putter for this week. I've putted with --

Q. But the one you switched to at East Lake?

SAM BURNS: Yeah.

Q. What was behind the switch?

SAM BURNS: It's honestly the same putter, it's just a different insert. It's almost exactly like -- if you were to look at it, you may not even be able to tell the difference.

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