

The Ryder Cup

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Farmingdale, New York, USA

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Team USA

Russell Henley

Media Conference



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THE MODERATOR: Russell Henley is with us now at the 2025 Ryder Cup. Welcome to your first Ryder Cup. How has the week been so far?

RUSSELL HENLEY: It's been awesome. Anytime you get to be on a team, it's really fun. Before last year's Presidents Cup, I hadn't been on a team in a while. So really cool to kind of have the locker room and have all your meals and play all your practice rounds with the team, and really cool to represent your country.

Q. Russell, just curious, you don't see Bryson that often because he's only around four tournaments a year, so to speak. How do you describe him as a teammate and how explosive can he be for you guys this week?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, obviously a great player. Explosive is a great word for how he plays. I've just really enjoyed Bryson. Bryson, after Greensboro in 2021 maybe, I was leading the tournament, and I choked it away, and the next week or the two weeks after, I saw him in Baltimore at Caves Valley, and he walked up and said -- he goes, hey, man, keep your head up, that happens to everybody, you're playing some great golf, and just encouraged me. I'll always remember that.

Obviously haven't played a lot of golf with him the last couple years, but I've always enjoyed Bryson, and it's been really cool getting to pick his brain this week.

I think we operate a lot differently on the golf course, and he plays a lot different game than I do, so sitting with him last night at dinner it was cool getting to ask him what he's been doing in the practice rounds and stuff. He's just a great teammate. It's been cool.

Q. Have you brought that up to him since he --

RUSSELL HENLEY: I have, yeah.

Q. What was his reaction to that?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Oh, he just said he appreciated me bringing it up. He meant it, and yeah, he's -- it's just cool to receive encouragement from a player of his caliber. Typically you don't really know what to say when one of your -- when you see a guy kind of choke in a tournament, but it was cool. He worded it in a way that was encouraging to me, so it was cool.

Q. You've got three or four guys on the team who played a Presidents Cup first and then made their Ryder Cup debut. Have you talked to any of them or have they talked to you about the difference in what to expect?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, I was actually talking to JT about it. I think it's good to -- it's great to have gotten that experience, especially in a way, Presidents Cup last year, and it kind of -- the more times -- basically he said the more times you can be on a team and get that team experience, the more valuable it is.

He said he was really happy that he got to play a Presidents Cup before his first Ryder Cup.

Q. How invaluable is it to have someone like that with that experience for you coming into this for the first time, and maybe what's one of the best tidbits of advice he's given you that's hit home to you?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, he's been really helpful with just little pieces of advice, on what to expect, and kind of brings an encouraging and fun attitude to the team room. It's comforting to me knowing someone like that who has so much experience is on my team and has been really encouraging to me so far.

So we've really hit it off, and it's cool to see somebody who's had as much success as him be very vocal to us on what to expect and hey, don't forget to do this, make sure you do that, and this is how it was the other year, let's make sure -- just a lot of little pieces of advice to make the week run smoothly, so it's been fun to have him for sure.



Q. What's your definition of a great Ryder Cup player? Is there a hero you have in this event, somebody that's inspired you over the years? Can be a European if you like.

RUSSELL HENLEY: Well, it's kind of funny, the first person I think of when I think of Ryder Cup for me is Patrick Cantlay. I played a lot of amateur golf with him, and he beat me in the U.S. Am; he was No. 1 ranked amateur in the world when I was in college, and we played the Walker Cup together, played the Palmer Cup together. Just a guy who I feel like thrives in these tournaments.

I've been watching -- unfortunately, but makes me more thankful for this one. I've been watching the Ryder Cup the last 10 years or so as a pro, and I guess I just -- I think of him when I think of the Ryder Cup just because he's been successful and he just has that way of getting points for the team.

Q. Just wondering, Presidents Cup last year, you played a bunch with Scottie. Obviously he'd been coming off a great year, World No. 1, gangbusters. Did you feel any extra pressure to play with a guy that had been so dominant? You want to feel like you're doing your part.

RUSSELL HENLEY: Have I felt extra pressure to play with him?

Q. Yeah.

RUSSELL HENLEY: I don't think so. I think the pressure that I feel is the pressure that I put on myself. I've been friends with Scottie for a bunch of years now and get along with him great. I don't really feel that from him.

I just enjoy being around him. Thankfully I feel like if I was paired with, like, Tiger, it would probably feel a little bit different just because I grew up watching Tiger all the time, and because Scottie is younger than me and I've spent so much time with him, I guess I just feel a little bit differently about it.

Again, the pressure I feel, I think, is the pressure that I put on myself.

Q. Because of what Scottie and Tiger have done, the last two years Scottie has been very similar in terms of accolades, but do you feel like it's maybe the fact that you were younger that Tiger would have carried more aura than Scottie?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, I think so. I guess that's what it is. I've spent so much time with Scottie now, I'm just

much more comfortable because we're friends. It's just not -- not to say I couldn't be comfortable around Tiger. I just haven't spent that much time with him. I just know him as "the guy" when I was growing up. Yeah, just a big difference there.

Q. One of the things Keegan said about the difficulty of foursomes is pairing guys, and he mentioned the golf ball. Just wondering how much of a thing that is. Is that something you guys really are having to work through, and do you find using a partner's golf ball is a challenge for you?

RUSSELL HENLEY: Yeah, so statistically last year at the Presidents Cup, I had a couple guys that I was paired well with, like odds and evens, for alternate shot, and Tony Finau was one of the guys. But he is the highest -- he plays the lowest spin, lowest launch ball because he's one of the highest spin players, and I play the highest spin, highest launch ball, so we're like on opposite ends of the spectrum.

For me to hit one of his balls with my driver would have been -- I don't know if I would have been able to spin it over 2,000 RMPs. It is a big deal.

I think especially into the greens, you see -- if you're seeing a lot different spin rate. Like a guy like me who is really emphasizes on controlling the ball with my irons, if I don't know how much the ball is spinning, if it's spinning way less, it's going to be really tough for me to figure that out. Absolutely, it makes a big difference.

Q. How does it change? It means you're going to hit the ball shorter, farther if you're unsure, especially with an iron shot?

RUSSELL HENLEY: So I think it would just be inconsistent. I think if you were into the wind and you had a lot less spin, I think it would just go right through it. I think if there was no wind, it might fall out of the air. But if the face was a little wet and it rode up the grooves a little bit you might launch it higher with no spin and it might go farther. You don't get the consistency. The spin really is huge.

Q. When you were watching those Ryder Cups at home like you said, as you were getting into your 30s, how much did you still believe you'd make one of these one day?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I didn't know -- I always believed that I could. I didn't know if it would happen. Last year I remember getting the nod from Captain Jim at the TOUR Championship, around that time. I remember kind of the

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

realization of, okay, all the hard work that I've put in added up to me making the team.

During those years of, like, the last six or so years of really putting the work in, I have goals and I hoped that it would happen, but you never know. I never was like, oh, I'm going to make it.

Q. You mentioned Scottie and your relationship with him. Can you sense any added fuel or pressure that he's put on himself to deliver here because of how he played in Rome and the tear he's been on as the World No. 1? Can you sense any added motivation or pressure that he's put on himself?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I feel like I haven't. I feel like he has high expectations for himself, and it doesn't matter if he's playing a nine-hole game for fun at home or if he's playing in a major. I feel like he holds himself to the same standard. He wants to play great. He wants to win. I don't think it matters what the situation is. I think that's just how he's wired.

Q. Has there been a moment yet this week or maybe even before that it's really hit you that you are playing in your first Ryder Cup?

RUSSELL HENLEY: I'm still kind of pinching myself, honestly, sitting here talking to y'all and seeing all the stands and stuff up and all the red, white and blue, and we've had a couple cool meetings and stuff. It's still, like, wow, this is like a dream come true. I'm just so excited and thankful. Kind of every day I'm waking up here, I'm like, wow, this is going to be a cool day.

I feel like a little kid or something. It's really fun.

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