

# Walker Cup

Thursday, September 4, 2025

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Cypress Point Club

**Captain Dean Robertson**

**Tyler Weaver**

**Niall Shiels Donegan**

GB&I Press Conference



and playing the Walker Cup, to be able to feed off the energy of the crowd. I'm fortunate to have grown up not too far from here, a few hours north, so I hope that they'll come out in force again and have some more fun.

**Q. Do you feel that local knowledge, that kind of feel for California, will help you?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Yeah, I think having grown up on the poa greens, it does give me a little bit of extra feel, but of course they're going to be running firm and fast for everyone. You're going to have to adapt to the conditions as you see them, and yeah, just do your best that you can.

**Q. Tyler, from your perspective, obviously coming into the week you're the highest ranked player in the GB&I team. Does that give you some added confidence and a bit of added responsibility in the team room?**

TYLER WEAVER: Yeah, a little bit, but I mean, I don't think the rankings mean too much at an event like this. Obviously they've got some really high ranked players as well, but our team is also great, and the rankings at the end of the day don't really mean too much.

**Q. How much are you looking forward to the match and the experience of competing? You know a lot of the guys, obviously. It's going to be quite a contest.**

TYLER WEAVER: Yeah, I'm buzzing for it. Done a lot of team events in my time, and it's the best week of your life, and hopefully we can have another great week.

**Q. Question for Dean. It looks like you've had a very regimented approach to the practice and also an emphasis on sort of easing into the week. I don't think you all played on Tuesday. Is that something driven by experience of your predecessors that you've developed?**

DEAN ROBERTSON: Yes. I think it's a very tiring week, and having spoken to friends and Padraig Harrington, Luke Donald and others, the energy levels are going to be so important. So to take that rest day on Tuesday was really important.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Good afternoon, everyone. We'll make a start to the opening GB&I press conference of the week. I'm joined by Captain Dean Robertson, Niall Shiels Donegan and Tyler Weaver.

Dean, if I can begin with you, can you just give us a feel for just the experience for you and the team of coming to a storied venue like Cypress Point and just how everyone is feeling about this week and the match?

DEAN ROBERTSON: I'm exceptionally privileged to be captain of the GB&I team this year, and to be coming to Cypress Point is just incredible. I've never been here before as a player. Played in the Walker Cup in '93 at Interlachen which was very special, but this week is going to be extra special.

**Q. There's something about this place, isn't there. How do you feel practice has been going? How are the guys finding the course and the setup?**

DEAN ROBERTSON: Well, the golf course is quite unique. It's breathtaking. The green complexes are exceptionally difficult. It's going to be extremely strategic. The course is changing all the time.

We came here last Friday, walked the golf course on Saturday, and it's firming up by the day. So the greens are getting a little bit quicker but more the firmness of the greens are going to pose the biggest problems, and you must be under the hole around this golf course.

**Q. Niall, obviously we're going to have a good crowd here this week. You found out at the U.S. Amateur how much you relish playing in front of the fans. Are you looking forward to that part of it this week?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Yeah, I think it's one of the great opportunities we've got, playing the U.S. Amateur

The nervous energy is elevated as soon as you get on the golf course here, so we enjoyed that day, and yesterday and today have been really good.

**Q. Niall, you were at the 2017 Walker Cup; was there anything that you took away from that and that it inspired in wanting to try to make a team?**

NIALL SHIELDS DONEGAN: Yeah, I mean, obviously being down at LACC for that Walker Cup, that was such a fun experience, and it's definitely one of the moments that I think made me start to realize that this was a dream of mine. Got to walk the fairways with Connor Syme, David Boote, Cameron Champ, Mav McNealy, all those guys who are kind of now household names. They've won on Tour, done great things in the professional game.

I just think it's such a great kickoff point for what hopefully will be a long career.

**Q. Dean, I'm curious if there's a particular message you've been trying to get across to the team this week as you've been building up for the competition on Saturday, something that you're trying to either inspire them with or trying to get them to realize as they're getting ready.**

DEAN ROBERTSON: Well, there's been a number of key messages, and as Tyler alluded to there, Tyler is the highest ranked player in our team, but the 10 players on our team, the key messages we've had have been strategy number one, approach play, short iron approach play and specific distances where you need to position the ball under hole high, and these have been things that we've been working on for a good number of weeks.

Also through developing the relationship and understanding of these players and the respect of them, we've really managed to bring them together, and there's a real unity there. I'm really thrilled to be their captain, really proud, and I'm really excited for the match itself.

**Q. Tyler and Niall, Tuesday what did you do with the day off, and how important do you all think having that day, given how long you'd been over here, was in terms of your preparation?**

TYLER WEAVER: For me, I tried to get as much sleep as I could. Had a little gym session and then just took it pretty easy, played some video games with the guys and did a little bit of putting up here but nothing too serious, just to get the body ready for the week to come.

NIALL SHIELDS DONEGAN: Yeah, I think as Dean said, it's

going to be a long week, and from talking to other people who have done this before, they know it better than us, it takes a lot of mental energy to play these matches.

For Tuesday, we just had a nice rest and recovery session in our team room, watching the tennis right now in New York, playing some FIFA, just having a good laugh.

**Q. Dean, you guys obviously had a pretty dominant showing in foursomes at the St Andrews Trophy. How much stock should we put into that performance where you guys didn't lose a match?**

DEAN ROBERTSON: Foursomes play is so important in any of these matches, and to gain some momentum in that -- we have been putting work into foursomes play and really focusing in on that, and we did that again this morning. Off the back of Madrid, there's momentum there, but there's also continuity within the players, and that's something that we'll look to use to our advantage in the weekend.

**Q. Tyler, when is the last time you've lost a match because you went 3-0 as a freshman at NCAAs and you went 3-0-1 at the St Andrews Trophy. Do you remember the last time you lost a match?**

TYLER WEAVER: Yeah, unfortunately I do. It was actually fairly recently, at the U.S. Amateur. It was a tough loss, but obviously learning from those, and hopefully keep the winning streak in team events going.

**Q. What do you think makes you such a good match play player?**

TYLER WEAVER: I think, honestly, playing a lot with my brother, older brother. A lot of the time he was better than me growing up, so just trying to find ways to beat him in match play. But it's a different mentality when you're playing against the person in front of you, and you just take it as it comes really.

**Q. When was the last time you've lost a match at a team event?**

TYLER WEAVER: The European Amateur Teams this summer I had one loss in the singles. I can remember them.

**Q. Niall, I was talking to your dad this morning. He was saying that a few years ago on social media you were posting things about wanting to be in the Walker Cup and especially at Cypress. Can you talk about that a little bit?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Yeah, I guess kind of in the recruiting process for university, I kind of -- I didn't play a lot of junior events, didn't play a lot of amateur golf when I was younger, so kind of what I did was I'd just start posting videos from my local muni course every morning before school and just tagging random courses, and Cypress would always be one that I would tag next to some of the dirt on one of the tees at my local muni.

Yeah, I think there might be an old Instagram post saying "Walker Cup 2025 here we come" or something like that. I definitely put that in something.

**Q. That's simply you messing around; at that point are you dreaming of it at all or are you just messing around?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Yeah, once I got that golf bug, it was certainly a dream of mine. As I said to Jeff earlier, going to that Walker Cup in 2017 kind of -- kind of sparked it all for me.

Yeah, it was a dream for sure.

**Q. What was the occasion of you going to LACC in '17?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: I don't know, just probably since my dad has been friends with Jeff for years, see them a little bit, and just kind of experience what I think is the best tournament in amateur golf.

**Q. I wanted to ask about the aftermath of the Am. He was saying that you had to take a red eye afterwards back to school? School started when? And the other question about that is you said you didn't want to do a lot of media afterwards; can you talk about that? You were the face of that Amateur and I'm sure a lot of people wanted to hear from you, but you also have a life to live. How did that all come about?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Yeah, you can call me the face of the Amateur, but at the end of the day, whose name is going on the trophy? Mason Howell. We're playing against him this week, and he played a great week at Olympic Club and I'm sure he's going to play great again this week.

But I just think -- I've always come from the standpoint of if you win, you've earned some attention, but other than that, you just got to get back to the grind, keep working, and it was a busy time for me as well. School started -- my U.S. Am finished Saturday, school started on Monday, so I was right back into the kick of things, and I just didn't think it was smart for me to be giving myself that much exposure

at such an early time.

**Q. What did you have to do that Monday for school? How many classes?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: I got in at about 8:00 a.m. into RDU and had to drive straight to our athletic facility for an academic meeting. Then we had workouts and then I had a couple classes later on in the afternoon to go to.

**Q. How surreal was that to be back in the college environment after what you'd experienced?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: I think it was great. Especially Chapel Hill is a new spot for me. Just being able to see some familiar faces with the guys on the team that I've been practicing with over the summer. I think it was good for me to get out of all that attention I was getting that week of the Amateur and get me back down to earth and straight back to work. We were practicing Monday.

**Q. Between the Amateur and now this experience, how much do you feel like this is going to further your mindset and feeling about where your game is and how good you are?**

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Yeah, I think obviously getting picked for the team was a massive honor, and to be able to play in the match on Saturday and Sunday is going to be great.

But at the end of the day, it's just golf. It doesn't define who you are as a person. I try and live my life as much as I can not basing it based on how I play my golf. I mean, I work. Don't get me wrong, I work as hard as I can to be good at this game. But at the end of the day, we'll just go out, see what happens, and my goal is just to have a smile and enjoy the experience.

**Q. This course you probably know is designed by Alister MacKenzie who was an Englishman of Scottish ancestry. I'm wondering throughout the British Isles, Ireland, Northern Ireland, all of Great Britain as well, what course comes to mind where you'd say it's a little bit like Machrihanish or whatever?**

DEAN ROBERTSON: I think a lot of the greens resemble the Old Course at St Andrews. You've also got Lahinch, where the Walker Cup is next year, which is also a MacKenzie design, so there are multiple in Great Britain that we'll have seen that resemble, but what they don't resemble is the breathtaking scenery and the speed of the greens.

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: I guess for me being someone

that's grown up in San Francisco, I can't really speak to over in the UK as much, but I've been lucky enough to be a member at Meadow Club, which is MacKenzie's first U.S. design for the past seven or eight years now, and I can really see the green complexes, the similarities there.

I think the bunkering is slightly different, and obviously the land he had to work with here is breathtaking, but I think green complexes is where -- with Meadow Club, yeah.

TYLER WEAVER: There's probably not a course that springs straight to mind, to be honest. It's so unique, like all the trees on the coast and everything, those few holes. There's nothing really like it, to be honest, so I can't really give a course off the top of my head.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Yeah, this is my first visit here, and I think it's a spectacular course, as the guys have said. The only place I can think of with scenery that's in the same league is Casa de Campo, Teeth of the Dog, which I've been lucky enough to play a few times, and it's pretty spectacular as well, but I think this is on a different level.

Walking down the 17th yesterday I was struck by -- I played a course in Japan last year with views of Mount Fuji, but one of the things that stuck in my mind was there were several holes with trees in the middle of the fairways, and you walk down 17 and you've got all these trees in the middle of the fairway. That was quite something.

But these guys are playing a different game to me.

**Q. Dean, to follow up, you have Dr. MacKenzie on your golf bags, on a little bag tag. How did that come about?**

DEAN ROBERTSON: So that came about, myself and Euan from the R&A, we had the visit here the end of last October, and we spent four days. So the first day we walked the golf course and took about four or five hours to walk it, roll some golf balls, and right there and then we recognized how special of a venue this was.

After that, we invited in a number of players. 10 players came, of which five of them are here this week, Niall being one of them. Tyler was busy playing for his school at an event, and we were privileged enough to be invited by the president, Mr. George Still, and George over lunch, I talked to him about honoring MacKenzie by putting a tribute on the GB&I bags. Our bags are quite detailed if you get a chance to see them, and they've got the lion all through them. That was the small little thing that we wanted to do.

I also noticed that the lone cypress, driving around to Pebble Beach, and we wanted to also mark the occasion

because this is going to be so special for these guys certainly. 32 years ago, I look in my office and I see a picture of the Walker Cup at Interlachen, and it means so much to me, but back when I was early 20s, maybe not so much because I was so tunnel vision and focused on the golf.

But on the base of all the GB&I bags is the lone cypress with Cypress Point on it, and it's something that they're going to cherish forever, and when they get old like me they're going to look at it and they're going to appreciate it even more.

**Q. You sort of answered my other question, but this course there's a lot of local knowledge. The guys have now essentially played the last two days. What things besides talking to George and different people did you do to develop and learn some of the quirks of certain greens and the local knowledge elements and pass that on to your guys?**

DEAN ROBERTSON: I think we're still learning it, to be quite honest with you. I think every day is a discovery. Having played at the Old Course on many occasions, you learn something new all the time, and when these courses get set up in championship conditions, the characteristics change very quickly, and this one is changing every day. So any of the learning we've had to just now, we're going to have to be versatile, and as Niall said, we need to be able to adapt. That's something that's going to happen over the coming days, so we need to be ready for that, and we're doing our best, but most of all, we need to be -- we're going to enjoy this week because it's the best days of their lives.

**Q. Niall and Tyler, building off of what Captain just said, when you think about the different things that go into preparing for a tournament, is there anybody that you two have specifically reached out to or tried to lean on to learn the course a little bit and learn a little bit about what the Walker Cup is like because it is a little bit different than any other competition you play in?**

TYLER WEAVER: You said mentioned about a person that we were able to talk to or ask questions about. We were lucky enough to have Luke Poulter on the team and his dad Ian here, so being able to talk to him obviously about the Ryder Cup and his experiences, and yeah, having the chance to ask him questions and what it means and how to play these events, how to deal with the pressure has been so important. It's been great for us to be able to ask him questions and learn.

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Yeah, last night we had dinner

with Ian, which that was really special. Obviously he's done a lot in team golf, and it was pretty cool to get some lessons from him. We've also had some messages from Harrington, Pdraig Harrington, Luke Donald, Paul McGinley, all messages of encouragement, and just talking about how special this week is going to be.

I think for me, I had a talk - this is way back in 2021 now - with Craig Connelly, who is still Martin Kaymer's caddie, and he spoke about just in match play golf, just play your own game, don't play your opponent, stick to your plan and just see what happens. I think that's been the lessons that I have tried to live true to in every match play event that I've gone into.

**Q. Dean, you talked about trying to enjoy this place, take in the views and everything. How do you weigh doing that through these first practice round days being able to appreciate where you guys are, what this event is, while also being able to prepare fully for what's to come on Saturday and Sunday?**

DEAN ROBERTSON: When we came in last week, our first day we spent in San Francisco and then we done a course walk on Saturday, and the course walk was quite significant because there was no golf clubs, it was just a putter, some golf balls and a wedge for around the green, and we spent a lot of time going around the 18 holes and learning the greens so that when we got back here yesterday morning we were able to understand more and learn more, and that's really what we've been doing. We've just been taking it little by little.

We know areas of the game that need to -- that this golf course demands. You've got to be an exceptional iron player. The fairways are relatively generous, and you've got to have incredible touch and feel on and around about the greens. If you can do that, you're going to make yourself hard to beat.

**Q. Dean, how much has the past history of this event and specifically GB&I's record on American soil, how much has that been a part of your message to the guys and the motivation to the guys?**

DEAN ROBERTSON: Well, in terms of legacy, we're under no illusions as to just how challenging it is to come up against such a strong United States team and arguably on paper the strongest ever assembled.

But we're looking forward to it.

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