

Walker Cup

Saturday, September 6, 2025

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Cypress Point Club

Captain Dean Robertson

Niall Shiels Donegan

Connor Graham

GB&I Press Conference



MIKE WOODCOCK: We're joined by Dean Robertson, the captain of the GB&I team, and we're also joined by Niall Shiels Donegan and Connor Graham. Dean, can I start with asking your thoughts on the first day's play. Obviously quite a lot of swings and fortunes throughout the day but very close.

DEAN ROBERTSON: Very close. The standard of golf today has been exceptional. Morning foursomes played off of Connor and Tyler. Their back nine was sensational, followed by by Luke Poulter and Charlie Forster, Grehan and Baker. Fantastic.

This afternoon the Americans played fantastic. The sportsmanship out there was exemplary. The weather was tremendous. The golf course is firming up even more so.

It was a brilliant day. We just fell short on a few putts there, and things went the other way. If we'd holed a couple more, things might be a little bit different. Slightly, slightly disappointed that we are one point behind. However, exceptionally proud of the way that the team performed.

Q. Niall, a good finish on 18 for you.

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Yeah, it was a tough grind the entire day. I think it goes back to what Dean has been telling us. We're built for that mentality. We can't give an inch. I think I really stuck to that today.

Q. Connor, from your point of view, your second Walker Cup match. Two points on the first day; you must be delighted?

CONNOR GRAHAM: Yeah, delighted. Me and Tyler played really good in the morning, and this afternoon I knew it was going to be a tough match again and had to go out there and play some good golf to get that point.

Q. Dean, can you talk about what the feeling was between the morning and afternoon, how your guys felt after going 3-1? And you've talked to some of your guys since what happened out there in singles. What are your thoughts in the team now?

DEAN ROBERTSON: The first session after the foursomes, we were delighted with our performance, and then at lunchtime we just regrouped, went through the same process that we would do for any round, checked out the new pin positions, worked out a strategy, and then sent the guys out there with a 0-0 in the singles, and the American team have just been better this afternoon.

Q. We don't have a copy of the pairings yet. I'm assuming you put them in by now?

DEAN ROBERTSON: I have not, and the clock is ticking.

Q. Dean, what do you anticipate saying to the team tonight after what happened today, ups and downs, still in it, but maybe a little disappointed at the end. What are you going to try to convey to them to get ready for tomorrow?

DEAN ROBERTSON: I'm going to ask them how much fun they had out there, and we're going to reiterate that tomorrow when they reaffirm go and be yourself, play your own game and enjoy it because tomorrow is going to be a hell of a day.

Q. Connor, you played this morning. Your nerves on the first tee, what was it like? You're a veteran of the Walker Cup, and now this afternoon for you playing your first match, how were you feeling?

CONNOR GRAHAM: Well, I mean, obviously I played the Walker Cup two years ago, so I know what it's like to be on that first tee with how nervous you are, and thankfully I've not had to hit that first tee shot both times. But the nerves are obviously there for how big the event is, and then you kind of try and get used to it and just try to learn how to play under that pressure.

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: For me, obviously playing out in the singles this afternoon, I think about five minutes before tee time I probably realized I'm playing a Walker Cup. I think that first tee shot is probably the most nerve-racking tee shot I've had for a few years. I played solidly for that opening stretch, but there was a point I looked down at my hand on the second hole holding a ball, and it was just shaking. That's kind of the nervous energy you live for in golf, and I'm just glad I'm here experiencing it and having fun.

Q. Dean, you have gotten to know these guys. What did you see out there today about the way your players looked and the way they performed with the pressure?

DEAN ROBERTSON: I think one word to sum up Niall is tenacity, and Connor is just -- he's just a superb golfer. He really is. They're all superb golfers. We'll need to be on it tomorrow.

Q. Connor, a couple years ago you're familiar with the ebbs and flows of what can happen in a competition like this just like you went through today. Even as the youngest member of your team, what's your message to your teammates tonight that you want to convey going into tomorrow?

CONNOR GRAHAM: Well, it's match play. The momentum is really big. You can get on a little stretch around here. Anything can happen. You can make a few putts in a row, and even if you get down, anything can happen going into the last few holes. Just kind of try and go out there tomorrow and play as best you can, try and keep the momentum on your side and try and get a point.

Q. Niall or Connor, all you can do is win your point, but when you look at boards, whether it's going well or going good, does it have any influence on the way your energy ebbs or flows?

NIALL SHIELS DONEGAN: Well, for me, I saw the board left of 11 as I was walking down and saw we weren't performing the best in singles. I think for me in that situation I got a bit more, like, I have to do my job, let's really focus on getting my job done, get any point for the team and see what we can do for the rest of the week.

CONNOR GRAHAM: Well, for tomorrow especially, you just want to try and get up early. The guys behind see you doing well and then hopefully that momentum builds from group to group, seeing everyone is doing well.

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