

Walker Cup

Sunday, September 7, 2025

Pebble Beach, California, USA

Cypress Point Club

Captain Nathan Smith

Mason Howell

Jackson Koivun

United States Press Conference



THE MODERATOR: Captain, your dream has now become a reality. What's going through your mind right now?

NATHAN SMITH: Well, it's all surreal. It's Cypress Point. Not only that, but just the way these guys played this afternoon, I don't know if I've ever seen a session like that, that we're up by one point, and again, alternate shot 3-1 against us yesterday. We stepped up, got back into it, one point up. GB&I is so tough in alternate shot and we were up by one.

Just to play like that, to have that type of session when the chips are down is just a testament to them. So lucky to just be their captain, and it was just an honor and a privilege just to watch them play today.

Q. When you look back on this week, what will be the overriding emotion?

NATHAN SMITH: Well, I don't know. It's just an emotion I've never had in anything. It's hard to describe until you do it.

Really, I think the only thing I can say, I was just so honored to be their captain. Not only how they played on the course, how they gelled as a team, how they bonded, what everyone brought to the team. It was a level of professionalism, how they conducted themselves, how they went about getting ready to play. I'm just honored. I'm so lucky.

Q. Jackson, Captain put you out first each session. What does that say about the confidence he instilled in you?

JACKSON KOIVUN: Yeah, I was honored to go out first. I like going out early, like going out there and trying to get a point for the team and then going to cheer the guys on. I

felt like I was right where I needed to be, and just happy that I could go get the job done and then watch some great, great golf from my teammates coming down the stretch.

Q. Mason, you've been an electric factory all summer. What's gotten into you?

MASON HOWELL: I couldn't tell you. A lot of hard work, and it's just been a fun ride these past couple months.

Q. How was it getting to know all these guys? You probably didn't know them being a little bit younger. How cool was it to just hang with all the guys?

MASON HOWELL: Yeah, absolutely. They were super welcoming. They all know each other, and they made it easy for me to fit in.

Yeah, it's been such a great week with these boys and one that I'll remember forever.

Q. Nathan, you've got a pretty special relationship with Stew. You guys have known each other for quite some time. His longevity in this competition, how good he's been in the singles matchups, just what he's meant, he's on a pretty spectacular run at the Walker Cup. What does it mean for the U.S. to have had a player like him the last decade?

NATHAN SMITH: Yeah, right now it's pretty much truth serum. I'm going to let it go. I think Stew and I, we've had a relationship, a great relationship for years. I think with some of the things that he's done with some Mid-Ams, playing in majors, I think that that's brought us together a little bit. He's asked me questions. I think we've bonded kind of through that.

Then I've totally love his game, respect his game, and really just couldn't imagine being a captain on a Walker Cup team and him not being on my team. He played incredible this summer. He went after it. I think his level of play and what he's done, winning so many Walker Cups, and his record just speaks for itself.



Q. Jackson, you've accomplished so much at the amateur level in this game from your college accolades to what you've done as an amateur as well. What more do you want to do in your amateur career with a PGA TOUR card in your back pocket whenever you decide to turn pro?

JACKSON KOIVUN: I don't know. I still haven't won a national championship. That's one of my kind of shining goals. I just want to keep getting better, keep learning the game, playing on teams like this. There's just so much I can learn from Captain, learn from Stew. His golf game, it's very, very good, but I really admire his mental game. He doesn't really make a lot of mistakes. I think that's what makes him so good in singles is he's just not going to give you anything.

Just little things like that. I just want to keep learning, just keep learning all I can.

Q. Mason, for you, 21 days ago you're sitting down at Olympic Club holding the Havemeyer Trophy, now you're a Walker Cup champion in your debut. How do you sum up everything you've been on the last three months, and how does your outlook change for your senior year of high school and into your college career?

MASON HOWELL: Yeah, I couldn't even tell you what's been going on these last two months. It's been so much fun, and to do it with my family by my side the whole way, yeah, I look forward to keep going up, bring another USA victory in Singapore coming up, and I'm just -- so much to look forward to next year, and just keep working hard, keep getting better, and hopefully some good results will keep coming.

Q. Nathan, a couple on each of these guys. How important or great is it to have a player the quality of Jackson, the No. 1 player in the world, a guy who's earned his Tour card, both in the leadership qualities and the quality of play, and then second, on Mason, the maturity that he's shown in this whirlwind time, what are your thoughts about that?

NATHAN SMITH: Well, I'll try not to cry, but I watched -- I think we've all watched Jackson all year, all summer, how incredible he's played, and when he closed out his match, I said, "Thank you for playing." It was just an honor for me to have him on my team.

I think in any sport, if you're a coach or captain, when your best player is your hardest working player and sets the tone for the team and just brings the level of professionalism, we got in the cart after his match and he

jumped in and he was going to drive the cart. I said, yeah, go drive the cart, you've been driving it all week. I'm just going to ride along in the passenger side. That sums it up.

As far as Mason, I saw Mason earlier this summer shoot 63-63 to get in the Open, and that turned my head. Then I watched him at the Olympic Club and I watched him later in the summer, and it was like I had found Superman from another -- I couldn't believe how well he was playing.

Just this week through our practice sessions, you get to see everybody's game, and I really couldn't believe it up close. Just an incredible young man, mature beyond his years, and I think we're going to be treated to some incredible golf by him for the next decades.

Q. I know it's all just happened, but if you could think of one moment right now that stands out personally for each of the three of you as a favorite moment of the week, do you mind sharing that with us?

JACKSON KOIVUN: Yeah. Flipping my match with Tommy this morning was kind of big for me. We lost to the same duo from GB&I on Saturday morning, and we were pretty fired up. We really wanted to win.

There was no real point in the match where I really thought we were going to lose until 17, but I guess fate had other decisions, and we were able to squeak out that win. But I thought that was huge. It helped USA tie the foursomes in the morning and maintain a one-shot lead going into singles.

I knew our dogs were going to fight this afternoon, and I knew if we had gone -- even if we had gone in tied, I was pretty confident in our team.

MASON HOWELL: Probably my favorite moment of the week was definitely the alternate shot match I had today. Jacob and I both played so good and both teams were throwing a bunch of punches, and to end that match with a hole-out was something that I'll remember forever. To do that with Jacob because he had worked so hard all day, and those guys weren't making it easy on us, and to put the exclamation mark on that match and celebrate with him, that was a lot of fun this morning, and I was glad I could put a point up in alternate shot. That gave us a lot of momentum going into this afternoon.

NATHAN SMITH: There's so many. I think every player had a moment. As Jackson said, just even what he did today in his singles match, how Tommy and him flipped it, that was huge for us this morning. That was unexpected because there were a couple matches that flipped. And then Mason, even in the practice round, holing out on No. 2

for double eagle and then he holed it out today. Preston sticking it in there on 17, Stew with his singles wins.

Every player had a moment. I'll remember each moment from each player, what they brought to the team. But for me, I think probably hoisting the Cup down there and looking back at them, probably telling them I love them, which I do, and just kind of looking at each of them through the dark there on 1 fairway with the ocean in the background, I'll remember that for the rest of my life.

Q. Your impressions of the GB&I team's performance this week and Captain Dean and all that stuff?

NATHAN SMITH: Yeah, I think Dean is incredible. He's an incredible player. He's an incredible captain. He's a great person. I was teasing him out there even in the speech, I really started to like him through the week, which was disappointing. He's a great guy.

They just play their hearts out, and I said it out there. Their heart, their passion, the way they play, how they go about alternate shot, they're really incredible in alternate shot, and they play with so much heart and passion, and like I said, it's only surpassed by their fans that travel the globe to watch them or down from San Francisco.

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