

29 August 2010



EUROPEAN RYDER CUP TEAM ANNOUNCEMENT

SCOTT CROCKETT: My Lord, ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much for your attendance here this evening on what is a very special day for European golf; namely, the completion of the 2010 European Ryder Cup Team.

The qualification process began high in the Swiss Alps some 51 weeks ago and ended here this afternoon in the Perthshire Glens with the 12th staging of the Johnnie Walker Championship at Gleneagles.

We thank everyone at the Gleneagles Hotel for their warmth and hospitality this week and of course we congratulate Edoardo Molinari on his wonderful victory, his second tournament triumph in Scotland, during this, the 2010 season. Before we hear from European Ryder Cup Captain Colin Montgomerie, it's my great pleasure to introduce the man to my immediate right, George O'Grady, Chief Executive of The European Tour to offer his own welcome to you.

GEORGE O'GRADY: Thank you, Scott, and welcome everyone tonight for coming here and keeping going at the end of a busy week. It would be remiss of me not before we start to thank Lord Macfarlane and all your team from Diageo for putting on such a great tournament for us this week and hosting such a tremendous winner; and of course at the Gleneagles Hotel, your chairman, Peter Lederer, and managing director, Patrick Elsmie, for looking after us and making us all, I think, so welcome.

I think this is at the end of 47 qualifying events now for the European side of this team,

either through the World Ranking points for through our Race to Dubai points.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all our promoters and sponsors for running such excellent tournaments throughout that time that now has given Colin I think what all agree is quite a headache by an embarrassment of riches of really great, committed players whom he can choose from.

I think it's perhaps time for us just to reflect on The European Tour, just how we feel at this time in the proceedings. I don't think about 20 years ago, 15 years ago, ten years ago, even five years ago, if I said there would come a time when three European Tour Members are bred on The European Tour and the opportunities we provide would be holding three of the world major championships. I, of course, refer to Graeme McDowell with the United States Open, Louis Oosthuizen with The Open Championship, and Martin Kaymer with the US PGA Championship.

If you add that to people that have won the World Golf Championships in Ian Poulter and Ernie Els, and, in fact, if you go back, when we had our first Dubai World Championship, to a young player who played on our Challenge Tour, won four times, won The Challenge Tour rankings, could not get into Dubai, so he had to play in the Dunlop Phoenix, one of Japan's leading tournaments and won that on his first visit in Japan; I refer to Edoardo Molinari.

That, combined with our players who play a lot of times around the world, on the PGA Tour, everywhere in the world, global players; I think Colin, you've had a headache, you and your vice captains have had headaches, but they are headaches of riches. And now, it's your floor.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Thank you, my Lords, ladies and gentlemen, and may I reiterate what our Chief Executive, George O'Grady, has

said. Thank you for remaining here on a Sunday evening. I know you have all got homes to go to, so I'll get on with this as quickly as possible.

I would like to first start to confirm the nine players who have qualified automatically in alphabetical order for the 2010 Ryder Cup Team: From England, there is Ross Fisher; from Sweden there is Peter Hanson; from Spain, there's Miguel Angel Jiménez; from Germany, there's Martin Kaymer; from Northern Ireland, there's Graeme McDowell; from Northern Ireland, Rory McIlroy; from Italy, Francesco Molinari; and from England, Ian Poulter; and always on these occasions, last but by no means least, from England, Lee Westwood.

I would like to add three picks to that particular nine, and they are: From Ireland, Pádraig Harrington; from England, Luke Donald; and from Italy, Edoardo Molinari.

I would also at this time like to announce that Sergio Garcia is going to join us as our fourth vice captain. This will be a fantastic addition to the team in every way at Celtic Manor. Thank you.

SCOTT CROCKETT: Thank you very much for that, Colin. We do have some quotes available from Sergio available.

Q. Colin, taking in one player at a time, can you tell us please what exactly led you to choose them?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Very good. In that order, as I mentioned, Pádraig Harrington, three major championships in the last three years; stature of Pádraig Harrington, and someone that we feel that nobody in match-play golf wants to play; a great competitor, and someone that will bring everything to the team that we know about European golf.

In Luke Donald, we have someone that can compete in foursomes and in fourball golf, and not just in singles record; he's played seven times in Ryder Cup play, Luke Donald, and has only lost in one particular game.

And from Italy, Edoardo Molinari, what can one say about today's performance at the Johnnie Walker Championship here at Gleneagles. I think in my time, as a player on The European Tour, I've been a member here for 24 years, I don't think I've seen a finish of that quality under such pressure by anyone, ever. And all credit goes to him for having to come here, having to win, doing so, and joining his brother as the first brother partnership that's ever played on either team in The Ryder Cup, and all credit to all three of those players to join a fantastic nine.

And I've always said at the start of this campaign, that we have a fabulously 12 strong team, and I think you see the team there, as it stands, and I think you'll all agree how strong it is.

Q. You've obviously had to disappoint a number of world-class players, most notably Justin Rose and Paul Casey, can you tell us why their cases were not as convincing as the ones you chose?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Well, I'd rather just comment on the strengths of the ones that have been picked other than the obvious ones that haven't.

Paul Casey, a world player, and will play in The Ryder Cup again and again. And I feel sorry for Paul Casey and for Justin Rose, having won twice in the States this year, and doing well again on this particular occasion in the Barclays tournament we have played over in America.

But as our Chief Executives have so rightly said, we had an embarrassment of riches on this occasion, and I and our team here had to leave out world, world stars, and Justin Rose and Paul Casey, I'm afraid, are those world stars that have been left out on this occasion.

Q. You said that if the automatic nine stayed the same, and they did that you knew the three men you were going to choose; was Edoardo Molinari in those three, and if not, basically, what he did today, did that change your mind?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: I said to you that I knew three. I think I was lying at that stage. (Laughter).

I think what Edoardo Molinari did today was literally incredible, and that's the type of player that we need to try and regain this Ryder Cup from the Americans. I feel that, as I said, that win on this tour, I truly believe is one if, if not the finest win in my 25 years of European Tour experience, and all credit to him for making that team.

Q. All of those that were in the mix, who have you managed to speak to and how have those reacted with the good and the bad news?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: I've managed to speak to a number of players today, and this is the hardest thing that any captain has to do; to let peers, to let friends, to let colleagues, to let fellow

competitors know of a decision that is going to go against them.

And I haven't managed to speak personally to Paul Casey, because he's actually on the golf course right now. I have spoken to Justin Rose, because he was on the range before he played his game.

I felt it was, of course, a bad time to speak to anybody before they play a very important round of golf, like Justin Rose, as he tries to win the FedEx series in America, but at the same time, I felt it was better to hear it come from me as this announcement goes worldwide. I've spoken to a number of European players that were here and couldn't make it over here.

I must have made a dozen phone calls today, all, I'm afraid, within that vein. I wasn't on to apologise in certain ways to those players, but it's just one of these things, as we have all said, we have had an embarrassment of riches this year on our tour. The standard of European golf has been second to none this year and all credit to all of the players for giving us, and I mean, the four of us; we've been in a room at the Scottish PGA headquarters there since one o'clock this afternoon deliberating over our selection.

This is the 12 players that we feel are very happy with that are going to regain The Ryder Cup back at Celtic Manor on October 3.

Q. How much involvement did the vice captains have? Was it a unanimous decision, majority verdict or did you have to pull rank?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: No, I haven't managed to pull rank at this stage, and I think that's a good thing. I think I've been very, very fortunate to have three, and now four, because I phoned Sergio in Spain and had his views very much tabled in our discussions. We have come to this decision not without deliberation, obviously, and with great difficulty, because, of course, we are leaving out world, world players for the first time The European Tour has had this, as I say, embarrassment of riches.

But at the same time, as I say, we are all unanimous in our decision that we have the strongest 12 players here in Europe.

Q. People are going to wonder when they look at this how it's possible for a player inside the world's Top-10, a European inside the world's Top-10, not to make it on the side by any which way of the mechanisms in place; do you feel in any way hamstrung by the qualifying process?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: I don't -- not at all. I don't feel hamstrung by the qualifying process at all. I would just like to think positively about the team that we have selected and think very positively about Pádraig Harrington, Luke Donald and of course our Italian friend, Mr. Molinari.

I think the three picks are strong in every way. We are thinking about pairings. We are think about team. We are thinking about everything to do with trying to regain this Ryder Cup and trying to get that magic number that Europe needed, 14 1/2 points, and that was our main criteria in selecting this team.

Q. And has this been the most stressful afternoon of your golfing career?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Yes. And I haven't hit a golf shot. (Laughter). Very much so.

I think every captain would say the same, but I must admit, I think since my day, when I first was a rookie myself in 1991, I don't think any captain has had the difficulty that I have had to have here in trying to select a three out of a possible ten.

And I just wish that this Ryder Cup Team on this particular occasion could contain 20 names. It contains 12, and we are all very happy with the 12 that we have selected.

Q. Is it fair to say that it's been a fraught afternoon for you?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Yes, indeed. Yes, indeed. Fraught in so many ways, and then watching one of our teammates come up the last three holes to birdie them all in such fantastic fashion made our job very, very easy for us. And we said that to him when he came into the Scottish PGA headquarters and wished him success at Celtic Manor, and offered him the position within The Ryder Cup as a rookie, and he made our job he very, very easy for us with his performance today.

Q. Did Edoardo have to win today?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: That's a very good question. No. I don't think he did. I think that it made our job even easier that he did win, but at the same time, I don't feel he had to win, no. I think what he achieved in the first three rounds and halfway through this fourth round was enough to tell us that this player was capable of handling

the most incredible pressure so well to see him play this last three holes with a smile on his face coming up that last hole, I think it was fortunate that he was playing with his brother, and I don't think I have to tell you who his partner might be (laughter) in the four-ball or the foursomes.

But I think it's a delight that we have two thrilling new players, an emerging nation of golfers, if you like, as Italy, and it can only help golf in that nation as well as others around Europe.

Q. And the order you named the three wild cards, is that the order you decided them?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Not at all. That was random -- that was in alphabetical order as the team was.

Q. Is it true that you've asked Rhys Davies to accompany you to Celtic Manor, and if so, why?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Yes, I have asked Rhys Davies. I think it's important that the Welsh -- I know, Gareth Edwards is down there as the Honorary Captain of the Celtic Manor Resort and he will be around the fairways in that position. But I think it's important that we all have so-called buggy drivers and we all have a buggy with the five of us now, including Sergio, and Rhys Davies will become my personal buggy driver.

I think that he'll look after me around the course. I think that he is a Ryder Cup player of the future, in the very near future, and the guy with the million dollar putting stroke, and we wish him well. And living half an hour away from the Celtic Manor Resort, I felt that it was important to have some Welsh representation on the golf course join that week.

Q. Did quote, unquote, loyalty to The European Tour have anything to do with your captain's picks, and in particular reference to Luke Donald, that he came over and played the Welsh Open while other contenders did not?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: No, that has not influenced our selection at all in the process. Although Luke did come over and do well in Wales and the BMW PGA, of course, win Madrid. It has not affected our decision at all. Our decision is based on 14 1/2. That's our magic number now for the next four weeks is 14 1/2 points, and that was the decision made on that and only that.

Q. What was Justin's reaction when you called him on the practise ground?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: He understood the position and he was very professional in his acceptance of that. I wished him well in his today's performance, which is obviously very difficult circumstances. But I felt I had to call him, and much better offer coming from myself than finding out from somebody else, but at the same time, he was very professional and did say to me that having won twice in America and having the best year of his life, it just proves the strength of The European Tour and the European players that he is not on this time selected.

Q. Were you always going to pick Pádraig Harrington because of his record in the majors and your experiences playing with him in The Ryder Cup, or was it a consideration leaving a three-time major winner out?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: No, it was a consideration. Of course it was a consideration for everybody, for everybody there; and I could name 20 names that were considered, the pros and cons for each particular player.

I just feel Pádraig's stature in the game and the way he plays the game, the way he would give one 110 per cent to any cause, and the work ethic of Pádraig Harrington made him an obvious choice.

Q. Are you concerned about his form at all this season?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Not at all. Not at all. I'm not concerned at all. I think when Pádraig's, if you like, back is up against the wall, he comes out and produces fantastic performances, and I'm expecting that at Celtic Manor.

Q. You mentioned the 13th man idea if there is any problem with Lee, is that Rhys's as role as well as buggy driver or have you got another player in mind for that?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: No. It wouldn't be Rhys's position there. What would happen in that situation, if Lee was not fit by Thursday evening, it would go down his particular points list. Now that Luke Donald has been selected and now that Edoardo Molinari would be next on the list there; so the next person to come into that would be Justin Rose, if Lee Westwood was not fit to play.

Q. Is he happy to fly over to sit on the bench? Have you spoken to him about that?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: I have not spoke to him regarding that fact, because I am pretty convinced that Lee Westwood will be fit enough to play.

Q. When will you speak to Paul Casey, and because of his ranking, will that be the toughest phone call?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Well, I have left a message with Paul. Obviously he's on the golf course right now. I have text Paul, I have left a message, and unfortunately I would rather not, of course -- been able to speak to him, of course, man-to-man, but at the same time, the situation was just against us. The timing was just against us that I was not able to do that on this occasion. I will be calling Paul Casey as soon as he finishes his round, and it will be the most difficult phone call, as was Justin Rose's, yes.

Q. In the past, could you have foreseen a day where you would not pick the man ranked ninth best in the world?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Well, that just proves the strength of European golf.

Q. Out seven rookies on the team, obviously Pádraig --

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Six.

Q. All right, six. Obviously Pádraig has struggled in the last two Ryder Cups, was his experience a factor --

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Of course.

Q. -- with so many rookies?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Stature comes with experience, of course. By definition, I think that that would be the case.

We have a lot of rookies but at the same time, I think that -- very difficult to classify Rory McIlroy and Martin Kaymer and to an extent, Ross Fisher, as rookies. Yes, they are first-time Ryder Cup players but they are world, world players, and have been for a number of years and I would not classify them as the rookies, that, say, I was when I played back in 1991.

Q. How much did personality influence your picks, the personality of those three players and the influence that would have in the team room?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Well, as we said, we got together and we have been there deliberating since one o'clock today, and I think the team makeup, the makeup of the team, who is going to play with whom. I won't give you all of the answers to that at this time, but at the same time, the makeup of the team was very important. Because of the standard of play being so close, as I say, I could have picked 20 names, so then I had to think about who plays with, when and where, and that was a very, very important part of our team selection.

Q. This might be for George, but my understanding was that if Lee can't play, Edoardo Molinari as fifth on the list becomes an automatic qualifier and Colin gets another pick.

GEORGE O'GRADY: You go down whichever way you qualify for the next one on that list it is, yeah.

Q. And then he has a pick?

GEORGE O'GRADY: That's right.

Q. Do you think it's unfair that Corey Pavin will have a few days to mull over this now and perhaps pack his team with experience perhaps knowing that half the side are rookies?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: No, I don't feel that's an advantage at all. If it was the other way around and I had an extra week to pick my team, the team would not have changed in my opinion depending on what he might select. We have to pick and only control what we can control, which is our own team.

Q. Can you talk about the irony of not having had a Scot in contention; yet on the day the team is announced, you have Martin Laird leading The Barclays championship.

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Very much so. And Martin is an Associate Member of the Tour and was able to qualify as that.

Unfortunately Martin, you know, although a fantastic player, one of the 20 that were thought about to lead the FedEx championship there by three shots going into the last day, and all credit to him. But at the same time, we feel that we have picked the strongest 12 to try and regain The Ryder Cup, and he goes along with a number of

others that fall into that category, unfortunately.

Q. Could you just say at what point it was this afternoon that you decided on Edoardo Molinari and was it something in particular?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: I don't think it was anything in particular. I think that the way that he handled the situation, the way that he played, the way that he has played throughout this summer, and remember that Edoardo Molinari had only half a year to qualify for this team. He was a Challenge Tour player at the start, at the end of last year, missed out on a number of our bigger events.

I think he's just played remarkably well throughout the summer, and I don't think today is -- as I was saying today, I don't think that was making that much difference to our selection. I'm just so glad that he went out and proved to everybody what a great player he is.

Q. Obviously Paul Casey, this is twice in succession he's failed to qualify, got a wild card last time; he's been as high as three in the world. Do you think it sends a message that they really have to sort their schedules out if they want to make The Ryder Cup Team?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: Not at all. I'm not here to make any statements about that at all. I'm just here to select the best 12 that we feel are going to win The Ryder Cup. There's nothing to do with scheduling or where anyone plays, but I just feel that we have selected the best 12 players for the European Ryder Cup Team.

Q. This is a question for the vice captains. I was just wondering if you had any discussions yet about how you are going to divide the players up between you, whether or not you are going to take on particular players under your wing during The Ryder Cup week.

THOMAS BJÖRN: Well, I think we have now been in discussion about this, trying to help Monty make what we think is the right decision, giving him all of that information, and the decision is made.

I think we have now got weeks to start thinking about how we are going to handle these 12 players the best possible way. So I think the stage that we move into now, I don't think that we looked at the team and really said, well, you are going to do this and you are going to do that. I think that's something for the next few weeks that will be discussed.

Q. So it's not natural that Darren will take on McDowell and McIlroy?

THOMAS BJÖRN: Well, it might be natural.

DARREN CLARKE: Thank you very much. It's all up to what Monty wants us to do. We are here to help him in whatever he asks us to do and we will all endeavor to do that.

So we have all thought about things, but ultimately, it's up to Monty, whatever way he sees best at Celtic Manor how we can help him best.

Q. Just wondering what you think Sergio García can bring to the mix at Celtic Manor?

COLIN MONTGOMERIE: One word that describes Sergio García, when I played with Sergio García since 1999 in The Ryder Cup, there's one word that describes Sergio García, and that's passion; along with his good friends of Seve Ballesteros and of course José Maria Olazábal who brought a real passion to The Ryder Cup. And I think Sergio will bring the same passion, not just on the course but off the course, as well. I think it's a great asset to the European cause to regain The Ryder Cup to have him on board.

I spoke to Sergio on the Wednesday before The Open Championship at St. Andrews, and we said, look, you know, things haven't been going well for him on the golf course, of course, and then he said to me, well, he said, "Let me have a role, let me have a role here in The Ryder Cup to bring back The Ryder Cup." And that's what it means to him. I think it's a great asset to everyone on this table and also everyone here that supports the European cause; that we have Sergio as part of our vice captain team.

SCOTT CROCKETT: Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to thank you for your attendance today. And it goes without saying, Colin, you and your team, we all wish you the very, very best of luck in five weeks' time at Celtic Manor. Thank you very much.

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