

THE WALKER CUP

September 10, 2015

- **Nigel Edwards, Great Britain & Ireland Captain**
- **Ashley Chesters, 26, of Hawkstone Park, England**
- **Cormac Sharvin, 22, of Ardglass, Northern Ireland**

Royal Lytham & St. Annes, Lancashire, England

MIKE WOODCOCK: Good afternoon, we'll make a start. Delighted to welcome the GB&I captain this week, Nigel Edwards, and players from the GB&I Team. We have Cormac Sharvin, the Brabazon Trophy winner this year with us, and of course we have Ashley Chesters who had a great finish, joint 12th at The Open this year at St. Andrews.

Nigel, if I can start with asking you, this is going to be your third match as captain. How much are you looking forward to this week and trying to win back the trophy from the Americans?

NIGEL EDWARDS: Yeah, Royal Lytham is a great venue, and I think everybody sort of knows my passion for the Walker Cup. It's a special place. I've been coming over here 20 years playing the Lytham Trophy, and then more recently walking the fairways and watching the players. I know just about every blade of grass. I'm glad the weather is a little bit better than what we seem to have at the Lytham Trophy.

It will be a great week. I'm sure there will be plenty of people that come out and support the Walker Cup, and looking forward to a great contest.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Thank you. And guys, I know this is obviously great week for yourselves. Has there been a particular focus in your preparations as you've built up for this?

ASHLEY CHESTERS: Nothing in particular. Just treating it like a normal event, really. We know the course fairly well. So it is a little bit different because we've played it so often. Just treat it like a normal event and just looking forward to play really.

CORMAC SHARVIN: Yeah, like he just said, just reiterate that. I think it's important, as well, it's a long week; you get here on Sunday into, so I think it's important not to burn yourself out, as well. That means a light practise session the next couple of days and just prepare ourselves for Saturday.

MIKE WOODCOCK: And the weather conditions may be changing a bit on Saturday.

CORMAC SHARVIN: Yeah, try to hit some low balls on the range.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Have the waterproofs ready.

Q. You had Paul McGinley earlier in the week. Can you talk about that, how it came about and what he had to say and can the boys talk about that, as well?

NIGEL EDWARDS: Yeah, sure, myself and Paul were both down at Quinta do Lago at the beginning of the year. We chatted prior to that, obviously his success as Ryder Cup Captain -- or last year's Ryder Cup Captain, and we just had a general chat. And he said, "Look, anything that you want me to do to help, if I can help, then I'll be more than delighted to do it."

So we discussed various things throughout the summer, and came up with him coming here if it fit in with his schedule. He's gone off to Holland to play now, I think he's gone to Holland to play. Some of the stuff that he did at The Ryder Cup was very similar to what we've been doing in a Walker Cup environment for -- probably since about 1999.

We use a similar formula where we know what we do on this side of the Atlantic because of the golf courses. And yeah, Paul just shared some of the keys that made the European Ryder Cup Team successful. It was very good, very enlightening, embracing the moment, enjoying it, getting the most out of themselves and the players being themselves, not anyone else. They don't need to do anything different this week other than enjoy the moment. Like we have all seen, when people seem to enjoy it, they do better.

Q. (Inaudible.).

ASHLEY CHESTERS: Yeah it was obviously really nice of him to even come and give up his time and speak to us, which for somebody like that to do that for us is motivation in itself.

Just hearing some of the stories and other things that he had to share was great, as well, and hopefully we can take it into the weekend and it can do us some good.

CORMAC SHARVIN: Yeah, obviously with Paul's experience with The Ryder Cup and Seve Trophies, I think he said he's been involved in 13 teams and won 12 times, so he obviously knows the winning formula. Maybe if we can get a bit of that to rub off on the team this week, that would be good.

Q. Can you talk about the conditions, setup conditions and weather conditions? Have you set up the course specifically for what you perceive to be your team's strengths?

NIGEL EDWARDS: No, I've never had any involvement in the setup at all. When it was Aberdeen, the R&A set it up in the way that they see fit. We have no control over the pace of the greens, the thickness of the rough, how narrow or how wide the fairways are. To be fair, it's pretty difficult to trick up Royal Lytham because of all those bunkers, anyway.

It's a great golf course. It doesn't need doing anything different to it. Clearly it's playing a little bit firmer than it was at the beginning of the week, but that was to be expected because of the forecast and the wind.

Q. Do you want a hooley over the weekend?

NIGEL EDWARDS: I don't think we want the hooley because then it becomes -- well, it's probably not the best spectacle for it, and really, the breeze that we've had today is probably more in keeping with what we'd like I guess.

Q. Do you think it would be a factor, otherwise --

NIGEL EDWARDS: I hope so. I think the players are so used to playing in such varied conditions now, especially the GB&I players, because we play all over the world. There are players that have gone to Australia, South America, South Africa, all over GB&I and Europe this year. And we haven't had a particularly good summer, as you might have noticed.

So I guess not perfect conditions. Monday and Tuesday was just so flat calm. Our boys are used to playing in a bit of breeze and using the wind to their advantage, so that's what I'm hoping that we can take forward and use that. Of course, it depends on -- let's be fair. Do we all the want it to pour? I would say not.

It's a great spectacle, and I think if it poured down through the whole weekend, that probably wouldn't be the best for the tournament and the best for the players.

Q. Concentrating on the players that you've got here, but there's rumours that Sam Horsfield is playing for Georgia Tech this week. Does that disappoint you, the circumstance of how that's all come about?

NIGEL EDWARDS: Like I said to Iain Carter the other day, it's disappointing when you get a message saying that due to personal reasons, Sam couldn't play. But we've moved on from that.

Ewen has come into the team. Ewen is playing fantastically well. Well, you all know his record. He's won

British Boys'; he's won twice in Scotland this year; and he's part of the Scottish team that won The European Team championship and forged a great partnership with Grant Forrest there in Sweden.

My focus is the GB&I Team and making sure that Ewen is comfortable, and he is. He's very comfortable and he's certainly one of the characters on the team and fitting in like a glove. All the boys get on with him. There's no issues from that part.

Q. Cormac, rumour that you knocked it on the last today; is that true?

CORMAC SHARVIN: Yeah, 3-wood, I got a lucky one down the last. Rolled on to about 20 feet.

Q. How long was that?

CORMAC SHARVIN: 410 or something. (Laughter).

Q. How important was your spell at Stirling getting you hear? Would you be here without that?

CORMAC SHARVIN: I don't think so, no. I think the biggest thing for me in Stirling was being around good players. When I got to Stirling, like I could play a little, but I didn't really think that I was able to compete with the top players.

Obviously when I got there, Jack McDonald, who is obviously playing this week, just got beat in the semifinal of the British Amateur. So I was obviously practising with Jack and practising with a few other guys and said, God, I can compete with these guys. So that sort of geed me on a little bit to push to the next level I suppose.

Q. America have a sprightly 52-year-old on the team and you're kind of the veteran at 26; is that kind of a role as maybe an on-course leader that you would like to assume given your experience?

ASHLEY CHESTERS: I still feel quite young though. When you talk about some of the ages of some of the other lads, I think I'm a good couple of years older than them. But I'm not quite 52 yet. But yeah, if I can be a leader and help any of the others, yeah, obviously I'll try and do that.

Q. Speaking of Gary Wolstenholme the other week at the seniors and he said that's something that could be maybe missing these days with the turnover, an older -- would you like to see an older player getting back in the GB&I Team like the Americans can do with the Mid-Amateurs?

NIGEL EDWARDS: We have very few people competing at that age. I think the American model where people have been extremely successful in business and then are able to continue competing is very different to what we have here.

I'm never worried about any team selection or the age of the person. As long as they are good enough, that's all that matters. Ashley has been around the international amateur scene for some time now and he's had great success. And I don't think the team is as inexperienced as maybe Gary suggested.

If you look at the five Irish lads, they have been in the Irish team for a number of years now. I remember playing in the Lytham Trophy in 2009 and Paul Dunne was playing.

So okay, that may not be exactly what happened when Gary was playing, but golf has moved on since Gary turned pro. There's a change in it, and certainly the speed at which -- the age at which players are turning pro has got to be a concern, not just for the Walker Cup, but for the game, because there's not enough room on all the tours for one to be -- or to have successful careers.

I think the timing of turning pro is critical. You look at the Ashley, he's won the European Amateur twice, had fantastic experiences at The Open Championship at Hoylake and St. Andrews this year, and he will go forward with a great deal of confidence. And perhaps some of the others could look at that as another model of doing it. There's no one way to skin a cat.

So I'm not worried about that. I've got an experienced team here. Jimmy has played the last three, with the exception of the last two where he played in the U.S. Amateur, as opposed to the home internationals; he would have played the last three only internationals. Grant has been around for some

time, GB&I Boys right through college, and now the St. Andrews Trophy and The Walker Cup. So not as inexperienced as may have been suggested.

Q. Is there a key element from the great ones you were involved in at Ganton and Aberdeen which you can use this week?

NIGEL EDWARDS: Is there a key what?

Q. Was there a key element in the big wins at Ganton and Royal Aberdeen that you are able to pass on to the team?

NIGEL EDWARDS: Yeah, I've been trying to feed that in. Like I said, we've used the same formula, arriving on the same day, going to the different golf courses to break it up, and then coming back and the players being comfortable here today.

I mean, each and every one has done something different today. We're all going to play, obviously not a ten-ball, but we are going to be off at nine o'clock tomorrow morning and hopefully there will be plenty of people out to see the players practise and get close to them and enjoy the practise rounds.

Pretty much the same formula all the way along since we're maybe -- as a player or a captain, but that was the formula pretty much with the odd tweak. We are just trying to do things a little bit better all the time.

So yeah, the boys are in the relaxed environment and a comfortable environment. They are given an itinerary at the beginning of the week so they knew what they were doing. Not throwing anything from the side to them that may knock them off kilter. So that was our thing this week.

Q. Last week the five Ireland members of the Walker Cup Team got together at Portmarnock and played a game with Shane Lowry. Just wonder, did Shane offer any advice or any sort of insight into the pressure that might be experienced this week?

CORMAC SHARVIN: Not really. He just sort of said, just treat it like any other tournament, really. Don't get too caught up in it. Basically just enjoy the moment and play your own game and that should be enough.

Q. It would seem that you had sort of set pairings or natural pairings coming in this week. Has anything happened this week that's made you change maybe your thoughts you were going into the match with?

NIGEL EDWARDS: Yeah, you would have seen the natural pairings because they played together and won together for their respected countries and performed well for their respected countries and for GB&I in the St. Andrews Trophy last year. So there's some natural fits there, which is great.

But you've always got to have your eye on other options, and since the team has been picked, I've got any number of options. We're very open. I've had conversations with each of the players, because if somebody gets injured, then you've got to have a backup plan. I'm comfortable where we are. But you've always got to have a backup plan and we have that.

Q. What sort of rapport have you had with the Americans? I gather there was a reception earlier in the week. Do you expect it to be a friendly competition?

NIGEL EDWARDS: Well, we got together with the American Team four years ago at Royal Aberdeen, myself and Jim Holtgrieve thought it would be a decent idea for the players to get together to perhaps meet each other, other than on the first tee in tournament play.

And we did that two years ago at National Golf Links, and we did it earlier this week after the club reception. Nothing formal, just very relaxed. The players were able to see and chat around the tables and just engage with each other and perhaps listen to what everybody has to say.

What was the second part? Will it be friendly? It's competition. You know, at the end of the day, the Walker Cup is such a great event because it's competitive, it's enjoyable, and both teams will want to beat

each other badly. I don't know if that's answers your question.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Okay, well, Nigel, Cormac, Ashley, thank you for joining us this afternoon. Best of luck for the rest of the week.