

# **THE WALKER CUP**

**September 10, 2015**

- **John "Spider" Miller, USA Captain**
- **Bryson DeChambeau, 21, of Clovis, Calif.**
- **Jordan Niebrugge, 22, of Mequon, Wis.**

*Royal Lytham & St. Annes Golf Club, Lancashire, England*

MIKE WOODCOCK: Good afternoon everyone. We'll make a start. Welcome to the 45th Walker Cup Match. Delighted to be joined in the interview room this afternoon by the captain, John "Spider" Miller, and then to his right Jordan Niebrugge who had a great finish at The Open Championship at St. Andrews this year finishing tied sixth. And of course, Bryson DeChambeau, the 2015 U.S. Amateur Champion.

Spider, if I can start with you. How does it feel coming into this week defending the trophy at a great venue like Royal Lytham?

CAPTAIN MILLER: We've had a wonderful lead-up to arriving here. I was very happy with the way our events went and basically began after the U.S. Amateur. We had a good flight over. The people, the treatment we have received could not be better. The condition of the golf course is first-class, and we are looking for a spirited and hopefully a winning time here.

But we've had a great time, and it's great. The golf course is great and it's all went well.

MIKE WOODCOCK: Thank you. And Jordan and Bryson, I know you've both had tremendous seasons. How much does it mean to you to be representing your country here at this match this week?

JORDAN NIEBRUGGE: It's just an honour to play for your country out there. I've been fortunate enough to do it before and fortunate enough to do it again this year. Just looking forward to playing over here.

It's going to be a little different feeling and just really excited to get the week going. We only got a couple more days left to prepare, and then off to the races.

MIKE WOODCOCK: And Bryson?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Yeah, again, any time you get the chance to represent your country is sweet. I've done it for the World Am when we won, and also here -- well, actually the Palmer Cup back in 2014, I believe, over at Walton Heath. That was pretty exciting. But we didn't win there and I hope it's going to be a little different this week.

Getting to play some links-style golf, I've never played links-style golf before. We play parkland golf, so it's a bit different. The bunkering is different. But it's going to be a great challenge and a great test on a great venue, so I'm excited.

MIKE WOODCOCK: You've all had plenty of time to prepare this week. I know you've played some great golf courses and got acclimated I guess.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Absolutely. We played Hillside. We played Hoylake, as well. So it was great to get to see the golf courses, a different style of golf course, a little bit different. Obviously the shaping is different, but still links golf courses and it was fun getting acclimated; a little bit tired at that point in time. Now we are a little bit more rested, and now I believe we'll be ready to go.

**Q. I believe you met a Scottish legend at Hillside in Kenny Dalglish. Did you know guys anything**

**about him at all?**

CAPTAIN MILLER: I can answer that. Prior to coming here, I did not. But when Kenny was walking up the fairway, I was informed of his record and the stature he has in the community and him being a legend and his nickname being "The King," and I thought it was great.

He was kind enough to come over and meet all of our players, and he took a picture with us, and what a nice man. I can see he was a fierce competitor. When he shook his hand, my hand just disappeared. But it was very nice of Kenny to do that.

**Q. Can you talk about the different challenge here, obviously St. Andrews where you played well, very different golf course this week.**

JORDAN NIEBRUGGE: Yeah, for sure. It's a lot more demanding off the tee here and the greens are a lot bigger at St. Andrews. It's more of just getting the right lines off the tee here and being confident going into the greens, because you're going to get some good bounces that kind of lead you to the open part, or you're going to get some bad bounces that lead you to the bunkers on the side.

You've just got to just keep your head up. I mean, there's going to be some good breaks, some bad breaks. But if you just keep going and play well and strike the ball well around here, you're going to get a lot of opportunities because the greens are fairly flat.

I'm just excited to kind of play this type of golf course. It's hard, and I feel like we in general play better on harder courses; the harder a course, the more we excel. Just excited to get going this week.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Not much to say, not much more to say. Again, you get, like you said, good breaks and bad breaks, and you expect it on every golf course. This golf course, you get in the bunkers, it's a little demanding. Obviously it will penalise you a lot.

But if you're able to hit it in the fairway, you can strike this golf course and maybe shoot a few under par. But if you get into the bunkers, you have no chance.

**Q. Did you meet Arnold Palmer before you came out?**

JORDAN NIEBRUGGE: Yeah, we all got to meet him in Latrobe. We went there for a little practise session about two weeks ago, and we spent a lot of time with him. I think we're all very fortunate in the opportunity that we got to spend that much time with him, and we all cherished it.

Spider has a great relationship with him and I guess he can talk more about it, but it was just kind of cool getting to see where he lives, where he grew up, the people in that town, the place he plays and just all the history that is there. We're just all very fortunate to get that opportunity.

**Q. When you did so well in The Open, there was a lot talk about, we had to go back to the record books to look and see when an amateur had done so well and so forth and I think I'm right in saying that Jordan Spieth had predicted that an amateur would win a major championship within the next two years. Why do you think that is, and what has caused this apparent improvement in standards by amateur golfers?**

JORDAN NIEBRUGGE: I think you're just seeing the game get younger and younger. There's so many -- even Jason Day, I think he's 25 or 26, for that matter. There's so many young players that are so high up there in the rankings that we get a lot of confidence.

We played with Jordan growing up, AJGA and other events, and you just see him, and there's other guys like Justin Thomas, Patrick Rodgers, they have had so much success right away out on Tour. I think if we get that opportunity to play on Tour in Tour events, like the more opportunities we get, the more comfortable we're going to be.

It's just getting down to the fact that it's just another tournament. I mean, it's no different than -- I think Paul Dunne said that there's an amateur tournament that week, that we probably would have been right at the lead. But there's a lot of other players that were -- that had the capability of going that deep, as

well.

I think there's just a lot of confidence with the younger players and seeing these guys succeed right away and just getting the itch to get out there and get that opportunity is all we need.

CAPTAIN MILLER: I would follow on with Jordan that as a little bit of an older fella, I would say that my observation is that the kids -- the difference in generations is the kids are: One, they start younger; two, they have much better instructions; three, they are more of a tournament series for these kids to begin. In the US, they begin in their state associations and it's very well organised. The USGA does a great job. They have the Junior PGA.

So by the time -- and Jordan will tell you, by the time they hit 18 years old, they have many times played abroad. They have played in I don't know how many tournaments, and like he said, it's a tournament and they are used to tournament golf.

They are just groomed and conditioned so much earlier than they were in the previous generations. Parents may not have had the ability to take them to these tournaments, and secondly the tournaments didn't exist. And the AJGA has grown, and aside from that, there are newer ones. They are ready.

By the time they hit college, they have played in, what do you think, Jordan, Bryson, how many -- be hard to count them, wouldn't it?

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: There's a bunch of tournaments. And to further that, I think the game itself, the game is lending itself to more practisers if you can say that. There's a lot more kids out there that are seeing Tiger, seeing Jordan Spieth, seeing Jason Day, that are all practising on another level. That's also raising the bar for the kids, as well.

We are all practising harder -- at least, I am. I'm practising as hard as I can every single day to make me the best that I can be so that I am prepared what I get out there. That's the way I viewed it and tried to accomplish my goals that way.

So I think on that note, we're furthering the game that way. We're pushing the game forward because of these guys that have pushed the game forward, as well, like Jason Day.

**Q. (Inaudible.)**

CAPTAIN MILLER: I would say that's instruction. Instruction is more widespread and it's better, and each one of these players, I think, have different swing instructors, and they are all great players. So that would be a testament to the quality of the instruction that's available to them and all the different parts of the United States.

**Q. This is a classic links course you guys are going to compete on. There's not a whole lot of links experience within the United States Team. Do you see that as a -- how would you categorise it? Is it a disadvantage? Is it something that these guys are going to have a talent and are going to be able to overcome it?**

CAPTAIN MILLER: I don't see it as a disadvantage at all. To a man, they love it. If there are different shots that they are not accustomed to hitting, and I don't think there are many, they relish that. They have been working on it.

The fairways and the chipping around the greens, they are all accustomed to it. It's really no different than the bermuda and certain areas that we have cut. It has less grain. In fact, it's generally easier for the fact that it doesn't have the grain; that you chip into the grain.

I don't see it at all as being a problem for us.

**Q. And secondly, Jordan, with your experience on links courses, have people been asking you lots of questions about what to do?**

JORDAN NIEBRUGGE: In general it's not a course I've seen before, but we can get a pretty good idea. We've played since Monday, and we have a pretty good idea of how the ball is reacting on the greens, how it's reacting in the fairways.

It's just being comfortable with the shot you're going to hit. You can hit any number of shots out here. I mean, you can just be athletic. I hit it a lot higher than a lot of these guys. Some guys are able to hit it low, run it around the place. There's different ways you can play the golf course, and it's just being comfortable with how you want to play.

**Q. You've not got your trademark Ben Hogan cap with you at the moment; is that a bit strange, and can you talk about what's been made of you having the same-length irons? How did that come about and how long have you been doing that?**

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: First off, I don't wear the Hogan hat before I play in the tournament. I'll do it only on the tournament days, not in the practise rounds. So you may see something Saturday or something.

The same-length clubs, that came out about four years ago. Just before the summer of 2011, I was talking to my coach trying to figure out a way to maybe make it a little bit easier to hit the golf ball. I had already started developing a single a plane swing at that time, and I realised I couldn't do that for every single club because I would have to change my posture 14 different -- well, really, 12 different times, 13 different times, not counting the putter.

Once I realised I couldn't do it, I said, why can't the irons be the same length? And for that matter of fact, why couldn't the driver, 3-wood and hybrid be the same length?

Obviously the driver, 3-wood and hybrid are in the works right now. We haven't figured anything out on that extent. But the irons work perfectly. Took us about two weeks to make a set. I figured out that the mass of the head could be exchanged for the length of the golf club quite equally from a force perspective.

So I went out and tested it. Never forget, right after building it, we went out to Dragonfly Golf Club at Riverbend, it previously was called, back in Madera, California. Went and hit an 8-iron on the first hole, completely fine. Went normal distance and everything, a little bit shorter than a 7-iron would, which is perfect, just like a normal 8-iron would be. Didn't think anything much of it because it was so close to 7-iron length anyway.

Went to the second hole, and had about 210 yards in, and I hit a 5-iron, and to my surprise, it went the right distance with the right spin.

It was a pretty incredible discovery at that point in time, and from then on out we have tried to perfect it as good as we can. It's not perfected obviously but it's worked pretty well for the moment.

**Q. I think there's also been stuff about the measures you take with the golf balls. Is that something you're going here, as well?**

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: The measuring of golf balls? I'm definitely going to do that this week. It's still, again, to maximise my potential of playing well, and every facet of my game, I'm trying to get an edge in every aspect.

So that's one way that I do it, and whether it helps me or not, I don't necessarily know, but I think it gives me a little bit more confidence on the tee.

**Q. You mentioned that you don't feel there's any sort of disadvantage in your team not having any links conditions. The weather conditions in practise have been incredibly good and favourable. A quick look at the forecast Saturday morning, around nine o'clock, there's a lot of rain and increase in the wind. How can your players prepare for that when the conditions are so benign at the moment?**

CAPTAIN MILLER: The old captain has to have plenty of towels, I can tell you that. (Laughter).

They play in rain. We have thunderstorms at home. They are used to being blown off a lot for lightning which won't happen here. The rain, it's not anything they are not used to playing in. They play in the wind.

We have wind -- I don't know if you've been to Texas or Florida, Oklahoma; I can go on and on. Our wind, 15 to 20, 25 knots, it's going to be the same over here. I don't see the weather -- I don't see the weather as hurting or helping anyone. I think all the players on both sides are used to it, and it's just the way it is.

**Q. Going back to the clubs, have you added weight to the club head?**

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: So if you want to know actually what it is, the pitching wedge, I have taken off some of the head weight to account for the increase in length. Everything is built around a 7-iron.

Normally with a normal set, the swing weight is all around mainly a 7-iron. And so for all the other clubs, in order to make the swing weight the same, the pitching wedge, for instance, I've cut the length down and added weight to the head to make it feel like the same swing length, somewhat around the same swing length. And then the 3-iron, they will lengthen it normally, and then take the head weight off to make it feel about the same.

So what we did is we said, well, let's just reverse it, make everything exactly like a 7-iron. So if you take a pitching wedge, you're going to lengthen it, take off head weight. And then it will decrease the length on the 3-iron and add head weight to the club to make them all the same swing weight and same length with the same mass in the head, same shaft, same everything; except four degrees of loft, which accounts for about 12 to 14 yards of distance, depending on what iron you're using, based on the aerodynamics of the head going through the air.

It's a bit more than that, I won't get too much further because of obvious reasons, trying to keep it to myself obviously, but for the most part, that's what it is.

**Q. Was it entirely your idea?**

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I asked the questions. Me and Mike Schy, my coach, came up with the clubs. So he said that it had been done before back in the 1980s, I believe, with Tommy Armour of the Equals, EQLs or something like that, not too sure but it didn't push off. Nobody used them. They didn't like them for some reason, I have no idea. But we made it work, and I've made it work at a high level.

**Q. I was just wondering, the increased turnover the amateurs to the professional game this year, do you think the Walker Cup still holds the same reverence as it used to maybe back in your day?**

CAPTAIN MILLER: Well, both these guys can speak to that as well as I can, but yes, I do. I think that it comes maybe earlier because the kids are ready and they are thinking about it at around earlier age than they were in my day.

But I indeed do; that I think it holds the same relevance, and it is their aspiration to make it, and it a lot of times fulfills their amateur career.

But Jordan, with this being his second one, he can talk to that.

JORDAN NIEBRUGGE: Yeah, I think this is the one tournament that we look up to and base a lot of our schedule, the tournaments we play off of it. Besides that, it's just the reward. I mean, this is a reward for all of our amateur golf. It's probably the best reward you could possibly get.

So really, when you're playing these other tournaments, you don't really think about Walker Cup that much, but in the whole grand scheme of things, this is the one thing that you want to accomplish and get on the team and represent your country at the end of the day.

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: It's the epitome of amateur golf as I look at it, and I've been working quite honestly four years for this. I didn't make it the first time around. I was too young and immature and things

like that. I almost had a chance if I would have made a couple more matches in the US Am, but I didn't, and missed the team. That kind of soured me and made me work harder to get on the team.

Now I'm here and it's a joy and a reward, like Jordan said, to be on this team.

**Q. I take it you're looking forward to the Blackpool Illuminations? What night is it that you are going to see them?**

CAPTAIN MILLER: It's so funny, because I came here last summer and I met Robert Webb and we were laughing, they made a lot of jokes about Blackpool. Well he had no clue what was there in Blackpool. So prior to coming over here I Googled Blackpool, and I see it's our equivalent to three o'clock in the morning in Las Vegas on the Strip. That would be my interpretation.

I made a joke with a writer about, yeah, I was going to take the boys to Blackpool Friday night to get them ready (laughter). He printed it, so I guess I'm going to have to back up on that one (laughter). I will not be taking them to Blackpool.

**Q. How do you go about balancing each golf ball, I was reading some, where four out of ten not in balance?**

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: No, I would say, on average, about four golf balls out of a dozen, I won't play. Now, for the average golfer and most people, it's completely fine.

But in my part of the game, one yard could mean going into the bunker compared to the fairway, so it is important for me, and I value that quite highly. I want to be playing the best golf balls every single time I tee it up.

So for me to have that little bit of an advantage may be the deciding factor in winning a match.

**Q. How do you balance them?**

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: Well, I put it in Epsom salt, a solution, combined with water, mix it up. It actually floats the golf ball in the middle of the water, and then I'll spin the golf ball to see where the heavy side is. Because normally, if you spin a golf ball, it will keep going over itself until friction, or water resistance, will slowly slow it down and just stop.

But with an out-of-balance golf ball, actually I'll spin it, and it will move over itself and it will slow down to where it stops and goes back and wobbles to where there's a low point or heavy side to the ball, and that's when you know it's out of balance. The centre of gravity isn't exactly in the middle of the golf ball. It's just a bit off.

Now, I'll put lead tape on the top to see how much it's out of balance. So if I put more than 60 milligrams of lead tape to where the CG (ph) will actually go to the top and then flip the ball, I won't play that ball. I actually put it in a shag bag and practise with it. But the other ones will be fine.

**Q. Are you a physics --**

BRYSON DeCHAMBEAU: I'm a physics major, yeah. I have one more year.

**Q. Did you feel in 1999, did you feel a special GB&I Team?**

CAPTAIN MILLER: Yeah, I got run over by Paul Casey. Paul, a nice man, I saw him last year and we had a few laughs. Yeah, I was going fine until he ripped off about four or five birdies. I said, "You just ran over me, didn't you." He grinned, and yes, he did. That's the way it was, and they beat us. We lost.

**Q. 2011, the Americans that came to Royal Aberdeen were a pretty special-looking team with Jordan Spieth and others. What lessons do you think have been learned from that defeat?**

CAPTAIN MILLER: Oh, my, I don't know. I was there but I was not in the team room. Our team manager just walked in, he could probably answer this better than I can. But I don't know if there were chemistry issues. Typically those things can play into things.

But bottom line is, I guess they were just out-played. That's typically the case.

**Q. Players that won all his matches --**

CAPTAIN MILLER: That is right? Well, I'm one of them. (Laughter).

MIKE WOODCOCK: Spider, Jordan, Bryson, thank you for joining us and best of luck for this week.