



For Immediate Publication

GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND LEAD BY TWO POINTS AFTER DAY ONE OF THE 47TH WALKER CUP

7 September 2019, Royal Liverpool, England: Great Britain and Ireland hold a two point advantage over the United States of America at 7-5 after day one of the 47th Walker Cup at Royal Liverpool.

Craig Watson's side need six points from tomorrow's foursomes and singles matches to win back the Walker Cup after losing to the USA two years ago at Los Angeles Country Club.

Foursomes

The two sides ended the morning foursomes level at 2-2 with each of the four matches concluding at the 17th hole and finishing in a 2&1 scoreline.

Alex Fitzpatrick and Conor Purcell put the first point on the board for GB&I after winning their encounter with John Augenstein and Andy Ogletree. They were 4-up after eight holes and although the Americans cut the deficit in half by winning at the 13th and 15th, the remaining holes were halved to give the home side the early breakthrough.

Scottish duo Euan Walker and Sandy Scott started brightly against John Pak and Isaiah Salinda in the second foursomes match but the loss of three holes in a row from the 11th proved to be pivotal as the Americans claimed their first point of the match.

The all-English pairing of Conor Gough and Harry Hall were never behind in their match against Akshay Bhatia and Stewart Hagestad and they won GB&I its second point of the session after remaining in control throughout the contest.

Similarly, Alex Smalley and Brandon Wu dictated play for the USA in their match against Thomas Plumb and Tom Sloman, picking up wins on the 7th and 10th holes to go 2-up. Although they dropped a hole at the 12th, a birdie on the 15th restored their two hole lead and they never looked back to give the visiting team its second point.

Singles

Fitzpatrick rallied from being 2-down after three holes to world number one Cole Hammer, who was rested for the foursomes this morning, to win the first singles match of the afternoon by two holes.

The 20-year-old recovered with birdies at the 4th and 6th holes to return the match to all-square and was 2-up with three holes to play after winning the 14th and 15th.

The Texan responded with a birdie at the 16th to reduce Fitzpatrick's lead but the Englishman extinguished any hopes of a comeback by birdieing the last to claim his second point of the first day and put GB&I 3-2 up in the match.

Walker extended GB&I's lead after beating Steven Fisk, also rested for the morning foursomes, by two holes as well. The Scot was never behind in the match and had established a comfortable lead after winning three of the first five holes.

Despite being pulled back to 1-up going down the 18th, the 23-year-old made sure of the point for Watson's side after the American conceded the hole.

Augenstein hit back for the Americans with a 2&1 win over Conor Purcell making it 4-3 in the match overall. The US Amateur runner-up was in control for lengthy periods of the contest and a par at the 17th was enough to record the first point of the singles for the USA.

Scott then claimed a notable scalp for GB&I, defeating US Amateur champion Ogletree by one hole in a match where the Nairn golfer fired in six birdies. He found himself 2-up with three holes to play and although Ogletree won the 17th, a halve in par at the 18th gave Scott an important victory to put GB&I 5-3 up.

The away side pulled another point back after Pak edged out Amateur champion James Sugrue, who did not feature in the morning foursomes, by one hole and then Wu defeated Sloman 4&2 to tie the match at 5-5.

With two matches left out on the course, Caolan Rafferty nudged the home side ahead with a 2&1 win over Smalley and then it was left to Gough to claim another point for GB&I, his second of the day, to leave Watson's side with a two point lead going into day two.

Key Quotes

Craig Watson, captain, Great Britain and Ireland

"It was a pretty good day. It could have been better but we knew the Americans were going to come back to us. We're looking forward to tomorrow though.

"No matter what happens in the foursomes tomorrow, we still have to play in the singles. The boys will be up for it."

Nathaniel Crosby, captain, United States of America

"I think we were a little slow getting started this morning. As they say over here, I think we were a little slow out of the paddock, but we fought hard to get back to where we were and all square going into lunch.

"This afternoon I just could not believe the amount of putts Great Britain and Ireland made in the first 45 minutes. It wasn't even the first hour and a half, it was the first 45 minutes. An amazing amount of golf that was fantastic. I think John Pak winning his match, we were pretty lucky to be 5-3 down when it looked like we could be 6-2 or even 7-1-down.

"You know, I think that these guys have tremendous games. They've won a lot of golf tournaments to be here, and if they just play their games tomorrow, we'll see where the chips fall."

Day 1 Results

Foursomes:

Alex Fitzpatrick and Conor Purcell vs. John Augenstein and Andy Ogletree (GB&I wins 2&1)

Sandy Scott and Euan Walker vs. John Pak and Isaiah Salinda (USA wins 2&1)

Conor Gough and Harry Hall vs. Akshay Bhatia and Stewart Hagestad (GB&I wins 2&1)

Thomas Plumb and Tom Sloman vs. Alex Smalley and Brandon Wu (USA wins 2&1)

Score:

Great Britain and Ireland 2-2 United States of America

Singles:

Alex Fitzpatrick vs. Cole Hammer (GB&I wins by two holes)

Euan Walker vs. Steven Fisk (GB&I wins by two holes)

Sandy Scott vs. Andy Ogletree (GB&I wins by one hole)

John Augenstein vs. Conor Purcell (USA wins 2&1)

James Sugrue vs. John Pak (USA wins by one hole)

Conor Gough vs. Isaiah Salinda (GB&I wins by two holes)

Coalan Rafferty vs. Alex Smalley (GB&I wins 2&1)

Tom Sloman vs. Brandon Wu (USA wins 4&2)

Score:

Great Britain and Ireland 7-5 United States of America

Ends.

Notes to Editors:

The Walker Cup

The Walker Cup Match is a biennial ten-man amateur team competition between a team composed of players from Great Britain and Ireland and the USA. It is played over two days with 18 singles matches and eight foursomes matches. The USA leads the overall series 36-9-1.

About The R&A

The R&A group of companies was formed in 2004 to take on The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews' responsibilities for governing the Rules of Golf, staging The Open, golf's original championship, and developing the sport. The British Golf Museum in St Andrews is part of the R&A group.

Together The R&A and the USGA govern the sport of golf worldwide, operating in separate jurisdictions with a commitment to a single code for the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status and Equipment Standards. The R&A, through R&A Rules Ltd, governs the sport worldwide, outside of the United States and Mexico, on behalf of over 36 million golfers in 143 countries and with the consent of 156 organisations from amateur and professional golf.

The R&A merged with the Ladies' Golf Union in 2017 and now has responsibility for running a series of world class amateur events and international matches in women's and girls' as well as men's and boy's golf. The R&A works with IMG to stage the Women's British Open and with the European Tour to stage the Senior Open.

The R&A is aiming to invest £200 million in developing golf over the next decade and supports the growth of the sport internationally, including the development and management of sustainable golf facilities. For more information, visit www.randa.org.

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