

Walker Cup

Saturday, September 9, 2017

Spider Miller

Collin Morikawa

Doug Ghim

USA Press Conference

THE MODERATOR: We would like to welcome the United States of America team which holds an 8-4 lead after the first day of the 46th Walker Cup here at the Los Angeles Country Club. Directly to my left is Captain Spider Miller, to his left is Doug Ghim, and down at the end of the table Collin Morikawa. And Captain Miller, if I could just get some comments from you about your assessment about how the day went. It was a halve in the morning on foursomes and then there was a lot of movement in the afternoon on the singles matches and you flipped matches when it was probably the most critical times. So just comment on that.

SPIDER MILLER: Well, you summed it up, Pete. I couldn't be more proud of these guys. These two here especially. But the matches that were flipped were critical and at one point in the day early probably after 7, 8, 9, 10 holes, things weren't looking that great. We were kind of at parity, sometimes slightly below parity, and then Braden flipped his match, Mav flipped his, Will, these are the only two that didn't. Norman Xiong flipped his. So, yeah, I'm very pleased.

THE MODERATOR: Collin and Doug, your feelings on the day. Both guys were undefeated for the day.

DOUG GHIM: Yeah, it was kind of excited to see what it would be like this morning. Maverick and I got off to a very good start and kind of helped settle the nerves a little bit and just tried to continue playing pretty well. I think the U.S. Amateur kind of helped preparing for this event with all the people and it was just a lot of fun and just very fortunate to be able to come out with two points against a very good team.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I couldn't be any happier. We started off strong, I played with Norman this morning and four birdies to start a Walker Cup debut is something special and something I'll always remember. And then we were able to finish early, so we got to watch some guys and that was pretty cool to just kind of support the team as much as you can. We wear this USA logo on our chest and hat as much as we can and it's an honor for us to be here. So coming out in the



afternoon just kept the momentum going, started off strong again. And I'm really proud of our team the way we came back and Doug over here is playing some good golf as well, so it's pretty fun.

THE MODERATOR: Thank you. Questions, please.

Q. I think in a lot of sports and a lot of golf competitions, four points isn't really that much, but you guys only need five and a half, can you just talk about how huge a four point lead is in this competition and obviously how big it was to turn those matches.

SPIDER MILLER: Well, I guess what I would say to the team and these guys know it, we're preparing as if we were even or down. We're not thinking ahead of ourselves, we have matches to play in the morning and tomorrow morning we have to be at our best and we have to fight for every point. I try not to get ahead of myself and I know these two don't either. They are going to take it one shot at a time, one match at a time, but yet I'm pleased with our lead, obviously. I'm encouraged by our foursomes performance and I think we can build upon that. We're going to make a change in a couple things, but I'm very encouraged by our performance.

Q. Can you speak to the nature of Collin and Norman's win in the morning, both the quality of opponents they had and the way that they did. I mean alternate shot, we don't see that kind of performance in alternate shot very often.

SPIDER MILLER: No, the only thing I can tell you about Collin and Norm is that I saw their lead 1-up, 2-up and I stay on the tee to shake the hand of each player coming there, the GB&I player and our player, but I'm watching my thing and it's just going, ching, ching, ching, and I thought, well, I'm not going out there and mess that up. Those boys are doing fine without me, so they didn't see me at all this morning.

(Laughter.)

Q. At one point this afternoon when the GB&I guys started leading five of the eight matches, what are you seeing out on the course from your guys as far as how they're carrying themselves and what's going through your mind?

SPIDER MILLER: I saw a lot of spirit, I saw a lot of

tough guys, I saw guys that reached down and pulled something out and they flipped their matches and I'm so proud of them, I can tell you that, each and every one of them. And they have it -- and they, we're ready to play. They came ready to play and they will be ready tomorrow, so we're not getting ahead of ourselves, I can tell you that.

Q. For all of you, you practice knowing the 15th hole would play the way it did today, I assume. Spider, you were on the tee there, greeting a lot of the matches, guys, did it, have you ever played a hole that short, first of all, and how was it playing it in competition and in a match setting versus what you tried in practice?

DOUG GHIM: Half the battle was trying to decide whether to use a tee or put it on the ground. I don't recall ever playing a hole that short since I was like maybe six years old and I used like a 7-iron then. But, yeah, that was pretty wild. It was just lucky enough to just barely get it over the bunker and have enough spin to keep it on the green. But, yeah, it's a couple little hole, really enjoyed it, it's just a little un-nerving to have 80 yards off a tee box.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I think that that's like the nicest hole. I got kind of the end half of Stewart's crowd and they kind of got stuck there, so they had to watch me hit a terrible wedge shot. But they, they just crowd the green. You're hitting a little pitch shot over a bunker with like eight yards to land it. And I don't think I can remember a hole especially in college golf or amateur golf where we're hitting it this short and create so much havoc because of the rough. The greens were definitely a lot firmer I think from the morning, so I think playing that today was awesome.

Q. Two questions, but first for Spider, so what was your feeling, your reaction when Braden got the first point this afternoon?

SPIDER MILLER: Well, I was thrilled when Braden flipped his match. I caught up with him and he was 2-down and he told me he was going to and he did. And that's the kind of kid he is or kind of a player he is. I can't call them kids, even though I'm old enough to be the dad, but he's tough. Braden is, he has a gentle nature, but he's a competitor and he told me, he said, I'm going to win.

Q. Did you see the par he made on 9?

SPIDER MILLER: On 9? I did not. No. Tell me about it.

Q. It was memorable. He was way left and putted from I don't know 20 yards off the green and with a big left-to-right sweep and I think he was about a yard or so short of the putting surface but then

made that big bender for par. It was a good shot.

SPIDER MILLER: Braden is a great putter. And he has a great routine for putting. I love his routine. When that hat, his hat goes up, comes down, and then he goes. That's his switch. You watch him, he'll do it every time. He'll lift his hat. He doesn't even know he does it, but he does it every time.

Q. And for you two guys, how much tougher did the course play this afternoon even though, I mean, not, just not the difference with the 78-yard hole, but the greens seemed to really speed up a lot.

DOUG GHIM: Yeah, the one roll they did in the afternoon was, I mean, we knew it would get firmer, like just by being in the sun, but with the roll, I mean it was concrete.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Felt more like more than one roll.

DOUG GHIM: Yeah, I hit a 6-iron from like 210 on the first hole and my 6-iron only carries about 185. So I hit this and I need all of it, I think, and I hit it to the middle of the green and the ball didn't even consider staying on the putting surface, it just went straight to the back. And I was like, okay, that's how it's going to be this afternoon. But I'm a fan of firm, fast greens and I enjoyed it. It took a couple holes to get used to, but I thought it played great.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think the course is in just amazing condition. We couldn't ask for much more. Maybe the rough a little shorter. I think I almost lost a ball after they flagged it.

DOUG GHIM: Two yards off the fairway.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah. But, no, I think this course, it's wide enough where if you hit a great drive you're in the fairway and if not it penalizes you. Other than the greens getting a little firm, I think that the course was just fantastic. The greens are rolling amazing, when you hit your line you know it's going on that line. Everything they did for us this prior to this week is has been great.

Q. You played and watched and captained a lot of teams, what causes momentum switches?

SPIDER MILLER: Well, I know there's nothing I did to cause it, so I would say it's innate in the players, they're all fierce competitors and they have a certain toughness and they don't like to lose. And several of them reached down today and flipped their matches and it was huge, huge momentum change for us. Because we were down 5-3 I think at one point.

Q. Two-part question. First is for Doug and Collin. Over the years you played some of the elite and

exclusive clubs all over the United States through AJGA, college, amateur golf, what is your experience this afternoon the greens surface being so fast, is there anything that comes, was faster than this or any speed of the green and second question to Collin would be, when Cal won PAC-12 back in 2013 you were not part of the team, but did you ever seek any advice from Coach Des or anybody about some of the holes or about this golf course?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: I think that one course would be Southern Highlands for during the college year. They put those green speeds and firmness to something I just can't even imagine. That's about it. And then, yeah, Max Homa had the course record, I think he still has the course record out here and I've been able to text him, Michael Kim, and Weaver, all about their experience in the Walker Cup and not necessarily advice on the course at LACC, but more just being on the team and what an honor it is to represent the country and to be playing here is something special. So they have given me good advice and it's been very helpful to kind of go through this week and take it all in.

DOUG GHIM: As far as the golf course goes, yeah, Southern Highlands we played my freshman and sophomore year. The greens are quite firm, which is a similarity. The National Championships in 2016 in Eugene, I think that during the finals the greens were listed as 15 on the Stimpmeter, so that was quite fast. And Riviera was pretty firm the final day. But we only have 20 players playing, I mean, less than 20 players playing today, and so the greens remain perfect and it was just a blast to be out here, much thanks to the grounds crew out here.

Q. Collin, obviously, you haven't trailed a hole this week so far, this day, and what's the key mentally tomorrow if you and Norman do maybe drop a hole or get down early and what's the key to staying mentally tough when you're in a position you haven't been yet?

COLLIN MORIKAWA: Yeah, I think that the key is, well, even tomorrow, is to go out like today never happened. Use the momentum that Norman and I had, hopefully we're paired together.

SPIDER MILLER: Yes, sir.

COLLIN MORIKAWA: We'll see.

(Laughter.)

But we have had this entire week to play with each other and it's all about momentum out here, so whatever happened today, who knows, but for tomorrow it's a new match and whoever I go against,

that's what I'm going to have to worry about. If you lose a hole, you lose a hole. It's not like Norman and I didn't lose a hole today or I didn't lose a hole. I definitely lost a couple. So you just have to worry about the next hole, worry about that shot, and go from there. Because if you get ahead of yourself, you can find yourself on the other end of things that by the end of the day tomorrow you won't want to be.

Q. Can you tell me what the difference was between the conversation you had with your players before you came in here today and what it was like two years ago?

SPIDER MILLER: I think today we were ready to play. I think two years ago we waited, we weren't ready to play as early. I think we didn't start thinking about it early enough and there for I think with the Saturday, it just came like a whirlwind. It was just, boom, next thing we know we're trying to play serious golf and we fell right behind, as you know, and this year we started thinking about it early in the week.

Q. What I meant was the tenor of your discussion with your players today after the first day versus the discussion you had with them after the first day two years ago.

SPIDER MILLER: I wish I could remember two years ago to be honest with you. You know, I'm an old boy.

(Laughter.)

This year we're staying focused. That's our conversation is we're staying focused. I make the decisions that I need to do for the team and these guys support me and they do the things that they need to do. We're just staying focused better, I promise you. Much better.

THE MODERATOR: Any other questions? Gentlemen, thank you. Appreciate your time.