

# The Walker Cup

Press Conference

Saturday, 2 September 2023

**Stuart Wilson**

**John Gough**

**Calum Scott**



**THE WALKER CUP**  
ST ANDREWS 2023

OLIVIA McMILLAN: Good afternoon. I am delighted to be joined by the GB&I team after the first day of the match. We have Calum Scott, Stuart Wilson and John Gough. Stuart, can you just summarise the day for us and give us your thoughts.

STUART WILSON: It's obviously been a great day result wise for GB&I, but it's been hard-fought day. I think that would be the message. But I think I've been saying that from the off, that this is going to be a tight match, and the American side came out strong this afternoon and went up in a lot of matches through the front nine, but our guys showed grit and determination and kept fighting and managed to get some points to get us ahead on the board, so well done to our guys.

**Q. Calum, can you talk about us about how amazing it was to play in front of that home crowd?**

CALUM SCOTT: Yeah. I wasn't sure what to expect on that first tee. But yeah, that was just unbelievable, an unbelievable experience. I'll probably never have something like that happen ever again, or not here anyway.

But the crowds were unbelievable. It was so cool to see so many of my home golf course members here. I know they've got a hat with my name on it and distinguished as a yellow hat. It's cool to see them in the crowd cheering me on.

Yeah, it was just incredible.

**Q. John, two points on the board for GB&I. You must be pleased with the effort you put in for the team today.**

JOHN GOUGH: Yeah, definitely. I think we had a very good morning, which always sets you up for a nice afternoon and slightly less stressful before you go out, but then obviously you're playing against some of the top best players in the world, so you've got to stay switched on.

Delighted with the two points, but also delighted with the team performance, and ready for -- we haven't even reached the halfway stage technically with 10 matches tomorrow. Looking forward to the challenge again tomorrow.

OLIVIA McMILLAN: Can you talk to us about how important it is to prepare well tonight to set yourself up well for tomorrow.

JOHN GOUGH: Yeah, I think I'll be getting an early night tonight. Obviously it was nice not playing all 36 holes, but at the same time, it's mentally draining as well as physically draining out there with all of the crowds. The crowds have been great. So we'll have a good recovery plan tonight and get to bed early, ready for tomorrow.

**Q. John, can you talk about, when you saw you were playing Nick, the U.S. Amateur champion, tell me what you thought. I don't want to say your match was easy, but certainly the score reflected that. Could you tell me why it turned out to be what it turned out to be?**

JOHN GOUGH: I think I just got in early myself. Obviously he's a fantastic golfer, U.S. Amateur champion, and I had to give him the respect of that.

Going out there, I couldn't take anything for granted, and I just took all the opportunities that come. This morning in our foursomes game, we managed to win on 18, but we didn't hole many putts, and then this afternoon they just started rolling in for me.

Hopefully that now is my putter nice and hot and warmed up ready to go for tomorrow, but yeah, I mean, I don't think it does him justice. He's obviously a great golfer, but at the end of the day I managed to get the point.

**Q. Stuart, the GB&I team has never had a lead like this except for a three-point lead in 1989. That's how far back we go. What do you tell your guys tonight, and how surprised are you because you said it's going to be a tight match? How surprised are you that you have a three-point lead going into tomorrow?**

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STUART WILSON: I'm not overly surprised because we've obviously done all the prep and we've got the guys here who have just proved that they can hang with the best, obviously, as far as the American team, which are a great side.

I just think there were so many tight matches out there that certainly this morning, the difference this morning was one holed putt and one missed putt on the last green. It just shows you how tight it is. We'll just be well aware that it might be us on the receiving end tomorrow.

It's all to play for as far as we're concerned, no matter what the gap in the points is.

**Q. For John and anyone else who wants to answer, a lot of was made about the average world ranking of the two sides coming in, but what's this team's biggest motivation?**

JOHN GOUGH: We just said it in a previous press conference. We just get on like brothers. We have full trust in each other that we're going to give everything we have for a point or whether it be half a point. Even if you don't get a point, we know that the other guys have given it absolutely everything.

As far as world rankings go, on paper obviously that's pretty clear, but when you play -- fortunately for us we play a good bit of links in amateur golf. When you play as much links golf as we do, you know that you can't trust anything on a links course. It changes every day, every hole really.

As Stuart was saying there, we're delighted to be in the position we're in, but we know there's still a very big job ahead.

**Q. You didn't play all the holes, but where did you feel like the course changed the most throughout the course of the day today?**

STUART WILSON: Well, certainly this afternoon the wind did pick up a bit. But we've had a glorious links day to play golf. So it gave the guys the opportunity to actually play, which was great to see. I know there was a lot of strong performances out there with good numbers.

I think when the guys get in that frame of mind, they just enjoy it and enjoy the environment.

I think the Old Course and the crowds and everything and the way they have the place set up is just fantastic. It's just a real buzz for the players.

**Q. Calum, very well played today. Can I ask you how**

**impressed you were with Connor Graham at 16 going out and delivering that performance alongside you this morning?**

CALUM SCOTT: Yeah, I mean, he's, for his age -- yeah, just incredible for his age. To be in the Walker Cup at 16, and then at the Home of Golf with all these crowds and pressure, I think he's handled it, I think, for how young he is and how mature he is, I think he's done an unbelievable job.

I thought I might have to take care of him maybe a little bit, but honestly, he took it in stride very well, and it was impressive. He hit some great shots down the stretch, holed some great putts.

So far he's done unbelievable, and I think he'll keep it going.

**Q. You had plenty of birdies this afternoon. Must have been great to get off to that hot start.**

CALUM SCOTT: Yeah, I think the momentum from foursomes was a factor I think why I played so well.

It just boosts your confidence. It pumps you up a little bit. Yeah, that was a big factor in starting off hot.

**Q. John, your younger brother played in the Walker Cup in 2019, and you've extended your amateur career to be available to play on this team here in 2023. Can you talk about how Connor's memories and his experience played into you wanting to make this part of your amateur experience that you'll cherish forever?**

JOHN GOUGH: Yeah, Connor played it four years ago, I believe, in Hoylake, and he was in a similar position as Connor Graham this week being one of the youngest ever to play. I think he was 16 at the time.

But unfortunately, and it makes me sound like a bad brother now, I didn't get to get back to watch his one, but he is here this week egging me on.

He has let me know that he got two points and I'm currently at two points, so he says, as much as I want GB&I to win, I kind of want to make sure that the other guys do the points for you tomorrow.

But no, I mean, he had a great experience. He met some great guys from it, and obviously he's getting back into his game now, so hopefully he comes in, gets on another one before he turns pro.

**Q. Stuart, I guess we're not going to get the pairings**

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**for about an hour. You don't have to tell us who as much as you can just tell us what you focused on for the morning tomorrow?**

STUART WILSON: Again, it's a very similar session, obviously another session of foursomes. The guys have done their prep. I think -- I don't think we've got too much to tweak from how we prepared and what we did this morning.

Yeah, I've not had a time to actually think about it and have discussions, but the foursomes actually play a huge part in it, and it's been where we got the most part of our lead from today.

Yeah, there will be a big focus on how we arrange that, I suppose.

**Q. Obviously I'm assuming you put in your singles, as well, today, too, for tomorrow?**

STUART WILSON: Yes.

**Q. How do you deal with that? A lot of people talk about if you have a lead, you front load. Do you have any idea what you might do with your singles?**

STUART WILSON: Currently, no. We had a lot of tough decisions to make for today, but obviously get all the 10 players back. It was really difficult working out who to leave out this afternoon because they've all been playing so great in practice, so I'm glad we're getting all the players back in.

**Q. Can I ask you all about the atmosphere out there and just were the crowds bigger and better than you anticipated?**

CALUM SCOTT: Yeah. I mean, they were incredible. I don't know -- the amount of times that I've looked back because I heard a roar from another hole, even almost two holes away, was -- I don't know. Almost every hole I was looking back and there was people roaring. I couldn't tell what team it was.

But you can kind of tell the louder one was probably for us as you'd expect, but in my singles match this afternoon, I heard Jack and Gordon had a great match. I could hear them from almost one hole away, and that was just in itself amazing. Not only beside your green but to hear it from another hole was incredible, yeah.

JOHN GOUGH: I'd say this morning was a bit of a different save for myself. I did play behind the two Scots this morning, so we were consistent a hole behind with the

crowds and stuff.

But I think this morning was crazy the amount of people around there early doors.

I actually don't even think in the Open they get to crowd the first tee like that.

As I said before, it might be however many yards wide, but it was quite an atmosphere at the first tee, and then obviously on 7, 8, 10 and 11, the grandstands there, there was cheers coming from all angles, so you don't know who's doing what or what's happening really. It's cool for us. We don't normally get into this situation, and hopefully it helps us moving forward in our golfing careers.

**Q. Stuart, you've seen a lot; you've experienced this event, the big events. What did you make of it today?**

STUART WILSON: It was absolutely amazing. I know I got asked the question yesterday about whether it's a competition or an exhibition, but I think the fierce competitive nature between the teams was there to see and the scoring was very competitive, but yeah, just an amazing experience for these guys and a great atmosphere out there, and it's just really good to see the golfing public of Scotland and obviously all the people that have travelled to support, as well, coming out in force to support what's one of the best fixtures in the amateur golfing calendar.

OLIVIA McMILLAN: Gentlemen, well played today. Best of luck tomorrow.

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