

**August 11, 2008**



## **37<sup>th</sup> RYDER CUP CAPTAIN'S NEWS CONFERENCE**

**JULIUS MASON:** Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to the post-round Ryder Cup news conference. I'm Julius Mason, the Senior Director of Communications and Media Relations for the PGA of America. We are joined today by some very special people that I'd like to introduce right now. First in the front row over here, the Vice President of the PGA of America, Mr. Jim Remy; the Secretary of the PGA of America, Mr. Alan Woronowski, and from Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, the CEO of the PGA of America, Mr. Joe Steranka.

At this time I'd like to turn the microphone over to the President of the PGA of America from the 500 Club in Phoenix, Arizona, Mr. Brian Whitcomb.

**BRIAN WHITCOMB:** Thank you, Julius, and good morning, everybody. First of all, our heart felt thank you for your coverage of the 90th PGA Championship, and through your pens and lenses you've created interest in this great game and as the President of the PGA of America, I thank each and every one of you.

Moving on, we are 39 days from the 37th playing of The Ryder Cup at Louisville, Kentucky at Valhalla. This is the first time in the post-PGA Championship where we are announcing the first eight members of the 12-member team and we will wait for our captain to make that decision on the other four participants as we go on.

But we are so proud as the PGA of America, and in the interest of the game and our Captain, Paul Azinger. He has done a remarkable job of leading the American efforts to date, and of course we all know what a great competitor and fierce competitor Paul is, and I can't think of anybody to lead our team more appropriately than Paul Azinger.

So with that, it gives me great pleasure and honor to introduce the United States Captain of The Ryder Cup, Paul Azinger.

**CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER:** Thank you. Thanks, Brian. Julius, thanks.

Well, we've got eight players established, and I'm really happy that I don't have to pick four players this morning, I can tell you that. It would have been very difficult to know what to do. If you want -- do you want me to just talk about the eight guys that are on the team?

**JULIUS MASON:** Give us some personality thoughts.

**CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER:** Well, Phil Mickelson had a pretty good week this week and ends up leading the points list. Tiger Woods would be leading the points list, but unfortunately for all of us he's not going to be able to be there.

Phil is a good friend of mine and arguably I think one of the best players that's ever lived, with 34 wins and three major titles. We're going to have a great time. I've already sought a lot of Phil's input with respect to course setup and we've talked about about picks already.

Stewart Cink is another good friend of mine, tremendous player, absolutely bombs the ball. I think he has a pretty good match-play record, as well.

I'm really excited for Kenny Perry to be on the team, being from Kentucky and I think we all are pretty familiar with Kenny Perry. He's established goals for himself, and you know, he unfortunately had to withdraw this week, I guess he had a scratched cornea, I don't know what that feels like; I don't know how hard that is to recover from. But I'm excited about Kenny Perry being on the team. I've known Kenny for a long time. We used to play against each other on the mini-tours.

And Jim Furyk, who I was able to spend a little time with this week, one of the most consistent players America has to offer, U.S. Open Champion and terrific player, terrific match-play player.

The next generation, fifth on our list, is going to be Anthony Kim, young and very exciting

to watch. Looks to me like he has a really good attitude. You see him smiling a lot. I really have liked him for some time. I did an outing with him earlier in the year. I have gotten to know Anthony Kim a little bit and he's got a terrific personality and game to go with it.

Nice to see Justin Leonard on the team. He has a lot of heart and a lot of moxy, I consider Justin a good friend of mine, as well. Terrific putter, terrific ball-striker. He's going to be fun to have on this team.

Ben Curtis, of course, played terrific yesterday. Part of the reason this system was set up the way it was was to reward guys for the major championships, the four biggest championships we play. I've had my eye on Ben Curtis for a long time and I really believe that Ben Curtis is going to add a lot to this team. So I could not be more excited for him. I have not talked to him yet, and it's going to be kind of like a consolation prize a little bit for him. He played terrific this week. He didn't lose the PGA, Pádraig Harrington went out and won it and Ben played terrific all the way to the end.

The last guy is Boo Weekley, we all know his personality, and he is considered one of best ball-striker's on tour. I've gotten to know Boo a little bit, he's really funny and I actually may ban everybody from the press room except Boo Weekley, but we'll see how that works out.

That's our eight guys, so I think the selection process has worked so far. I'm really excited about who we have on the team. The next three weeks are going to be really important for the remainder of the PGA TOUR because as I look at it right now anybody can get on this team.

I have some really good friends that play this TOUR that are out there with chances to get on this team, and there's a bunch of guys who I don't know, at all, who have an opportunity to get on this team, and some of them are close.

So I'll do what's best for us, what's best for the American Ryder Cup Team, which is best for the United States of America. I'll look beyond friendships, and just try to do what's right and get the best players on this team.

So putting friendships aside, I will just reach out to the players that I think are the most confident and playing the best.

JULIUS MASON: Thanks, captain. Thanks, Brian.

Ladies and gentlemen before we go to Q&A, I'd like to invite a couple of players to join us via telephone. Justin, if you're out there listening,

how about saying good morning to your captain, and by the way, welcome back to the Ryder Cup.

JUSTIN LEONARD: Good morning. Thank you, Captain Azinger and I'm very excited to be on this team. This has been a goal of mine for about nine years, and it's taken me a little longer for me to reach it than I'd like, but now that I'm back on the team, I've certainly played a couple, but I feel like I'm going to bring a little bit of -- not quite youth, but you know, maybe a little perspective on it that some of the other guys may not have.

JULIUS MASON: Thank you, Justin. If you can stay with us for a couple more minutes because we might have some questions for you.

I'd like to also welcome Ryder Cup rookie, Boo Weekley with us. Boo, say hello to your captain. Good morning.

BOO WEEKLEY: Good morning, Captain Azinger.

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: How you doing, Boo?

BOO WEEKLEY: I'm doing good. It's a little early here.

I want to thank y'all, too, man, this has been a dream come true for me in the last two years being able to come out here and play, and last year I got to represent the United States at the World Cup and actually got to feel the tension of what it's like to be a part of something.

I think I'm with Justin, on bringing something to the team that might just overturn that slide that we've been on.

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, I just want everybody to know and understand, that the selection process is probably the most difficult selection process that players have ever had to endure and go through. The top eight guys have really earned their spot and they have done it because they have played well this year and played well under pressure. For many of them, The Ryder Cup was forefront on their mind.

So I'm real happy with the eight guys and I'm real happy that Boo Weekley is going to be a part of the team, and Justin Leonard, and I just appreciate both of you guys showing up this morning and being on the phone with us.

JULIUS MASON: Boo, if you can hang tight, also, we're going to go to Q&A right now.

**Q. The first few guys that you named, that you talked about and said they were close**

**friends of yours, how important is that? You obviously seem to put some importance in the fact that they are friends. Do you, and why is that so?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, actually I consider every player on this team a friend. I feel like it's important, because I want to share input. I don't want them to feel uncomfortable with me in any way, shape or form, and I don't think anybody will. I just want us to all be able to come together, have each other's back and try to step up a little bit.

We lost the best players in the game, today, Tiger Woods, and we are all going to have to step up. We are going to take on an underdog role in this Ryder Cup for the first time in a long time, even on paper, when you look at the strength of the European squad. So we are going to have everything to gain here, and what we are going to try to do, what I would like to do is have everything come together and have each other's back. I plan on getting input from the two guys on the phone, as well as the other six guys that are not on the phone that qualified for this team, so that we can make four good picks.

So I think to have a relationship with the players is important.

**Q. Given the European's performance in this tournament, the PGA has never been their domain, just how much more of an underdog are you now, and can you use that to your advantage in any way?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, I think the pressure, really, would be on them a little more than maybe it's going to be on us. We're playing on our home soil, and, you know, for the first time in a long time, Europe is going to have kind of everything to lose here in these matches. It's usually the other way around.

Even though they won five of the last six, somehow they just seem to come in as the underdog, I don't know how that works. This time I think it's clear that we are the underdogs going into these matches.

I figured that somebody from Europe was going to play really well this week. There are several guys coming back from a really great Ryder Cup in 2004 and you figured there was going to be good recall on their behalf and sure enough there they were and Sergio and Pádraig were on the winning Ryder Cup Team here in 2004.

**Q. Is Boo still on the phone?**

BOO WEEKLEY: Yes, sir.

**Q. Boo, Doug Ferguson here. Wanted to ask you, you had no chance of, obviously, winning the tournament here, nor were you a complete lock to finish in the top eight. How much was that weighing on your mind when you went out and shot that fine round of 66 yesterday?**

BOO WEEKLEY: It was pretty heavy. I mean, after that morning round of finishing up, I really was just like, we've got to go out and play some good golf. We have got to show them that we want to be a part of it and that we can play under pressure and that we can play against all odds. You know, you're out there playing 36 holes or 30 holes, however many holes you played, it shows that, hey, you know, you've got the backbone to go out there and do it, and I wanted to prove it, and I know I could.

**Q. Justin, if you could just kind of talk about what it was like to be known for all these years almost specifically for making that big putt at Brookline, but also bittersweet because you have not had a chance to make another memory since then.**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Well, it's been bittersweet until here in the last few weeks. I felt like I had a great chance to make the team.

It's nice to be known for something good like that, and to be a part of a couple Ryder Cup teams and to be a part of a winning Ryder Cup Team, and that's the last -- the last memory I have of it personally. So hopefully I can bring some of that into the locker room and the team room, and just have a positive influence on the event and especially on the guys on the team and on Captain Azinger.

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Wait a minute, I want to make sure that all of the players watching me on the GOLF CHANNEL refer to me as Captain Azinger like Justin has done so far, and Boo.

**Q. Admiral Azinger. If I'm doing my math right, you've got three rookies, and as Justin just said, he's not been in this dance for about nine years. Could you again sort of give us your thoughts on experience versus new blood, especially when experience might be**

### negative scar tissue?

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, I really figured we would have seven rookies on this team. I could pick four rookies and have seven rookies on this team. I've said all along that experience, while being very important, anybody who has played Ryder Cup in the last 12 years, I mean, we've lost five of the last six Ryder Cups, so most of their experiences are bad experiences.

So it's not like experience is going to be a great help. So I'm looking for guys that are playing well, it's as simple as that. And if it's an experienced player playing well, then I think that's fantastic.

**Q. There seems to be a lot of players leading up to this that point to the Presidents Cup and the success the U.S. has had in the Presidents Cup and repeatedly they say it's fun and Jack just has fun and it's not so serious. How do you as a captain go about getting that through to your players and say, in the end, it's just a golf tournament.**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, it looked like The Presidents Cup team got off to a great start, and they were ahead 5 1/2 to a 1/2 or something the first morning, so of course they are going to be looking like they are having fun. When you're winning, you're having fun and when you're losing, you're not having fun.

I think the American Ryder Cup teams have gotten along famously the last several Ryder Cups. I believe they had a lot of fun in the team room and all that, but when you're behind, early, and we've been behind early a lot, you know, you're not having fun. The other team is having fun.

So it's important to get off to a good start. But in the end, what's fun about it, there's nothing fun about trying to win the golf tournament. It's fun after you've won. It's a grind.

So everybody on this team I think gets along and knows each other pretty well, and you can't help it when 12 guys start getting together and hanging out together, they are having fun. When you're ahead, you're having more fun.

I did ask the question to several players, did you get off to a great start because you were more relaxed, or were you more relaxed because you got off to a great start at that Presidents Cup. I think I got a blend of answers, but it could be that they got off to a great start because they were more relaxed. So I think it goes both ways.

But you know, the reality is that you're on a big stage and there's going to be a lot of pressure, and I think if all you want to focus on is having fun, then when you get to the first tee, you start to panic, like, "Oh, my gosh." So there needs to be a blend there.

I believe that preparation and focusing on the process is what's important, and getting to know the golf course is important, and you know what, I'm not holding anybody's hand this week. I've said that all along; these are all big boys. They are all professionals. They are great at what they do. They don't need to be motivated. I mean, they are all fantastic players. Our focus isn't going to be to have fun, I can promise you that. We will have fun because that's just what comes naturally. Our focus is going to be just to prepare, to get to know the golf course, to try to find any advantage or edge that we can, and just do this as a team.

**Q. Successive American captains in recent times have expressed bafflement as to the outcome of the matches, why the matches went the way they did. Now, without disclosing your strategy, do you think you've hit on something, some explanation for this, or some way of righting what you believe has gone wrong in the past?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: I don't know. All I'm trying to do here is what I feel is right. I felt like there was some glaring observations for me as to what needed to be done, and changing the selection process was the first thing. This is a very difficult selection process. These players made it based on, for the most part, a one-year selection system, the four majors, counting last year.

I just felt like a more current system was important. We've got that in place. These are the best players America has to offer right here. They have played well this year, and they should be confident and proud of what they have accomplished. They get to represent the United States of America because of the way they have played this year.

I'm really grateful I didn't have to make four picks this morning. I can assure you it would have been very difficult and honestly I wouldn't know what to do, if I had to sit back right now and say, these are the four guys, I could have gotten burned by it, because there's three weeks after this tournament that I get to pick. Hopefully the four picks will fall right in my lap and it will be obvious. I

don't think it will be that way I think picking four guys will be difficult.

In the end I think changing the way we pick the team is going to be different there's though super motivational speech you can give to a guy who is playing poorly to get him to play better and I've said all along, I don't think I can say anything stupid enough to screw a guy up who is playing well. So we'll see how that plays out.

**Q. A few guys left here, 10 through 17 or 18, left here kind of wounded. Will you make a few calls this week?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: I may make some calls. I probably will make a couple phone calls, anyway.

This is a hard golf course. I played it. I made the cut and endured four days of this golf course, so I think we are all licking our wounds a little bit. And I'm not going to put a whole lot of weight on what happened yesterday or what happened the first two days. You know, a couple guys who are, let's say Woody Austin and Hunter Mahan played terrible the first two days, but I can throw that away if they play decent any of the next three weeks, I'll have my eyes on them, as well as anybody else.

**Q. I think it's fair to say that Europe in the past have really been given great boosts at times when they have taken points from Tiger Woods, because of the figure that he is in the game and it's offered a degree of momentum to European matches. Do you see something similar being available to you now if your players can get anything from Pdraig Harrington, given that he's won the last two majors, and it could be argued that he's the hottest player in the world right now?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Yeah, that's a possibility. There's no doubt that beating Tiger Woods could give them a boost, and has given Europe a boost. Maybe our team kind of looks up and goes, "Oh my gosh, Tiger's losing"; that's a possibility. We'll see.

The difficult thing at Ryder Cup is that you can't really necessarily target an individual because you know when they are going to tee off; we don't know when Pdraig is going to tee off.

If somebody happens to beat Pdraig, I'm sure it would give us a boost.

**Q. Justin, since 1999, you've been in a couple of major hunts on Sunday. You've won**

**and lost a couple of golf tournaments, but has there been anything like the experience and the nerves and the pressure that you felt in '99 at Brookline?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: No, I've never experienced anything like that.

You know, I've played a couple of Presidents Cups since then, but it's just not the same. I'm looking forward to getting back to that. There are some great memories because of the success that we had on Sunday, but there's nothing like those butterflies on the first tee of your first match in a Ryder Cup. There's nothing like it.

**Q. And for Boo, playing in the World Cup and representing the country is different than playing for yourself, but have you ever been in a situation where you felt like the nerves just seemed overwhelming?**

BOO WEEKLEY: No, sir. Like they were saying earlier, it's just golf. You've got to go out there and play your best, and you go out there and play your best and that's all you've got that day, or that week. It's not like you just go out and chop it up just for the fun of it.

**Q. Is the underdog role important, and do you envision some kind of "Win one for the Gipper" speech for Tiger?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, I don't think the underdog role is important. I just think it's obvious that we are going to be the underdogs coming into these matches. So whether we can play off that or not, I don't know.

But win one for the Gipper, I don't know, we'll see. Depends on a lot of things. I'm looking forward to calling the Gipper and I want the Gipper's input on what's going on here and how Tiger feels. I respect Tiger Woods a lot. I hate that he's not going to be hanging out with us during that week. I would have loved to have spent time with Tiger and I would have loved to have been his captain. I would have loved to pound him in ping-pong, but I'm not going to be able to do that. So I'm going to have to pound on Boo and Justin.

**Q. Kind of a tie-in to all these Tiger Woods questions. Leaders often look to find positives in potential negative situations. Have you been able to find any positives in the fact that you're not going to have Tiger Woods on your team?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: I don't see any positives not having Tiger Woods on the team. I just feel like it puts us in a very difficult spot. You know, he's arguably the greatest golfer who has ever lived, really; in the end, he probably will become that.

So to not have him on our team, if you want to paint a positive scenario for that, go ahead and try. I don't see one yet.

**Q. Why was Ben Curtis on your radar screen? Because he doesn't seem to have been really on anyone else's from a TV perspective, press perspective, public, what-have-you, over the last three or four years.**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: There's just something about Ben Curtis that I've always liked. I like the fact that he won the British Open and he came back, having kind of a down spell in his career and came back and won those two tournaments in that one year, and I just saw a lot of heart in Ben Curtis.

I just feel like he's got that kind of demeanor that you need on The Ryder Cup team. You need really a bunch of different type of personalities for a Ryder Cup Team to blend, and Ben Curtis, a little more stoic, a little more subdued, but I like his personality. I just feel like he's that type of guy that's going to kind of just put his head down and barrel on. I've always had my eye on him and I was hoping he played well at some point so I could either pick him or he'd make the team, and he's done it.

**Q. Given how well this new system appears to have worked, in hindsight, do you think four picks is really necessary?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, that's a good question. You know, I think what we are going to do really right now is continue the selection process as if it didn't end this week, but as if it would end in three weeks so that I can look at the Top-12 guys and maybe make a choice just based on that. If I really believe the system is exactly like I think it is, that it's going to produce the best 12 players; and if I have a hunch or anything other than that, I can go outside of what would be the new Top-12.

So, you know, maybe not. I don't know. I like -- if you look down that list, I like the next four guys a lot. It's a good question. Did I answer it? (Laughing) Sorry.

**Q. You indicated that since the beginning, prestige and cash is the only thing people choke for --**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: No, I didn't say that. I said that's the only thing I ever choked for, prestige and cash, and I don't know about anything else.

**Q. And you said you wanted to put emphasis on majors and this is the last major before you have to make four picks and you have two players that played arguably pretty poorly yesterday, in big situations, Rocco and J.B. Holmes. How do you discount that after saying the things you've said about the situations they were in and the biggest major there was this year?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, Rocco was back in the pack and he played poorly. I don't know what happened. I haven't talked to Rocco. I don't know why he played the way he did yesterday. I'm not that concerned about it. I know how Rocco hits it day-in and day-out.

If either one of those two guys play well the next three weeks, well, you know, I have a lot of confidence in both of them.

I feel for J.B. Holmes. He had the pressure on him all week and he just got off to a horrendous start. I don't know how he tripled the first hole, but I can't think of a worse way to start on a golf course that is just frightfully difficult. Once you get behind the 8-ball and you have that kind of aggression, that kind of power game, you start thinking birdies, and then all of a sudden you short-side yourself and start making bogeys and it begins to snowball. If ever there was a golf course you could discount a poor round, this would be the one. Would I have liked both of them to have played better? Of course. There's three weeks to go. I like both of them a lot.

So I don't think that you can say that Rocco choked yesterday, and I really don't think J.B. has any choke in him.

**Q. For Boo and for Justin, Captain Azinger has talked about not having any bonding or any kind of team sessions. Will you guys -- a lot of changes to Valhalla, will you try to get there? Will you try to feel the place out? And Justin, you played there in the 2000 PGA, what do you remember about Valhalla?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: I remember quite a

bit about it. I remember it changed a little bit from, I think it was '96 to 2000. I remember some beautiful green complexes, pretty straightforward off the tee. I am going to try and go for at least a day and play the golf course, and just kind of refamiliarize myself with everything there.

But I remember it being a good golf course. I think it will be a great golf course for match play, for an event like The Ryder Cup. There's some exciting holes. There's four par 5s, you know, some good risk/reward holes. And it doesn't really seem to favor a certain type of game or certain style of game.

So I think it will be a great venue for the event, and I'm looking forward to getting back.

JULIUS MASON: Same question to Boo. Have you ever played Valhalla and will you try to get there before the 37th Ryder Cup?

BOO WEEKLEY: No, I've never played it and I will try to get there some time to play it, just to get my eyes looking at it and see what's going on with it. And I hear there's so many things that have changed, just talking with some of the guys. I hope to get there, but if I don't, I'll have to see it when I get there, you know.

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: I'll just add to that. I just feel like there's really not enough time to ask the players to go in together as a team. The week off before the matches, I feel for each individual player, they should respond however they want. If they want to go play Valhalla, they can. But I felt like to organize all 12 of us to go in there and play.

As a team, is unnecessary, and these guys, as I said before, they are big boys and I know how they prepare, but they are 12 guys and I want them to be ready when they show up. There's practice rounds, we get to play there on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. Valhalla is not a difficult course to learn.

But somehow you have a little more peace of mind if you roll in there early and play Valhalla. It's up to each individual to do as they see fit and they may want to go in there together with a couple other players. One thing I would like, if they can play a little alternate-shot with their buddies at home, that's fun to do. I used to try to play alternate-shot. We all know how to play best-ball. I used to play alternate-shot at home with a couple of my friends who were pros and put something on the line just to kind of get a sense of what that feels like.

**Q. Have you or will you study the makeup of the past teams that have not been successful, sort of look at the trends of the matches, the turning points, the key factors that might have led to their defeat, and if you do, how do you factor all that in?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: I'm not really going to look at how all that went down. Those last two Ryder Cups were so lopsided, I don't think there was any significant, defining moment.

I know in 2002, I was on the losing team there and Curtis was the captain, and personally, I thought Curtis did a terrific job, but there was just nothing we could have done on Sunday in any scenario to win that Ryder Cup. They made two-thirds more birdies or something than we did. It was a crazy amount of birdies. I don't know if there was a scenario that would have changed the outcome there.

What I will do is try to gather some statistics and data and maybe let that pertain to who I want to pick. But for the most part, it's a different selection process. The team is a different makeup. This is going to be a pretty confident group of players that's coming in there, and like Boo said, we are really just going to go play golf. I don't want to overanalyze it, and try to keep it simple for the most part. And let's just try to figure out who wants to play with who and is there anyone you want to play with, and is there anyone on the team that you don't want to play with and I'll try not to put you with that person.

**Q. Having been on the last winning team and having watched the three defeats since, is there anything you noticed that was different, whether it be clutch putting or maybe just Europe playing better, anything that you saw that might have made a difference?**

JUSTIN LEONARD: Well, just the last two Ryder Cups, I think it's pretty obvious that the Europeans just out-played our team. Whether it's making clutch putts, chipping in, or all of the little things that you have to do, but we've just been out-played.

I think our goal and Captain Zinger's goal is to get 12 guys that are ready to play and that are playing well at the time, and with the new selection process we have a much better chance of making that happen.

**Q. Just want to get your thoughts on**

**Sergio, pretty much locking up a spot on their team. He had been outside their little floating window and he, of course, has been pretty much a giant killer for them for -- it seems like forever.**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Well, yeah, Sergio's played amazingly well in Ryder Cup. He holes putts all over the place. I don't know what else you can say about the guy. He just seems to rise to the occasion at Ryder Cup.

So anybody who plays Sergio García has a great opportunity to knock him down, to beat him. I think any time anyone beats Sergio or Pádraig at this next Ryder Cup should probably give the team a boost. He's really hard to beat for various reasons. Maybe it's that Spanish heritage or something. Between he, Jose, and Seve, they probably have more points than anybody.

**Q. You've been a Ryder Cup Captain for awhile now, over a year obviously, and it's only about two months from now that you'll be looking back at everything. Have you thought about the whole process and what it's been like, and realizing that there's not much left before you're not The Ryder Cup captain?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: You know, I have thought about it. It's coming on really fast now. I've enjoyed being the captain. I haven't played much, so I haven't-- this week was unbelievable, all of the people, "Go captain, bring back the Cup, bring back the Cup."

It is going to be over in a couple of months, and I'm going to look back and reflect. I've got a lot of stuff that I've written down and there's been a lot of stuff that's gone on that nobody knows about. You know, we'll see how it turns out.

There's a lot more to it, being the captain, than I thought there was going to be. There's lots of little things that you don't realize and you don't think about. I never thought about designing the clothes. I never thought about deciding what we were going to eat.

I've tried to surround myself with people that I feel can help me. I've tried to -- Olin Browne, I feel like he's very active and has the respect of all the players, and he knows the players, and I've gotten a lot of phone calls from Olin Browne. We've spent lots of time on the phone together. Not a lot of time seeing Olin this year because I haven't played much, but I value his input and his perspective. He's really smart and articulate. And Dave and Raymond bring a lot of experience, and

they understand match play. And there is a difference between stroke play and match play.

But I've got a few other people that are helping me behind the scenes that nobody really knows about, so I'm just trying to surround myself with people that I think can be a great benefit to me, and I'm looking at a lot of different aspects as to how to approach this. I think the captain is consumed by what's going on, and obsesses it; I've been losing sleep over all this, and in the meantime, the players are just trying to grind it out each week and then The Ryder Cup has been in the back of their mind and they just show up.

I had no perspective of what the captain went through leading up to the matches. I just played golf to the best of my ability, and The Ryder Cup was part of the bonus prize.

**Q. It seems like every year there's a little bit of volatility on the U.S. roster, other than Tiger, Phil, Stewart Cink and Furyk, they seem to be around every year. The Europeans have a larger core of guys that just move along and play six, seven, eight Ryder Cups before they are done, it seems. Do you have an explanation on why they seem to be able to hold their core together, and is that a big benefit for them in the long run?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: I believe it is a benefit. They somehow have a way of keeping the same guys on the team. Their selection process is pretty good. They are using five off their Money List and five off the World Rankings and they cover the ground with their overlaps there and the two picks.

They seem to have a tremendous knack for getting the most players that are on form for these matches and it's a big part of the reason that they have been able to win these matches. They have a system and it works well. One of the things we have tried to do is correct a selection process that was not giving us our best players -- I shouldn't say that. We have had tremendous players in these matches but they weren't necessarily red hot coming in. Some of the players in the past Ryder Cups were making it based on the previous year's performance. I don't want to take anything away from those guys. I think in the end you have to look at the European players and say that they played fantastic.

If you look at the highlights of the last two or three or four Ryder Cups, all the great highlights

seem to be coming from the Europeans, the putts, the shots holed in from the fairways, it seems to be going their way.

**Q. Could I ask you how impressed you were with Pdraig Harrington's performance yesterday, and do you think he goes into The Ryder Cup with what he's done over the last few months with a target on his back, and does it make it all the better for you to try to beat him?**

BOO WEEKLEY: Yeah, I mean, that's our goal. I want to beat anybody I tee it up against and it doesn't matter whether it's match play or stroke play. It would be an honor to beat him, you know, just like Sergio, he's a giant killer. I'll ready to go out now and play either one of them. It don't matter who Paul puts me against and I think Justin might feel the same way. He's got a target on his back, yes, sir.

JUSTIN LEONARD: Yeah, to shoot 8-under par over the weekend on this golf course is almost unimaginable.

So, you know, pretty incredible performance, and especially coming after winning the Open just three weeks ago. You know, I mean, I don't know about a target on his back, but he's certainly their best player right now, and I look forward to the challenge.

All of the matches are hard to win. You have to play great golf to win, and to beat those guys, you might have to play just a little bit better than that, but I think it's a challenge that we're up for.

**Q. You said something a minute ago that raises an important question. What exactly are you going to eat, and how much input do you get from Boo Weekley on that?**

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: Yeah, I'll think about Boo a little bit. I'm looking for some -- I don't know, do you like fried catfish and fried chicken and all that, Boo, with grits and stuff like that?

BOO WEEKLEY: Throw some frog legs and alligators and stuff like that would be good.

CAPTAIN PAUL AZINGER: We're good. Kentucky, I think the chef there can cook just about anything. Honestly, I think we are going to kind of go for comfort foods, but to me grits are comfort foods, so we'll go for some grits and cheese eggs in the morning, some cereal choices. I like the idea of having some fried chicken, boy, sounds good to me. I know Boo will like that, and I think even Justin will go for fried chicken. I don't know

about Cink and Furyk are health food nuts, so they may avoid that. I don't know what Anthony Kim will eat. Mickelson will eat anything. I've seen him eat. (Laughter).

JULIUS MASON: I'd like to thank 2008 United States Ryder Cup Team members Justin Leonard and Boo Weekley for joining us this morning. A reminder to everybody that Captain Azinger will round out his 12-member squad on September 2 at ten o'clock in the morning in New York where he will make his four captain's selections. Ladies and gentlemen, we'll see you in Louisville. Thank you.

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