

Golf



Scotland on course Tournament returns to the sport's natural home

Page 4



SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER / SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2014

Rivals prepare for fierce Ryder Cup

The transatlantic competition pits the top US players against the best of Europe but although the continentals are favourites, they have no room for complacency, writes *Roger Blitz*

hat on earth possesses 24 golfers, who in any other tournament would carry themselves with the appropriate levels of decorum, calmness and good grace, to behave so completely irrationally at the Ryder Cup, which pits the US against "Europe"?

It is not just the sight of players from both sides whipping team mates into a state of frenzy, or of the over-the-top uniforms worn by players and their partners to illustrate their patriotism, or even the stirring, emotionally-saturated pre-match speeches of the captains that make this event so unlike any other in the sporting calendar.

It is also the backdrop of whoopin' and hollerin' spectators, draped either in the Stars and Stripes or, somewhat incongruously, the flag of the European Union, indulging in football-style chanting and occasionally trying to put off an opposing player during his backswing, that makes this event unique.

Played every two years either side of the Atlantic, it is contested just often enough to make memories of previous matches still fresh without losing the keen anticipation of the next encounter.

Scotland is hosting the 40th edition of Samuel Ryder's match - a contest, the

English seed merchant and golf sponsor said, "to influence a cordial, friendly and peaceful feeling throughout the whole civilised world".

The Scots have been told to be on their best behaviour.

The Very Rev Dr James Simpson, former moderator of the Church of Scotland, said this month that there was a place for nationalist fervour in the sporting arena, such as the Commonwealth Games held this summer in Glasgow.

But he took care to add that the Gleneagles resort in Perthshire, where the Ryder Cup will be won and lost, is not the place for extreme nationalism: "When it becomes extreme and you shout down opponents, that's when it becomes highly worrying," he said.

Come the first day of the Ryder Cup, Scotland may be drained of nationalist emotion anyway.

The tournament begins the week after Scots go to the polls at the end of a two-and-a-half-year campaign that has left the country drunk with anxiety over whether it is in its best



interests to break from the UK and become independent.

Sporting emotion may be the perfect hangover cure.

For three days, Scots and, for that matter, their neighbours in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, can forget the implications of the referendum outcome and throw themselves into the struggle alongside their European cousins to repel the US assault on the

The contest may feel a bit exclusive, yet it has global weight. Nearly 200 countries cover the event on television. Across Europe, it will transfix a continent, such is the determination to defeat the US foe at the game of golf.

The Italians will root for Spain's Sergio Garcia, the French will cheer on Englishmen Lee Westwood, Ian Poulter and Justin Rose. It is a common cause, a joint enterprise for which, in sporting terms at least, there is no parallel.

The Ryder Cup also stands as a proxy for the continuing struggle between the two bodies on either side of the Atlantic that run professional tournaments - the PGA Tour in the US and the European Tour.

Each strives to continued on page 3









THE RYDER CUP
PGA CENTENARY COURSE, GLENEAGLES
SEPTEMBER 26TH TO 28TH, 2014

WITNESS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE WORLD'S BEST COME TOGETHER. AS OFFICIAL PARTNER OF THE RYDER CUP, ROLEX CELEBRATES THE LEGENDARY TEAMWORK AND SPIRITED COMPETITION THAT DEFINE THESE HISTORIC MATCHES.



OYSTER PERPETUAL SKY-DWELLER



Tourists lured by highlands welcome

Media attention on the cup is shining a spotlight on the claimed home of the game, says Tom Lynch

he 2014 Ryder Cup is this year's showcase event for golf tourism in Scotland, which is estimated to be worth about £220m a year to the country's economy.

The event caps a period of substantial investment in courses, hotels and resorts, providing an infrastructure in which VisitScotland, the national tourism agency, expects revenues to rise to £300m by the end of the decade.

The Ryder Cup is the third most watched sporting event in the world and - as it is unlikely either the World Cup or the Olympics could ever be staged in Scotland - the event is a unique opportunity to use sport to market the nation.

Scotland boasts of being the "home of golf". The game has been played at St Andrews for 600 years, and the modern rules of golf were drawn up in 1744 for a game on Leith Links, then the home of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers, now a public park.

A 2009 report for Scottish Enterprise identified £250m of investment in new and upgraded courses and facilities in the previous two years, and since then two new developments have opened near Aberdeen - Trump International and the Paul Lawrie Golf Centre.

Scotland was already amply provided with golf courses. It has more than 550, giving the country the highest density in the world - one for every 9,000 people.

Most are traditional member clubs, with a significant number owned by local authorities. Prices are moderate the average green fee is less than £45 and, says Mike Cantlay, chairman of VisitScotland, "for £20 you can play a round on a really good course".

Golf tourism embraces a range of visitors, from groups of golfers taking a break together to family holidays and from corporate events to competitive players aiming to play two or more rounds in a day and seeking experience of championship-level courses. The main non-UK markets for overseas golfers are the US, Germany, Sweden and France, with China's 1m registered golfers an obvious marketing target. Chinese golf tourists are the biggest spenders, says Cantlay. VisitScotland is also appealing to other Asian markets. Last year, it played host to a group of business leaders from leading Indian companies for three days of golf.

The growth in the number of championship-level courses is changing the shape of the typical golf visit. Traditionally, a tour group would play courses all over the country, spending significant time on travel. The trend now is towards visiting the latest golfing hotspots, which have developed attractive accommodation to entice golfers to stay in one place. Visitors can play top courses and book rounds on dozens of othersnearby with different styles and standards.

This is a welcome development for the traditional member clubs, which have suffered in the recession. Many that used to get by on membership and green fees from locals are actively looking for

more business. VisitScotland is talking to them about widening the range of golfing opportunities for visitors.

The Ryder Cup will boost Scottish golf tourism not just with global exposure -43 broadcasters from 183 countries are expected to reach half a billion homes every day - but also with the 250,000 visitors expected at the tournament. A wider economic benefit may also arise from the business lobbying that will be carried out in corporate hospitality buildings that have risen all round Gleneagles.

But for Mr Cantlay, the Ryder Cup "in a sense isn't just about sport". Big events, sporting and otherwise, are main drivers of tourism, and Scotland "is very good at using all kinds of events to create momentum in tourism".

The summer of 2014 was a prime example, with the Commonwealth Games, followed immediately by the Edinburgh festivals and the Ryder Cup. All this in a Year of Homecoming, with more than 900 events to entice people with Scottish connections to visit the "old country". Mr Cantlay says the



18th century golfers in Scotland

Ryder Cup will show off what he sees as a selling point for golfers: the warmth of the welcome - seen already at the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow - combined with a real interest in golf among the local population. Scotland will stop for the Ryder Cup, he says. People will be watching at home and in pubs and golf

And the overseas visitors will find many of the Scots theymeetreally know about golf because so many of them play

They will be able to share their appreciation of the Ryder Cup with people who speak their language.

Tax proves to be thin end of the wedge for many European players

Florida has long appealed to top international stars as a financial haven, reports Richard Gillis

> t's getting a bit crowded, isn't it?" said English player Justin Rose, after he built a family home in the gated Lake Nona community in Florida in 2008. He was referring to

the number of his fellow European Ryder Cup team mates who had made the decision to live and play in the US full

At the last match in 2012, 10 of the fourteen and a half points won by Europe were scored by Florida residents such as Rose, Ian Poulter, Graeme McDowell, Rory McIlroy, Lee Westwood and Peter Hanson. Team mate Luke Donald also has a home in Florida and another in Chicago, his home since attending Northwestern University as a teenager.

Florida offers many advantages to professional golfers. The weather means they can play and practice all year. The transport system makes it easy to connect to every part of the US visited by the PGA Tour. And the state is one of just six that impose no personal income tax.

Lake Nona's reputation as the epicentre of professional golf began when Arnold Palmer and Mark McCormack, founder of the IMG talent agency, took up residence in the 1970s. Tiger Woods moved there from his home in California shortly after turning professional in

Woods's decision was driven by fiscal reasons as much as those to do with the game, says David Lightner, a tax and investment specialist with FSM Capital, who worked with Woods's agency IMG at that time. Lightner says that Florida residency saved Woods between 11 and 14 per cent of his income. The player had signed an enormous Nike endorsement deal and his annual earnings were estimated to be excess of \$80m at that point, says Lightner. "It is common for players to change residencies as Tiger did in 1996," he adds.

US tax rates, he says, do seem to be favourable compared with the rest of the developed golfing markets, such as the UK, Australia and Canada.

But the choices made by the current generation of golfers are nothing new. Tony Jacklin, the leading British golfer of the 1960s and 1970s, did a similar calculation in 1974 after the UK elected Harold Wilson's Labour government. "The tax levels in the 1970s were a nightmare and coincided with my time at the top of the game when I was earning a lot of money," Jacklin told the FT.

"The taxation level was nearly 90 per cent on worldwide income. It didn't matter whether I won in Skegness or Paraguay, I got to keep less than 10 per cent."

In Jacklin's case, he sought shelter not in Florida - where he now resides but Jersey, the British Channel island, where the tax rate at the time was far lower than on the UK mainland at just 20 per cent. Jacklin says the decision

'It didn't matter if I won in Skegness or Paraguay, I got to keep less than 10 per cent'

not to live in the US in the 1970s was a mistake that limited his career

There is a long tradition of international players uprooting from the countries of their birth because of their high incomes. Indeed, these two competing factors - tax and residency - have been driving a wedge between the authorities and Europe's top players since the Ryder Cup began in 1927.

The late Percy Alliss, father of BBC commentator Peter, and fellow leading British professional Aubrey Boomer were left out of the 1931 Great Britain team for contravening the "British natives" rule. Boomer was working as a club pro in France and Alliss had taken up a similar role at the Wannsee in Berlin. The money was far better than what he made at home, says Peter Alliss, who was born in the German capital in 1931.

Peter Alliss told author Robin McMillan for the book *Us Against Them*, on the history of the Ryder Cup: "War didn't come home for another seven, eight years, but Hitler was already starting his purge of the Jews and closing banks, so in 1932 [my parents] decided to get out. But it wasn't easy. The banks were shut, but we managed to get some money, and mother stuffed it down her knickers and we got on a train and escaped. But instead of coming here with what then would have been a small fortune, a couple of thousand dollars, we came home with about \$300."

Wall-to-wall coverage lined up for sport's 'world cup'

With an entire channel dedicated to the event. gone are the days of patchy broadcasting, writes Matthew Garrahan

elevision coverage of the Ryder Cup used to be a sedate affair lacking breadth, urgency and razzmatazz. When the BBC was the only UK broadcaster covering the event in 1993 it often lacked space in its schedules to show the most important events, such as the Friday tee-off, live.

Not so in 2014. On both sides of the Atlantic the three-day contest has become a major fixture in the broadcasting calendar, with days of televised build-up, previews and analysis to stoke the excitement of golf fans before wallto-wall live coverage begins from Gleneagles on Friday.

In the UK, Sky Sports will be showing 300 hours of programming on a dedicated Ryder Cup channel over a twoweek period. The scale of the company's outside broadcast operation has increased substantially since Sky first began screening the tournament in 1995, with interest from viewers growing at each staging of the biennial event.

The company will be using 80 cameras at Gleneagles - double the number it used at Valderrama in 1997 - and has scheduled more on-site programming than ever, such as a three-hour highlights show from the course each night.

After broadcasting the event in 3D for the first time in 2010 at Celtic Manor, this year it will be testing an ultra highdefinition technology, called 4K, for internal research and development. 'We felt it was prudent to start looking to the future," says Jason Wessely, executive producer of Sky's golf coverage.

"When we first broadcast the Ryder Cup in 1995 it was the first time the first tee shot had been shown live," he adds. "It was uninterrupted golf. The BBC had always struggled with the number of hours to cover. We took that on board and made a big thing of showing it all."

Nearly 20 years later Sky is showing more than ever. "I think the fact that we have dedicated a whole channel to it shows how highly we regard it," says Wessely. "It's become like a World Cup or Olympics. The build-up to the competition, when the captains are announced, the start of qualifying, the wild card selections . . . it's like a long journey that builds the excitement. We're pushing it very hard this year



because recent Ryder Cups in 2012 and 2010 were so incredibly nail-biting and

The tournament is enduringly popular and rarely fails to deliver drama, incident and spectacle. "It's become an event that almost transcends golf," says Guy Kinnings, global head of golf for IMG, the sports marketing and media group. "It's a time when people who are not necessarily golf fans - but who love sport - won't miss a minute of it. There's always a story."

For media companies, there are other factors at play. In an increasingly cluttered television landscape, sporting events - particularly marquee ones, such as the Ryder Cup - stand out. Unlike pre-recorded programming, such as dramas or comedies, which a viewer may record to watch later so they can skip commercials, compelling sports events are better watched live.

This makes the biggest events highly prized by advertisers, which is why broadcasters such as Sky in the UK and NBC and Golf Channel in the US, are spinning off as much programming from the event as they can. While they have

Commentators for Sky include David Livingstone, **Jack Nicklaus** and Colin

Montgomerie

'We are

pushingit

Ryder Cups

because

recent

were so

exciting'

the viewers' attention they want to hold it for as long as possible. In the US, Golf Channel - which like

NBC is part of Comcast, the cable company - is carrying the Ryder Cup for the first time and will share the coverage with NBC. The PGA of America and NBC recently agreed a long-term deal that will keep the tournament on NBC's family of networks until 2030, NBC, like Sky in the UK, has a long relationship with the tournament, having broadcast it since 1991.

As part of the deal, NBC is committed to expanding the reach of the event beyond the week it is staged. "There are wonderful synergies between [Golf Channel] and the PGA of America," said Pete Bevacqua, chief executive of the PGA of America.

Synergies aside, the value of sports rights to marquee events has increased exponentially for the past 15 years. The Ryder Cup has earned its place alongside the world's other biggest sporting events. "I genuinely think that the sports fan is drawn to something that delivers," says Kinnings of IMG. "And the Ryder Cup always delivers."

Long-term sponsors benefit from rarity of event

Ambush marketing raises the difficult question of why companies should pay for official rights, writes Richard Gillis

s a fleet of four stunt planes flew over the Medinah Country Club in Illinois they delivered messages for the European team and its supporters, written in white smoke across the blue sky. These "Sky Tweets" ranged from simple messages of support - "For Matthews was Seve" and "Go Europe" through to the more risqué such as "Tiger likes a bit of rough" and another that pleaded with Americans to keep British chat show host Piers Morgan on their side of the Atlantic.

outraged by Paddy

Power effort to

associate itself with 2010 contest

The joke was not shared by the event's rights holders, the Professional Golfers' Association of America and the PGA European Tour. The stunt was the work of Paddy Power, which had not paid a penny in sponsorship rights fees to be associated with the event.

The Irish bookmaker had carried out this kind of ambush before. At the 2010 Ryder Cup at Celtic Manor in Wales, the company constructed a huge logo on an adjacent field to the course, in full view of the television cameras covering the event. So outraged was Sir Terry Matthews, the billionaire owner of Celtic Manor, that he branded Paddy Power "scum" in a television interview.

> 'We don't mind occasionally upsetting the establishment so we enjoyed the Terry Matthews rant immensely," says Christian Woolfenden, Paddy Power's global marketing director. "As long as it keeps our punters entertained and no one goes to jail."

This poses a difficult question for sports sponsorship. If a company can associate with a global event through little more than creativity and chutzpah, why should any enterprise pay for official spon-

sorship rights? Tim Hunt, marketing communications

director of Ryder Cup

Europe, says it is inaccurate to say that ambush marketing can build an association with sports events. "Affiliation and partnership come through long-term engagement with the Ryder Cup, its wider family and its audiences," he says. "The opportunity goes beyond a quick bit of PR on any given day."

The event's portfolio of blue-chip sponsors appears to be evidence that the official model works. There are five official partners of the 2014 Ryder Cup: BMW, Diageo, Rolex, EY and Standard Life Investments, each thought to pay about £1.5m to £2m.

The market for elite sports sponsorship rights remains bullish for events with a global media audience. To win the commercial battle in golf, says Steve Martin, chief executive of M&C Saatchi Sport and Entertainment, which works with consultancy EY on the Ryder Cup, "you need to stand out from a pretty small crowd". The winners he says, will be those whose approach to marketing is "truly integrated and creative, not just a media buy and a bit of hospitality". Rights holders must also adapt to a changing media landscape, says Tim Crow, chief executive of Synergy Sponsorship. He encourages sports bodies to be flexible in the packages they sell.

"Brands get very few rights in relation

to the players, which is why you see so many Ryder Cup sponsors working with former players and captains," says Crow, whose company works with BMW and Standard Life Investments. "The most effective Ryder Cup spon-

sorships are one- to two-year integrated campaigns which build to a crescendo when the event starts," he adds. "That's how to build maximum brand and business return on investment.

"Social media is going to be a crucial battleground for brands. The Ryder Cup ignites on social in a way that other golf events don't, and I expect to see some of the most interesting work in that space."

The Ryder Cup's greatest marketing asset may be its rarity value. One of modern sport's biggest problems is that

there is too much of it, notes Crow. "The Ryder Cup doesn't come around very often," he says, "but when it does, we can't wait. Less is more".

Message for a new captain? 'Keep things simple'

Former US skipper Curtis Strange tells Richard Gillis what qualities are needed to lead a team

hen he became US captain for the 2001 Ryder Cup, Curtis Strange sought the views of Jack Nicklaus, widely reputed to be the greatest US golfer ever. Strange was looking for some extra insight into handling the members of his team that might make the difference

between winning and losing. He recalls that Nicklaus's message was to keep things simple. It is one Strange feels is in danger of being forgotten as the profile of a Ryder Cup captain these days

grows with that of the event. "Nicklaus reminded me that these guys are grown men and they should be treated as such," says Strange. "Screw the personality differences. You've got to put all that aside."

Now 59, Virginia-born Strange was among the most successful US golfers of the 1980s. In 1988, he became the first man to win \$1m in a season on the PGA Tour, capping four victories with the first of two back-to-back US Open Championship wins. He played in the Ryder Cup five times from 1983 to 1995, watching the transformation of the event as a competitive spectacle.

His debut at Palm Beach in 1983 was a low-key affair. "At the Sunday afternoon singles there might have been 2,000 people there," says Strange. At the Belfry in 1985 he was shocked by how it had turned into a big event. "We went back to Muirfield Village in 1987 and it was bigger still because we'd lost [in 1985]. It was on the radar."

Strange was on consecutive losing US teams, in 1985 and 1987, as Europe's players exerted their dominance. "[Tony] Jacklin was in the right place at the right time," he says of the captain often credited as the architect of team Europe's success. "With Seve [Ballesteros] and those five great players [Faldo, Lyle, Langer, Woosnam and Olazabal] - well, they made Jacklin look fantastic. You have to give Seve an enormous amount of credit [for raising the profile of golf in Europe]. I loved him. It's like watching [US player Phil] Mickelson today; you want to watch because you want to see when the train wreck is going to happen, to see how he is going to recover, and it was the same with Seve."

Ballesteros "thrived on animosity", says Strange. "I played Seve seven times in the Ryder Cup and got my ass kicked virtually every time. What made me so mad was that I let him get to me. I like to see myself as something of a tough guy. But Seve bothered me. I got pissed off at myself because I let him get under my skin. It was the crap, the gamesmanship."

He remembers giving some advice to then team mate Paul Azinger before he played Ballesteros in a singles match at the Belfry in 1989. "I took him [Azinger] aside and said, 'Don't even look at him, don't watch one swing of his. Just leave

Strange laughs. "Sure enough, twice over 18 holes they were at each other's throats. Certainly, on the last hole they had a confrontation. Azinger came back in to the locker room and said, 'Man, you were right about him'.

"Seve knew the buttons to push. Over Team spirit: Curtis Strange sought out players who could handle the the years there's always something haprough and tumble of the game pening out there, certainly with Seve,

and with Nick [Faldo]." As a captain, he sought out players who could handle the rough and tumble. In particular, he wanted good foursomes

players, the format of the game that requires two golfers of each team to play alternate shots with the same ball. He

"went out on a limb" by selecting journeyman Scott Verplank as a wild card pick in 2002. Verplank had all the nec-

essary attributes: "A tough,

gutsy guy. Accurate. Very consistent. A team player. Similarly, Lanny Wadkins jumps out as a good matchplayer. Look at the way he's made up. A bit arrogant, a bit of a swagger. That's not the type of guy I want to hang around a lot with, but I want him on my team. Scott Hoch is the same. Tough, a bit lippy. You may not want to go to dinner with him, but you want him on the team. He'll be so-so in the locker room but he'll be great on the course."

The choice of Tom Watson as captain for this year's matches did not surprise Strange, who says he had heard "rumblings in the background that they wanted to go with someone older". This prompted Strange to phone Ted Bishop, PGA president, and make a case for a player of a previous generation he feels has been overlooked for the job. "I said, 'Tell me if I'm out of line here, but there's a rumour you're going after an older captain and I think Larry Nelson deserves the opportunity"."

Strange cites Nelson's extraordinary Ryder Cup record (he won nine points and lost just once in three cups). The Texan, however, is just one notable absence from the list of US captains. Strange also says three time US Open winner Hale Irwin and double major champion Mark O'Meara have been passed over. "O'Meara is a friend of mine but it probably isn't going to happen. But Hale Irwin and Larry Nelson? Why weren't they picked? I don't know. Sometimes there are too many candidates for the job. That happens."

Rivals prepare to square up for



continued from page 1

meet the demands of their tournaments' sponsors and broadcasters by luring the world's best players to their events. It is a popularity contest that the PGA Tour, with its superior financial firepower,

Four European team members live in Florida, from where they can more eas-

Other members of the team have PGA Tour membership, and Ryder Cup rookies Jamie Donaldson from Wales and Frenchman Victor Dubuisson took up temporary membership of the PGA

Keith Waters, chief operating officer of the European Tour, says: "We know we compete with them. It's a businesslike relationship, and we know how important it is to co-operate at the right

ers to the US; our proposition is attracting players from the rest of the world. We

the battle with its adversary on the Ryder Cup course.

It is the Americans who are the ones

But Europe has won seven of the past tage, is the bookies' favourite to complete a hat-trick of consecutive wins.

Two years ago, at Medinah in Illinois, the European ship looked rudderless heading into the last day of singles matches, with the US holding a com-

gone down in European golfing folklore as the "Miracle of Medinah". But it is also the reason why the European camp is cautious about its prospects.

"They are very strong as well," says European team vice-captain Sam Torrance, eight times a competitor and captain of the winning 2002 team.

The European team has the players with the best form. Four of the world's top five are in the European team, including world number one Rory McIl-

"We have home advantage, we have the support of the crowds, we set up the course," Torrance says.

The US team is without the injured Tiger Woods - no bad thing from the US point of view, some say, given his patchy Ryder Cup record. But his presence and his stature will be missed, not just by the US team but by all in golf who regard the event as one of the pinnacles of the sport and one to be played by its best practi-

Golf's administrators, particularly in the US, fret about "life after Tiger". The game's greatest star, increasingly handicapped by back problems, is 38 years old. He is no longer lord and master of

But the Ryder Cup, one of the few events that Woods has never excelled in, has not been devalued by his fitful and sometimes wooden performances and nor will it be after his competitive days

glittering stage not just for the star performers of the team but also for the

ers, such as the Northern Irishman Paul McGinley, this year's European captain, the cheerful Italian Constantino Rocca, and the quiet Englishman David Gilford, and given them their biggest moments

of the occasion.

pressure," says Torrance.

ence to play under that pressure."

fierce Ryder Cup contest



looks like it is winning.

ily meet PGA Tour commitments.

Tour halfway through the season.

"Their proposition is attracting play-

have a very international product." Europe may be losing its own players to the US tour but at least it is winning

The Ryder Cup was, for decades, embarrassingly one-sided when it was contested between the US and Britain and Ireland.

struggling now. Since 1979, when, to improve competition, the contest was opened up to continental Europeans, Europe has prevailed nine times, the US seven, with one match tied.

nine matches and, with home advan-

Few would express supreme confidence in a European triumph this time, however. Those two latest victories were won by margins of a single point.

manding four-point lead.

The turnround on that final day has

tioners from either side of the pond. the game.

are over.

This is partly because the contest is a workaday, honest professional.

It has lit up the careers of unsung golfin sport - even if just for a few minutes.

It is because the Ryder Cup celebrates not simply the virtues of driving the ball far, finding the green from the rough or holing a monster putt but, perhaps most of all, coping mentally with the intensity

"Once you walk on to the first tee, it's about how you stand up to that

"Everyone senses it and plays through it. It is a wonderful, exhilarating experi-



Contributors

Roger Blitz

Leisure industries correspondent

Tom Lynch FT contributor

Richard Gillis

FT contributor and writer of the Unofficial Partner sports business blog

Matthew Garrahan Global media editor

Richard Milne

Nordic correspondent

Robert Orr World news features editor **Andy Mears** Picture editor

Steven Bird Designer

Peter Chapman Commissioning editor

For advertising details, contact: Victoria Roberts, tel +44 (0)20 7873 3226,

e-mail victoria.roberts@ft.com.

All FT Reports are available on FT.com at ft.com/reports

Follow us on Twitter at @ftreports

Tartan twist to bid rivalry tale

Gleneagles long ago hosted golf's first transatlantic contest but Scotland is one among many that competes to stage the cup, writes Roger Blitz

y the time this article is published, Gleneagles will be preparing to host the Ryder Cup as a jewel in the crown of golfing in Britain - or of a Scotland on the road to independence.

Of course, the result of the Scottish referendum vote of September 18 has as much relevance to the outcome of the 40th Ryder Cup as the price of Scottish salmon has to do with Rory McIlroy's club selection.

But it is a quirk of the calendar that the event at the Perthshire location should take place so soon after Scotland's momentous decision. And the chances are that someone, somewhere is bound to exploit the competition for a political opportunity at some point.

Alex Salmond, Scotland's First Minister and leader of the Yes campaign, has $said\,that\,he\,plans\,to\,spend\,the\,week\,after$ the vote at the Ryder Cup.

This is, after all, a partisan sporting occasion - mostly played in good spirit, with tempers boiling over occasionally, but against the backdrop of a rumbustious atmosphere.

Flags and anthems bring colour, vibrancy and the unmistakable smack of patriotism to the event - even if loyalty to a group of nations as disparate as Europe is hard for some to fathom.

However the Scots vote, they will surely milk the occasion - just as Celtic Manor in Wales did when Newport staged the event in 2010, or the K Club in County Kildare did in 2006, or Valderrama did when Spain were hosts in 1997. The Scots simply have to, given that



All square: Gleneagles was peeved at losing out to Celtic Manor, Wales, when it came to staging the 2010 event

Scotland styles itself "the Home of Golf". Even Samuel Ryder's 17-inch gold trophy has been on a pre-event tour of what organisers call "the four corners of Scotland", a gentle attempt to ape the pre-games hype generated by the Olympic torch relay.

It will be a Scottish occasion in every sense. Stephen Gallacher may be the only Scot playing in the European team, but the names of the holes - Gowden Beastie, Nebit Knowe, Wimplin' Wyne and Crook o' Moss, to cite but a few - will lend the event a very Tartan twist.

Sam Torrance, one of five non-playing vice-captains and one of Scotland's finest golfing sons, expects his fellow countrymen to come to Gleneagles from far and wide. "The atmosphere will be like no other golf event," he says.

Torrance has competed in eight Ryder Cups and captained the European team to their 2002 triumph. "It will be very loud and very exciting. Of course, we are going to get Scottish passion."

That passion will be expressed against the scenic backdrop of the Ochil Hills and the Perthshire mountains.

Gleneagles, an hour's journey from Edinburgh and Glasgow, is set in an 850acre estate. In 1921, in pre-Ryder Cup days, it played host to the first ever contest between British and US golfers, with the teams including sporting legends Harry Vardon and Walter Hagen.

Muirfield hosted the Ryder Cup in 1973, but it has been a battle to bring the competition back to Scotland this year.

In 2001, Gleneagles was peeved at losing out to Celtic Manor when the European Tour elected to take the 2010 event to Wales. Acutely aware of how badly

that decision would be received, the European Tour immediately announced Gleneagles as the 2014 hosts.

But, whatever shape the UK takes from now on, the Ryder Cup will not return to these shores for some time.

Interest in hosting has enabled the European Tour to create a competition for the rights to stage the event, resembling the bidding processes for hosting the Olympic Games and the World Cup.

Three years ago, France embarked on a successful €35m bid to host the 2018 event, fending off competition from Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain. The French came from behind to pip the more fancied Madrid and Munich bids, promising golf centres in or near 100 French towns, increased participation and a revamped course at Le Golf National outside Paris.

Spurred on by this rivalry, the European Tour is hosting another bidding competition for 2022. Bidders must demonstrate government backing, the means to provide a world-class course and other facilities, ways to exploit commercial opportunities and a programme for supporting the development of the game in the host country.

Seven countries think they can meet these criteria: Austria, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Turkey.

Richard Hills, Europe's Ryder Cup director, says: "We think it is a process that befits a sporting event of the stature of the Ryder Cup and, as we have consistently stated, has the key criteria in place that will enable us to evaluate each bid equally on both its sporting and its commercial merits, while, at the same time, allowing us to judge each bid fairly, thoroughly and on a level playing field."

That is for the future.

More immediately, the European and US teams are preparing to join battle on Gleneagles' PGA Centenary Course, described by Jack Nicklaus, its designer, as "the finest parcel of land in the world I have ever been given to work with".

"It is a very good course," says Torrance. "Who knows whom it suits best? It is a good test of golf."

Scandinavian talent is among best in show

Richard Milne assesses the Nordic region's wealth of world-class players

playable half the year, Scandinavia excels at the sport. Its golfers have long been stalwarts of European Ryder Cup teams, accounting for a third of members in 2002, despite the small

populations of Sweden, Denmark and

or a region where golf is only

This year is no different, with Sweden's Henrik Stenson, ranked number four in the world, and Denmark's Thomas Bjørn competing in their fourth and third Ryder Cups respectively.

Stenson is already part of Ryder Cup lore for sinking the winning putt in 2006 in his first appearance. Bjørn made his debut in 1997, playing in a team that included Ian Woosnam, Nick Faldo and Bernhard Langer - all captained by Seve Ballesteros.

Such has been the presence of Swedes and Danes on the European team this century - Peter Hanson, Robert Karlsson, Søren Hansen, Niclas Fasth, Pierre Fulke and Jesper Parnevik have all featured in one or more Ryder Cups - the biggest surprise may be that none has won a major.

Stenson and Bjørn came closest with both having finished as runners up in the Open. The Swede finished behind Phil Mickelson last year at Muirfield. The Dane came closer, losing at the 2003 Open at Royal St George's, having led by two shots with three holes left to play.

Stenson has not won a tournament on the European or PGA tours all year and Bjørn has won only once recently - in December in South Africa - but both $come to the \,Ryder\,Cup\,in\,good\,form.\,The$ Swede was behind only Rory McIlroy in both the European and world points for Ryder Cup qualification. Bjørn ranked sixth on both lists.

Scandinavian players' success may seem unlikely given that Sweden's has only 10m inhabitants and Denmark and Norway have just 5m each. But golf is popular in the Nordic countries, with a broad appeal that goes beyond middleaged men.

The most successful Scandinavian golfers have been women. Sweden's Annika Sörenstam, who retired in 2008, won 10 majors and took part in the Solheim Cup - a women's tournament contested by teams from Europe and the US - eight times, making her one of the most successful female golfers ever.

She became the first female player since the second world war to take part in a PGA Tour event, the Bank of America Colonial tournament in Fort Worth, Texas, in 2003. Norway's Suzann Pettersen has not matched Sörenstam yet but, with two majors, it could be argued that she has achieved more than the Scandinavian males.

"Nordic golfers have increasingly made a name for themselves. It's both male and female, it's youth too," says Jacob Wallenberg, Sweden's leading industrialist.

As well as being a board member of companies such as Ericsson, ABB and SAS Group, Wallenberg acted as the chairman of the bid committee to bring the 2018 Ryder Cup to Sweden. It eventually pulled out - leaving France to win - but Wallenberg hints Sweden could return for a shot at 2022 and many think it stands a good chance of winning.

"If you want to put your country on the map then golf is a very effective way," says Wallenberg, who plays off a handicap of 10. "It has a tremendous impact worldwide. It is one of those sports that generates an interest almost globally."

Sweden has the largest number of registered golfers of any European country outside the British Isles, he says, and only football is more popular as a sport.

"There is a solid foundation for the sport in this part of the world. It is like tennis when Björn Bjorg came through. Golf is a sport for the broader population," Wallenberg adds.

Indoor venues have sprung up across the region. "We are used to seasonal sports," Wallenberg notes, with some understatement.

Golf's popularity, however, may well be dwindling. Sweden had 474,000 active members of golf clubs last year,



Stars Big personalities to

watch on the fairway

Victor Dubuisson is a virtual unknown, having secured his place in Team Europe as runner-up at this year's Accenture WGC World Matchplay. The Frenchman learnt the game growing up in Cannes and is a formidable match player long off the tee and a good putter.

Jordan Spieth is often hailed as US golf's next big thing. "Heir Jordan" was a fixture on the 2013 PGA Tour money lists in his first year, winning once, and with 12 top-ten finishes. His diffident demeanour and oddshaped swing have won prize money but few envious glances. His strength lies in his short game and consistency.

Martin Kaymer After rising to prominence, the German's game went awry as he sought to change his swing in pursuit of a draw - a shot that moves from right to left in the air – and in doing so lost the consistency that got him to world number one. He has rectified this and won this year's US Open.

Jimmy Walker is a late developer, who played 187 times on the PGA Tour without winning, then won three of the first eight starts in 2014. Captain Tom Watson admires Walker's putting, so expect to see him appear in the foursomes over the first two days. **Richard Gillis**

according to the Swedish golf federation. This was down from a peak of 554,000 a decade earlier. The number of young golfers - those aged 21 or under - has declined more precipitously, falling from 94,000 in 2003 to 49,000 last year.

But there is no doubting the strength of competitive golfers from the region. Mikael Lundberg won on the European Tour in Austria this year. Jonas Blixt, Freddie Jacobson, Robert Karlsson and Kristoffer Broberg - all from Sweden featured in the top 40 in the world points ranking for the Ryder Cup.

Finland is in with a shout, too. In the Ryder Cup world points ranking, the nearest Nordic to Stenson and Bjørn was Mikko Ilonen, ranked 19th.

Scotland's golfers hit patch of rough

Programmes to nurture the country's future stars will take time to bear fruit. writes Robert Orr

he selection of Scotland's Stephen Gallacher ensures the host country will have player representation when Europe begins its defence of the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles later this month.

But the fact that the 39-year old Ryder Cup rookie had to rely on a wild-card pick from captain Paul McGinley to secure his place is chastening for a country that has produced more big championship winners than any nation except the US and that has contributed players to every Ryder Cup but two going back to

the second world war. Consider that both the times when Scots were absent from the Ryder Cup team sheet were recent - 2008 and 2010 - and add the fact that no Scot has won a major since Paul Lawrie snatched the British Open in 1999, and the evidence suggests the professional game in Scotland is in far from good health.

Yet according to Lawrie, a member of the European team that retained the Ryder Cup two years ago, it is part of the natural ebb and flow of talent in most countries in every sport.

"We were very lucky for a while that we had three or four top players," he says of the 1980s and 1990s when Sandy Lyle, Sam Torrance and Colin Montgomerie were Ryder Cup stalwarts.

He compares Scotland's relative lack of current top-level talent to the period around 2000 when Lee Westwood was the only Englishman in the world's top 100 golfers - at the time there were four Scots on the list, including Lawrie.

He adds: "There's a lot of work getting done behind the scenes and some promising golfers [being developed]."

Bryce Ritchie, editor of bunkered magazine, also says Scotland's woes have been overplayed. He points to Marc Warren, Russell Knox and Martin Laird - the latter two based in the US - as three Scottish players with the potential to reach the top of the game.

"Scottish players win tournaments but just not

the big events. It would not surprise anyone if Gallacher or Laird won a major. But our guys tend to struggle in the big tournaments - we don't know why,' Ritchie says.

Andy Salmon, deputy chief executive of the Scottish Golf Union, says after a period of soul searching in the Scottish game, the pipeline of talent is better now than it has been for a number of years.

He puts the absence today of worldclass Scottish golfers down to huge changes in recent years to the way players are developed and to the investment needed to make it to the top. "Look at the number of countries spending money on developing players now, look at the

number of Chinese golfers," he says. The SGU has overhauled its coaching system, including bringing in leadership from outside the game.

Salmon says: "Two or three years ago we were beating ourselves up about it [the lack of emerging talent]. But now we have six players in the top 100 in the world [men's] amateur rankings. We've had more success this year than we've had for a while," he says, citing talented youngsters such as Bradley Neil, Ewan Ferguson and Grant Forrest.

He also credits the success of the Club Golf initiative developed in partnership with the Scottish government. Club Golf aims to give every schoolchild in Scotland an introduction to the game - about 350,000 children have taken part over the past decade, and 71 per cent of the players in Scotland's academy team came via the initiative.

But in the development of young golfers, Ritchie notes, there are no quick fixes. "The pipeline was not there before. So even though young amateurs are coming through now, it could take a decade for them to make it," he says.

Whether any of the emerging Scottish golfers can progress to the top level of the sport is, accord-

"down to the individual - if he wants it badly enough".

Scots' hopes

Gallacher

rest on Stephen

ing to Lawrie,

Players and fans turn the intangible into team tactics A fashionable theory has its

20 September/21 September 2014

critics, writes Richard Gillis

he buzzword of Ryder Cup strategy is "momentum". Hours are spent pondering how to capture it. Golfers tell stories of what it is like to have it on their side and feel scared and powerless when it shifts allegiance. But few can explain what it is, and some do not even believe it exists.

During press briefings at Gleneagles in 2013 looking forward to the event this year, Paul McGinley, European captain, used momentum to frame the discussion about the "Miracle of Medinah", the 2012 match when Europe came back from four points down to beat Team USA on the final day.

"The first two days in Medinah we got hammered," said McGinley, who was vice-captain to Jose Maria Olazabal in 2012. "I saw that sometimes you put good strategies in place, you have the players well prepared, but sometimes when you're playing against the top people in the world you get on the wrong side of the momentum and you just get beaten. But the important thing is to stay in touch and wait for things to start turning your way. That's what happened."

McGinley's view is a popular reading of the 2012 match, shared by many golf fans, journalists and commentators who routinely use momentum to help explain what they see at the Ryder Cup.

But this is an attempt to make sense of chaos, says Dr Jim Taylor, a renowned performance psychologist who has worked with professional golfers.

"Whether there is such a thing as momentum is up for question," says Dr

"When there's a change in direction in a match - that is, when someone starts to play better or worse - we say there's been a change in momentum. But that one shot, or a single victory or a run of good play can be explained by the natural swings in performance. Golfers need to feel like they are in control so they create a force called momentum to help explain random events."

The definitive research into the subject was carried out by Professor Thomas Gilovich of Cornell University, for a paper that appeared in the Cognitive Psychology journal in 1985.

Its title was The Hot Hand in Basketball: On the Misperception of Random Sequences. In it Gilovich attempted to find out whether a player who has hit a basket with their last shot is more likely to hit with their next one, a phenomenon known as "streak shooting" or the "hot

Gilovich reported that 91 per cent of fans agreed a player has "a better chance of making a shot after having just made his last two or three shots than he does after having just missed his last two or three shots".

This is not true, said Gilovich, and to prove it he followed the Philadelphia 76ers for a season, tracking the results of their free-throw shooters.

Gilovich's findings told him that players who had hit their last one, two or three shots were no more likely to hit their next than players who had missed their last one, two or three. In fact, they were slightly less likely: the weighted average of 51 per cent hits after a hit compared with 54 per cent after a miss.

It is easy to get tricked into thinking we're on a roll when we're not, says Dr Taylor. "If you look at a small period of time, let's say a few holes, someone can hit a remarkable shot, or series of shots, and we can think that it represents a change in momentum. But if you look at that shot in the context of the dozens or hundreds of shots made in a Ryder Cup match it is not that remarkable.

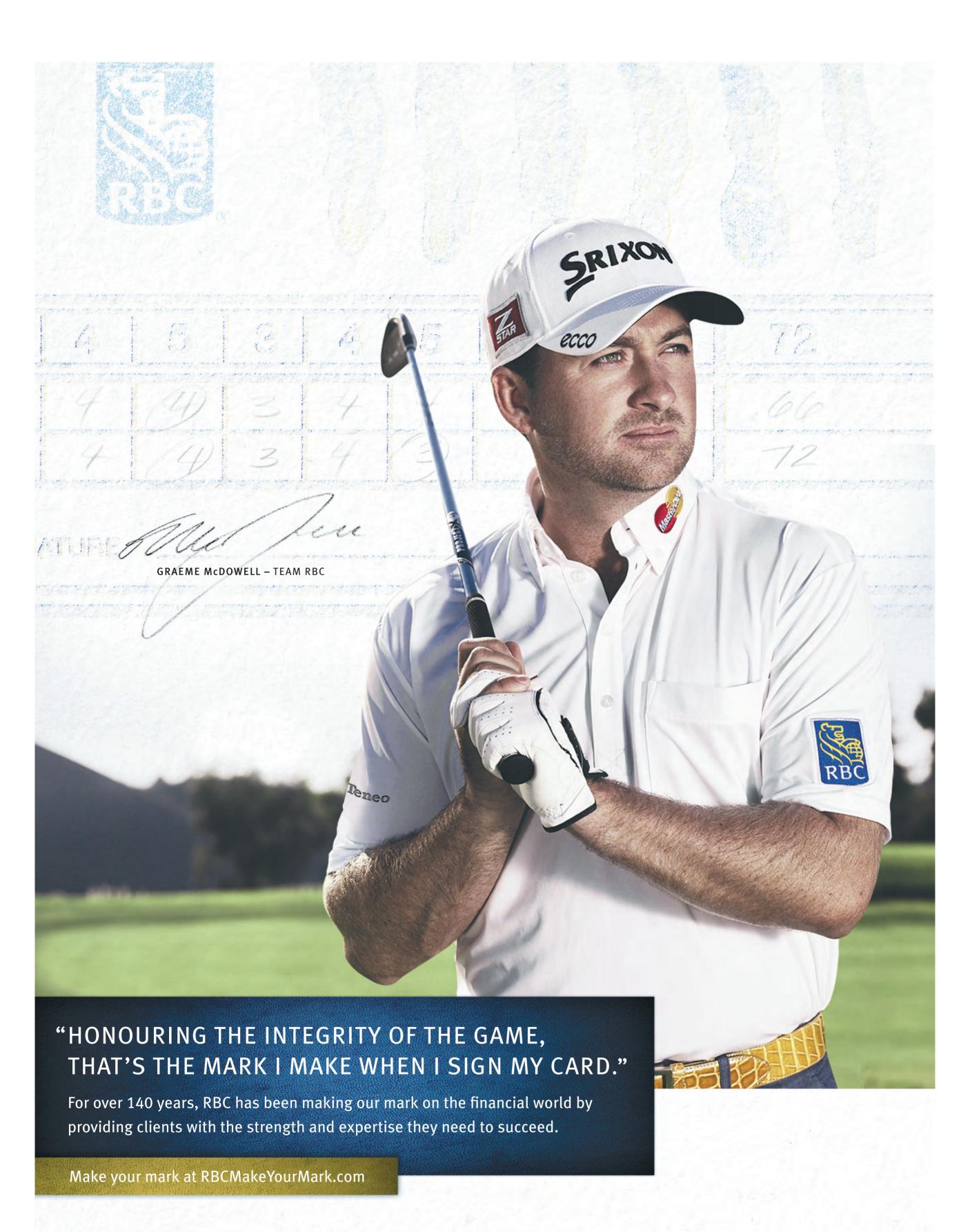
To make the momentum story work, says Taylor, we attribute great import to what feels like a defining single event, the point marking the shift in fortunes.

At Medinah, one such moment was seemingly provided by Ian Poulter. Paired with Rory McIlroy against Jason Dufner and Zach Johnson, Poulter birdied each of the last four holes to ena-

ble Europe to win a point.

> "That was a monumental achievement and there is no doubt he personally pulled the team into a position to be just within touching distance," said McGinley.

Maybe. There are people who believe absolutely that the world is flat, says Dr Taylor. "But that doesn't make





Royal Bank of Canada

CAPITAL MARKETS | INVESTOR & TREASURY SERVICES | WEALTH & ASSET MANAGEMENT

The value of investments may fall as well as rise. You may not get back the full amount that you originally invested.

RBC Capital Markets, RBC Investor & Treasury Services and RBC Wealth Management are brand names for businesses of Royal Bank of Canada and its affiliates, including RBC Europe Limited (authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority) and RBC Investor Services Trust, operating through a UK branch authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority. All are licensed users of the RBC trademark. ® Registered trademark of Royal Bank of Canada. Used under licence. © Copyright 2014. All rights reserved.



For many, it is simply the greatest competition in the world.

Winning The Ryder Cup requires the ability to combine individual excellence and superb teamwork. And it demands the ability to deliver world class performance, regardless of the conditions.

This combination of talent and teamwork is pivotal to delivering the returns our clients demand across all asset classes.

With so many shared attributes, Standard Life Investments is proud to be the first Worldwide Partner of The Ryder Cup.

Find out more at www.standardlifeinvestments.com/rydercup

The value of an investment may fall as well as rise and is not guaranteed. Past performance is not a guide to future performance.

Standard Life Investments

Worldwide Partner of The Ryder Cup

