PGA Tour Champions Learning Center

VO/OC>> Welcome to PGA Tour champions Learning Center. I'm Vince Cellini. We are a little more than a week away from the 43rd Ryder Cup, which will be held in whistling straits in Kohler, Wisconsin. Recently, we sat down with four men who have first hand experience as to what it's like to participate in the competition and to oversee a team.

Over the next 30 minutes, you'll hear from Tom layman, who was captain of the US Ryder Cup team in 2006, a squad which lost 18 and a half to nine and a half to Ian Woosnam his European team at the K club in Ireland, and Cory Pavan, who captained the US in 2010, at Celtic Manor resort, however, the US lost 14 and a half to 13 and a half to Callum Montgomery's European squad.

 On the European side, we are joined by Montgomery, who is known as one of the most successful Ryder Cup participants of all time, with a record of 29 and seven, and Swede Robert karlsson who made his Ryder Cup debut in 2006. But most recently served as vice captain for Thomas Bjorn in 2018. And will be a vice captain for Padraig Harrington this year in whistling straits.

 Topic number one course setup, which has been one of Europe's biggest weapons coming up, you'll hear the strategy surrounding it, and why it has been such a big advantage for the home team.

OC>> and the feeling I got, like right off the bat was how much the guys didn't like the golf course. Because I feel like it didn't suit their games.

OC>> Sorry, your own team in America.

OC/VO>> Right. Yeah. So one of the big I think one of the big advantages, you know, which there are probably several that the European team has always had. Is that you the courses that you play in Europe, you know, so well you play, you know, competitions. I mean, you won the French Open there, you know and so our guys show up and they realize hey, I've there's nowhere for me to hit this 320 yard bomb. No, you know, where am I gonna hit it to and and I could tell that they dislike this golf course doesn't suit me, which is awfully bad way to go into a competition if you think the course doesn't suit.

VO/OC>> Yes. I think I think there's a lot of there's a lot of outside determining factors think Tiger was the main man at the time. He just won the Tour Championship, hadn't he? So he was emotionally drained. Because of that. It wasn't a course for Phil Mickelson because it was very, very tight. Bryson the same and I think that home course advantage now that the captains can set up or not the captains but but the home team can set up the course the way they want. It is vital. I think Sam Torrence started that at the at the belfry, where we started growing in at 300. And now it's 330. You know, but a 300. When we grew it in in 2002. Every home Captain has set up the course according to his own team, and what his own team wanted. And I think, I think Thomas Bjorn and you can speak because you're a vice captain there that that the course was set up for a European hate to say a European wind trying to get a European winner your way to your

VO>> strengths. You know, why wouldn't you do that if it's your

VO/OC>>two years before for the two last French opens. We had the course set up the way Thomas wanted to play it right. So we collected all the stats, and we saw were the guys were hitting it, which clubs they were hitting and then Thomas and I during the French Open literally walked the fairways and just looked Okay, where are they gonna hit it, where are the Americans because we had collected all the stats, we know what our most likely team was going to where they were going to hit it where the Americans were going to hit it. So we kind of just work a rough, rough. Yeah, make it wider this distance. And the one way we kind of sacrificed Rory because he plays the same game as Bryson and Brooks. Yeah.

OC>> The better men of the team

OC>> He's a very straight driver when he drives Yeah.

OC>> But no one person has won the Ryder Cup. Yeah, that's right. You need a team, you know, and it's usually from eight to 12 as we all know that win these things and that's why that course was set up that way. I did it the same at Celtic Manor. You pair were captains away from home, you didn't have the opportunity. I think Davis loves set up hazelteen was Hazelteen set up for an American win I believe you know, it was it was more wide open

OC>> very much. With the statisticians weighing in on who is the best chippers who has the best putters and the US team on paper was better around the greens in that particular team. So very little rough around the greens, you know, so it became a chipping and putting contest and we out wedged and shipped and putted the Europeans.

OC/VO>> Yes, you did. So what about whistling straits? What's going to happen there? What is Steve Stricker going up there to set it up? Because you can no rough but there's hazards isn't there? You know, there’s hazards everywhere.

VO/OC>> Yeah, I would think you know, whistling straits would set up better for the US in general, you've got guys that are going to be hitting it on the US team, generally speaking a little further, the fairways There seem a little more generous. It's a course that everybody's familiar with, you know, we've had major championships. So Europe's familiar with it, we're familiar with it. There's not much of an advantage of familiarity type thing that which you guys do have in Europe, because you play courses that way. But I think the course is probably going to be more suited to our style in general. Generally speaking with guys that hit further. But that still comes down to you got to hit shots you got to play in and you've got to hole putts and chips. You know, there's other ways to set up like you're talking about chipping areas, you know, what's the grass can be around the greens? And yeah, I think the biggest advantage sometimes is where the hole location is going to be on the greens. Since it's on home soil, I think I don't think it's shared with the European team.

OC>> Actually, we did change it last year. We changed how we did it in Paris. We gave all the five pins for the tournament. Didn't say which day but all five pins were official to both teams from the Tuesday. And that was kind of their this was a new thing. Hopefully it's going to be something.

OC>> because we kind of threw a curveball at the European team at Valhalla. Yeah, I do recall.

OC>> Right. I wasn't there. So yeah, Nick didn't pick me. But we won't go there. We won't go there. I wasn't there.

OC>> I think we should go there.

OC>> He was very busy discovering about on course technology.

OC>> Quite good that I didn't realize now that that what's happening is that the pin positions are given out. We were given the pin positions at Celtic Manor, as you say, the five pin positions for the five rounds. We weren't told. We weren't told what particular day. We were told the positions, but not the day. But now it's been shared between the teams I think that’s fair

OC>> You didn’t come to me and say hey, these are where the hole locations are gonna be. You did not do that.

OC>> Would you have done but would you have done to me?

OC>> Oh, of course. I would help you. Anyway I could I would help you out

OC>> Got the sheet turned around backwards. Just the opposite.

OC>> Oh, I'm sorry. That was the wrong that was the wrong information. No, but well, we did what we did there, you know, I played the Celtic two years before the Ryder Cup play the tournament. And we did some stuff there. We probably prepared there. Yeah, I would think. But, you know, we got all the pin placements, hole locations where they were for the tournament, that was at Celtic Manor. So at least we had an idea and you have an idea anyway. But at least we had this specific hole locations for the tournament's that were played there. Yes. So odds are they're going to be near the same places. Yeah. And that helps, you know,

OC>> oh, it does help. I think it does help the putting to hitting two shots especially match play when you've got to attack a pin and where it might be left or right or whatever. It's interesting.

OC>> You said you missed Valhalla.

OC>> Yeah, I said that. Yeah. That was cool. That was cool. I think I said it

OC>> so what happened at Valhalla was –

OC>> I was at home, did I tell you I was at home? sorry, because Nick didn't pick me. Oh, yeah, sorry. Have we made that quite clear.

OC>> He wanted a guy with more experience

OC>> We took your {inaudible} because you would have been most likely first off in the better ball that that Friday morning. Okay, but I was this time with Padraig Harrington. I took your place. Yep. Sorry about

OC>> He is the one that took your spot

OC>> as long as you won

 OC>> let me just finish, this is what happened to Valhalla

OC>> hole number two yes par five. dogleg left

OC/VO>> yeah and the setup was really really tough part four long from the back, yeah you know we put in hours of strategy. How are we gonna, How are you gonna tee off it's almost better to go five wood short and five wood. If your front you can you can always fix a {inaudible}. super conservative. Make sure you don't lose this whole ec. Get Up we go up to the tee. Where are the tee markers? 80 yards further up. The Americans had practiced with that all week. I had Padraig Harrington, my caddy {inaudible} he goes have you got any yardage from that? And this is all happening behind my back. I was like, no, no. So coming up on the tee Lord is up. Yeah. On the on the camera tower. So they moved the camera tower 80 yards left. But usually, the camera tower is kind of where you hit the ball into and I'm not the longest not the shortest. So kind of in between this should be straight away. Look at the book. Yep, on the line with the camera tower is 265 over the water. And 310 running up perfect. Just driver just hit it. And please, please, please was right. Then he was saying we won it {inaudible} Don't stop this.

OC>> I mean, I suppose Yeah, I suppose it's entitled I mean, someone one of the one of the and I'm not blaming Nick in any way. I mean, how could I got one of it one of his assistants. Why would I but one of his assistants should have been watching where the Americans are playing from yes, we do nowadays. spies, spies. Somebody should be watching on that tee

OC>> that’s part of home course advantage

OC>> Sergio was a spy for you, wasn't he during that – He didn’t make the team but he was spying

OC>> Yeah, he was spying.

OC>> He was wearing all black I had a mask on. He was spying.

OC>> I didn't I didn't tell him to spy. He came up to me the open at St Andrew's 2010. And he was he wasn't playing well at the time and he was on the verge of the team. And I'm going how the hell am I going to leave out Sergio Garcia, you know. And he came up to me and says look, I think it was after the second round and he and he was had he missed the cut or he was he was down the field. He wasn't going to win anyway. And he says unless I win the PGA Championship coming up the uspga you can't pick me. But I want to help. So I'm going Okay, hang on, hang on. So he ends up as the youngest vice captain ever I thought I thought he was 30 Yeah. ends up the youngest vice captain ever. And he was and he was like he was he was unbelieving, like a Duracell bunny. He was running around all over the place. Absolutely. He was running all over the place and sorry if he was spying, but I think he was I think he ran over and suddenly came home came across an American group, you know? Oh, I'll have a look at this. He was great I’m so glad -

OC>> In the team room with mickelson’s yardage book.

OC>> I'm so glad that that was the only Ryder Cup he's missed in the last dozen or so.

OC>> He's a bit of a bumbling spy. I just came across something. Yeah, he just oh, no, that's, that's the fun of the Ryder Cup. Yeah, you try to figure all these angles and all these things and certainly as captains, you know, you try to think of all the scenarios and what you can do to help the players play their best golf and that's our big job of ours. You know, obviously pairings is but, you know, what situation can we put our own players into, to give them the best opportunity to play the best golf

VO/OC>> coming up with 12 of the best players on both United States and European Ryder Cup teams. Why sit out four men each session of the first two days of competition. Our former Ryder Cup participants will discuss if it's time for a change.

Welcome back. Since Ryder Cup began back in 1927, it has been a match play competition and that format has served Europe very well as they won seven of the last nine competitions. Let's rejoin now Tom layman, Corey Pavan, Robert Carlson and Callum Montgomery as they discuss the beauty of Matchplay.

OC/VO>> We are brought up with Matchplay in our in our in the European system. Most amateur golf is match play. It's all match play, stroke players stroke plays the No no. You come to America and it's all stroke play and that Why we tend to be more aggressive, I think, you know, especially in the foursomes, or even in the, in the four ball, where you've got a partner that, you know, you can rely on, you know, and you feel comfortable with, you gotta feel comfortable with. But I agree with you as a captain, it's all about adaptation, isn't it? You've got to adapt to certain idea. I'm looking at us when the weather hit in Wales, we suddenly had to adapt to have all 12 people on the playing field at one time. Yeah, but it's never been done before. You know, so yeah. Yeah, we never thought that was ever gonna happen. Yeah. To this day, you know, I think I think the powers that we have to get together and decide that four matches for the for the spectators, especially, is not enough. You've got four guys sitting out on either side who want who are chomping at the bit to play, and they should be able to play. And I think, you know, I'm not six, six games, or certainly five games should be on the should be on the course at the one time. I mean, I don't think it's right to leave out people that that way.

OC>> Well, we talked about that, when we were captains leading up to you know, a year out at least and we're discussing that point that and we actually both went to the to the organization said, Maybe we should change this format, maybe we can play five matches at a time instead of four. The players are so much, you know, the teams are so much more even. I mean, it is almost hard to pick sometimes. So the odds of a team pulling away so much are slim, you know, with more points and it's a shame for guys to wait two years to get make a Ryder Cup team. And they sit out.

OC>> That's the hardest thing. That's the hardest. These guys have practiced, they made the team they've got picked however they got on the team that 12 of them. And they want to be playing Friday morning course they do. How the hell can you say I'm resting you? Well, he's not tired. He hasn't played he hasn't played yet. He's not tired. resting him. It's, it's the most difficult job I had. I don't know how you feel the same as captains but to leave out somebody. Just for me to say that. Friday morning is a big morning we all know that. You know, to get off to a decent start is important. So what are you trying to say is that the eight guys I've got there, I feel are better than the four guys it's a horrible thing to but I think it's tough to do,

OC>> I think is one of the- I differ here because I would like I like it when you have four guys sitting out there just because it's harder. The captains the captain's role is so much tougher, because what I found is I've only been a vice captain so far, but I mean, keeping those guys happy is probably one of the most important things in the day

OC>> don’t you think they’d be happy if they were playing and winning and having an opportunity to win.

OC>> worry about making them happy, just let them play

OC>> I like the intrigues. I think it's our captains or vice captains the role is to keep the whole team happy. And I think America would just look on the Presidents cup they just better if the play or they have way so many intrigues

OC>> now you're saying we should we should actually just play one match,

OC>> maybe Rory and Rahm

OC>> will turn the clock back. Let Tiger play Rory and Rahm.

OC>> Take him on himself.

VO>> When we return reliving the 1999 Battle of Brookline, which includes the story of what Tiger Woods told Andrew Coltart on the first tee of Sunday singles.

Entering the final day of the 1999 Ryder Cup, United States trailed the Europeans 10 to six. US Captain Ben Crenshaw still had a good feeling about this, and front loaded his Sunday singles lineup. While European Captain Mark James had a different strategy, which led to mismatches that swung the momentum the Americans way. The result, the US winning by a point our panel of guests discuss that memorable Ryder Cup and just went backfired for the European

OC>> you guys did a really good job. I thought of getting your whole team in the mix on day one. That was always my perception. There's only one time I can remember and that was when Mark James was Captain that those guys sat for two days.

OC>> And, and, and they paid the price. John vandervelde, sanderling, Coltart and they the three of them, they paid the price Unfortunately, there was no opportunity. In fact, I'm sure Andrew Coltart got the first tee and he's playing tiger. And he's, you hear this? and he's playing tiger. I mean, it's a bad start, isn't it already? I mean, you haven't played a Ryder Cup match and you get the draw. For God's sake, you know of all the bloody people to draw woods, you think Oh god. So here he goes. So Tigers, Tiger was obviously very confident as he as he should have been. And he says, He says, oh, by the way, Andrew, this holes a dogleg to the left.

OC>> Did he really say that?

OC>> I think he said that. Yeah, he did. He goes, by the way, it goes over.

OC>> I mean, the three of them, they drew Mickelson, woods and love. Three of America's strongest three at the time. Because those three were going to win anyway, whoever they need almost, you know. So. So we thought that was we thought that was okay, you know, but it gave that momentum. You talk about its momentum in the Ryder Cup. It gave America a huge momentum going into that last few

OC>> It was 10 six on the board, but

OC>> Really 10 9, 10 9.

OC>> you look at matches like that. When you get in you say well, obviously this, this two are better than those two by far. And if that team whichever side it is wins that match the team that you don't expect it to. It's a big shot in the arm. So when you have those matches like you had in the singles, one of those guys comes through and wins. It's a big momentum change.

VO>> This year's Ryder Cup can be seen on Golf Channel and NBC with coverage beginning next Friday, September 24. I'm Vince Cellini. Thank you for watching Learning Center. We'll see you next time.