

## Presidents Cup Captains Nick Price & Steve Stricker August 1, 2017

---



**MARK WILLIAMS:** It's our privilege to welcome the 2017 Presidents Cup captains, Mr. Nick Price for the International Team and Mr. Steve Stricker for the U.S. Team.

It's just 35 days from now and we'll know who the top-10 are, which occurs on the Monday of the Dell Technologies Championship when both teams will be finalized on September 6th, on Wednesday, with two extra captains' picks for each captain. In 60 days from now the Presidents Cup will take place at Liberty National Golf Club in New Jersey the week of September 25 to October 1. We'll just get a quick update from each captain and then we'll take some questions.

Let's start with you, Nick. Last week, Canadian Open, we had an international winner. That's got to sit well with you, for sure.

**NICK PRICE:** Absolutely. This is the week that I start getting excited. Basically, the last year and a bit we've been going, doing all the mundane things -- well, I call them the mundane things, but going through the uniforms and doing the schedule and whatever. But now it's the exciting time for me because we start dealing with the players. Even though I've been looking at the form of the players every Monday, I go on to the world ranking and I look at the European Tour and the U.S. tour and the Japanese tour to see how the players have played, just basically get an idea and a feel for who's doing what with their form. I start paying even closer attention to all of that now in these next five weeks. What did you say, 34 days? Yeah, 34 days.

But it is a team decision, it's not just my decision. I put it out to the team and to the captains, and I'm sure Steve does the same way. We all have our ideas and beliefs and who we think are the guys that would serve us best on the team. Like I say, it's a team decision. But like I say, it starts getting exciting from this week onwards now. This is where there's a lot of points the next four weeks. So the positions, particularly down the bottom end, can change dramatically and you can have a guy who may not even be on the radar who will play well the next four weeks and can play himself onto the team, so anything's possible. Good time. We're all excited.

I know the players are very much looking forward to it, and Liberty's going to be a fantastic venue. We just hope that we have five, six days of really great weather which will top off the week.

**MARK WILLIAMS:** Steve, some comments from you. At The Open we had obviously Spieth and Kuchar, Kuchar moved up to the top-10 and last week as well in the mix with Kevin Chappell and Charley Hoffman, a couple of stable players.

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, and Gary Woodland was up there as well, so we did have some

real positive movement on our side of the world with the U.S. team, guys making some strong moves, seeing Jordan win again and Kuch getting in position to win and then again last week with Charley Hoffman making a move inside the top-10, Kevin Chappell.

So our guys are playing well and that's good to see. We've got five guys that haven't had any team experience whatsoever within the top-10 right now, so that's exciting and a little bit nerve-wracking at the same time, the guys with no experience. But the guys that are in there that haven't had the experience have shown a lot of guts and a lot of fortitude and just a fighter's mentality, it seems like to me, and they've been playing some great golf. It's shaping up to be a really good solid team from our perspective and excited to see the final 10 in 35 days and to get the matches going already. Looking forward to it.

**MARK WILLIAMS:** We'll take some questions. Just before we do, it's worth noting that the top 12 on the current standings for both the international team and the U.S. team are in the field this week at the Bridgestone Invitational.

**Q. I'm Uncle Buck. Mr. Price, how are you? Steve, how are you doing?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Good, how are you?

**Q. Third times a charm, Mr. Price?**

**NICK PRICE:** I hope so, I hope so.

**Q. Well, you're talking about form. What are you looking for when you say form because some guys may just have, maybe have a bad round but they've got that Ian Poulter in them?**

**NICK PRICE:** Yeah.

**Q. Is there anybody that's not on our radar that strikes you like that that could be the man?**

**NICK PRICE:** Yeah. I mean, what you're looking for, 18-hole match play, this is what you've got to understand, 18-hole match play is probably the most unpredictable format of any kind of matchup that you could have. You really need guys that can go out there and fire and make a lot of birdies. Guys who putt well, guys who have got strong short games, you've got to have that fire factor.

And then you've also got to have a guy when you get into the alternate shot who's a nice steady eddie, someone who can put the ball in the middle of the fairway and not put a lot of pressure on his partner. So it's a blend, it's a mix of that. I think since we changed the format, they changed the amount of games, that's now brought more tactics into the whole thing. I think that's really important. The fewer games there are, the more you have to be on your toes as to how you set your players up, who plays with who.

We nearly got it right last time, it was very exciting, and both teams played a phenomenal four days of golf. It's kind of sad when one point separates the team at the end, but that's what we're in it for. We're in it to have that excitement and to feel -- get the blood going.

**Q. Nick, just to follow up on that question about unpredictability, just wondering how far down the standings of the internationals team you're looking and how much attention did you pay at the Zurich Classic given that it shares a lot of the formats? How close did you look at the results of the Zurich Classic given that it was played in alternate shot?**

**NICK PRICE:** I watched that and I looked every day to see who was playing. It's quite a long way off but it does give you an indicator who will play well together. I don't think Steve, like me, would never advise guys, hey, you guys go and play there. I mean, you would love them to do that but you also don't want to show your hand in the same place, you don't want to let your opposition know who's playing with who. But I'm looking all the way down to Graham DeLaet, who I think is now, he's like 29th. But there's lots of guys out there who can fire. Scott Hend, if he has a good couple of weeks, there's a lot of guys that can really put themselves into the mix if they play well the next two or three weeks.

I think for the overseas guys that's a little harder because they've only got this week and the PGA next week to actually prove their worth. The guys who play on the U.S. tour will obviously have the first two playoff events before we have to make our picks. It's so hard to sort of put your finger on but I'm wide open and I think the whole team is, too. We sort of have an idea of who we would like on the team now, I think the guys who have played consistently, but I don't think you would get any one of us to sort of go out on a limb and say yes, this is definitely it because it could change.

**Q. I'll stick with Nick. How important is it for you that your top-5 fire this time around?**

**NICK PRICE:** You know, Jason last time in Korea was very tired. The guy had come off a banner year and a year that -- I mean, Steve knows what that's like and I know what that's like, and it was really hard for him to get up, I think.

The other thing, he's our No. 1 guy, he's playing against all the guys that are playing well and he had a target on his back because he was No. 1 in the world. But you try -- you want him just to go out and play golf and try not to think about all the other things, but it is important, the top-5 on our team with the exception of maybe Branden haven't played their best in recent months, but their timing is good right now, so hopefully they'll start really getting their games into shape now. There's so much to play for for those top -- anyone who's in the Playoffs, these next four, five weeks can make your whole year. Just need that little bit of momentum going into that week.

**Q. Steve, a question for you. Speaking as a captain, how important do you think**

**Jordan's final six holes were at the British Open for the rest of his year?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, I think it was very important for the rest of his year. It won him the tournament. I'm going to check to make sure that the range is in play when the Presidents Cup comes there, make sure that's in bounds. (Laughter.)

Do you know if it is, Nick?

**NICK PRICE:** We'll never see him hit another tee shot like that.

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah. He's a great kid, a great model for USA golf and our team. He's a friend of mine. I played with him as a partner in his first team competition at Jack's place at Muirfield Village, and to see how far he's come in such a short period of time is really cool to see.

As it relates to those last six holes, it has to give him a huge amount of confidence to see that his round was going pretty south early, the first 12 holes, 13 holes, and then for him to turn it around like he did and to win in convincing style, you know, as a player, and I'm sure Nick can attest to that, and he's done it, too, that has got to give you a tremendous amount of satisfaction and confidence going forward the rest of the year.

**Q. What is your indelible memory of being paired with him at Muirfield Village when he was a raw talent?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, and that's the part that amazes me. Like we are all, he was no different. He was very nervous, he didn't play particularly well the first nine holes, and he kept missing it to the right and he kept apologizing to me. I finally had to just take my arm around him like a dad, and I'm old enough to be his dad, and say that it's okay, we've all done this, we've all been in this position before. You know, I'm here for you and that's what this event is about.

**NICK PRICE:** Absolutely.

**STEVE STRICKER:** It's about holding up your partner when things aren't going quite the way you planned. But he turned it around on the back nine, made some key putts and then settled into things as we have all seen the last four years.

I don't worry about him anymore.

**Q. Did he call you "Mr. Stricker?"**

**STEVE STRICKER:** No, no, he calls me "partner" all the time now. I think I'm his partner for life just because of that first time that he played in a team event. He's a good kid. My kids love him. I mean, who doesn't love Jordan Spieth, right? Just a great example and testament to who he is as a person and what he does for us on the USA side of things.

**Q. Steve, curious, Ryder Cup last year, Brooks Koepka, I think was the only player on the team who hadn't had experience. You're going to have a much younger team and I think you did mention five guys who haven't had Presidents Cup or Ryder Cup experience.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Well, six, if you count Brooks not having Presidents Cup experience, yep.

**Q. I'm just curious about how you look at your job, how much more of a challenge it's going to be as opposed to say, Davis Love, who had such an experienced group. Are you in a way sort of, I guess, breaking in a new era of American teams?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, I think it is a new era, and I think we saw a little bit of that last year, too, and on the potential last year guys came up to Hazeltine a little bit earlier, guys that were on the fringe, like Justin Thomas and Brooks Koepka, younger guys were there, Daniel Berger, that were invited up to Hazeltine early last year. And you could see the change there, even though some of them didn't play, you can see the movement is definitely going to younger, powerful players.

It concerns me a little bit that we have a lot of rookies. I mean, that's a little bit more than normal, I think, but it also excites me that what I'm seeing from them. They're very courageous, they're feisty, they're making clutch putts when they have to. Kisner, when he poured in that putt at Colonial this year, Berger winning back-to-back, Chappell finally getting a W. Justin Thomas, doing what he's doing at the start of the year. It just shows a lot of guts, I think, the way I'm looking at it, and we're in good hands is also the way I see it. These guys are playing well and showing a little attitude when they're doing it, which is nice to see, especially in match play.

**Q. Just to follow up on that, how do you see the things that maybe you need to do that might be different from your predecessors as captains who had more veteran teams? I know you learned from them but they didn't really have this kind of a situation.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Right. You know, and that may change what kind of picks we make. If we have a lot of rookies, we may have to throw a couple of experienced players in there. And we'll wait and see. There is four tournaments usually for these guys yet. These next couple weeks and the first two playoff events, so there could be some movement, but we'll have to -- again, we're just like Nick's team. I ask all my assistant captains, and we've been talking about it, and we'll ask the team players to be invested in this team, who do they want to play with, who do they think makes a good pick when it comes time to make those picks. We'll just wait and see, and usually it's the guy who's playing the best and who's making the putts.

We saw last year's Ryder Cup team out putt the European team and that hasn't happened in

too many years. So it's important to find the guys that are making the putts and playing the best coming down the stretch.

**Q. Steve, what kind of consideration do you give someone like a Pat Perez, I don't know where he is, I'm going to guess mid-20s but didn't really start until October?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, I played a practice round with him at the Open Championship last week just to see where he was at, played a few holes with him. He's a character. He is always fun to be around. You don't know what's going to come out of that mouth kind of thing, but I've been watching him and he's gotten in touch with me, he wants to be a part of this team in the worst way. He hasn't been playing as well of late as he did at the start of the year, but like I said, there's four events left. He's on our radar, for sure. He basically didn't play or earn any points last year, so he's done this all in one year's time, so he's definitely there and I know he definitely wants to be a part of the team.

**Q. When you say you don't know what's going to come out of his mouth, can you give us an example of something that's surprised you?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Umm, no. (Laughs.)

**Q. If things did wrap up with five first-timers or five rookies being in the top-10, would you be hesitant to take a first-timer with a pick?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Not necessarily. I think these guys, like I said, we're going to be looking for people that are playing well and hot and making putts down the stretch. I'm not hesitant on taking anybody. I think if a guy's playing well and he's making his move up towards the top-10 but he didn't make the top-10 but he's playing well -- we showed that with Ryan Moore last year, I think, and he performed unbelievably well in the Ryder Cup. So I think these guys have a different mentality. They haven't been a part of these losing teams that we've been a part of over the years on the Ryder Cup side of things, so they've got a different approach. They're excited, they're -- they just want to be a part of it, so I'm not hesitant on taking anybody.

**Q. What do you feel like you might need to see out of Phil in the next few weeks versus how important his experience would be concerning the current shape of the line up?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah. And I've been talking to Phil. I know how important he is to the team. I've seen it firsthand. I think we've picked him as far down as in the 20s somewhere.

**Q. 27.**

**STEVE STRICKER:** 27? Was that Korea?

**Q. Yeah.**



**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, and he went 4-1 maybe, so I know what he brings to the team not only as a player but as a teammate, and someone that's really good in your team room. So just like I said, just give me some good reasons to pick you if you don't finish in the top-10. And he told me flat out he's going to make his way inside the top-10. He feels like he's playing that well, he just needs to score a little bit better and see some putts to go in, but he's not worried about sneaking his way into the top-10. So you like to hear that as a captain, too. The guy's confident that he's playing well and going to make it in on his own.

**Q. I've got a question for both. Even with rookies, Steve, you're going to probably go in as a hot favorite given the history, and you're going to go in as the underdog. How much do you use that narrative for your team as in, hey, we're the underdogs but we can create something here, and how much, if at all, do you have to guard against any complacency being the favorites?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** I don't think our guys have ever been complacent. Each group is a different group every time you go to this team event, each guy wants to perform as his highest. You have the whole team you're want to go play for, your country. It always, one, it has always made me wonder how the U.S. team has dominated this event when I've looked at, and it goes back to when I played against Nick in '96. I still go back and look at that team.

**NICK PRICE:** Strong.

**STEVE STRICKER:** Your team was unbelievably strong, and for us to win that, I'm like there's no way in hell that we can compete against that team and we ended up beating them.

But I think we have a slight advantage, and it's gotten narrower, but I think we have a slight advantage because we play the Ryder Cup. We get into that team competition, we get some pairings in another year that they're sitting idle, they are not able to play, and we're able to put some different pairings out there, and we get usually five or six, same or more, seven or eight guys from a Ryder Cup on to a Presidents Cup team the next year. So we get this cohesiveness in an extra year that they don't get to have, and I think that's the constant battle on their part. You can answer that. But it's always been very close, it always comes down to a match or two every year. We've seemed to flip it our way, but again, it's gotten close and it came down to the very last match last time.

**NICK PRICE:** With 18-hole match play I don't like to think that we're underdogs. I think where we've had trouble and this is one of the things I've certainly tried to address is that we don't really represent our countries directly. Indirectly we're representing our countries. So the dilemma is how do you motivate a team to beat the U.S. I keep saying to them, we want to win the Cup. It's just like going into an event as an individual, you want to win the trophy, you want to win the championship. It's really important. So it's a little bit of a different mindset for us. But it's also getting the guys more motivated, that's the big thing, and you do

that, I think, as a captain by letting the guys know that you're watching during throughout the year, sending them text messages, emails, phoning them, playing a little bit of golf with the guys. It's all about you've got to have some kind of morale and motivation before we get to the week.

In times gone by toward the end of the week, you know, the beginning of the week no one really knows each other and everyone's being kind of courteous. At the end of the week, everyone's putting arms around and hugging them, but it's too late then because the week's over. So what we're trying to do is make sure when we get there on Monday that it starts then. So there's lots of ways that you get the guys to play more practice rounds together. It doesn't matter whether you're representing your country or whether you're representing different parts of the world and different countries. You're 12 team members and that's what the whole thing is, is to say you guys are a team so let's not put aside without being -- you know, being, what's the word I'm looking for, don't worry about your country. Your countries are very important to you but let's get together as a team this week because we've got our work cut out. We've got 18 holes of match play, 36 holes of match play each day, and this is what we want to win.

**Q. So it's not as easy as just saying, creating a fake hatred against them, either. It's not possible?**

**NICK PRICE:** Yeah, you know, I don't think there is that much hatred at the Ryder Cup like some people put out there. At the Ryder Cup, we all play against each other day in and day out, so a lot of that is created and I don't think -- but the competition, that's the greatest thing of the lot. You've got a tradition at the Ryder Cup.

And the Presidents Cup will catch up, it definitely will. If you look at the size of the world that we draw from, I think one day, certainly from a viewership, I think, the Presidents Cup will surpass the Ryder Cup because we've just got such a huge area where all our players are from, but there will be so much interest in it, but it takes time to get that tradition. We're only, what, 23 years? This is our 12th one, so we've got a ways to go, but I think as we sort of change the format, last year or two years ago was a huge, I think, step in the right direction. And this is a big one for all of us.

**Q. Nick, I was about to ask that kind of that same question, is this one more important than ever for you guys to push it over the top, not only for you guys but for the event itself?**

**NICK PRICE:** If you look at Adam and Jason and Charl, Louis, and the guys who have played a lot, they have never won with, so this is a difficult -- it's tough for these guys, they don't know what it's like to win. Ernie and I together, we're the two guys on this team, the captains who have been there in a winning situation. Last time in Korea, I had a big photo of the winning team in 1998, and I said to the guys in the team room before when we had our team meeting, I said, "You guys have got to know what that feeling's like, to be with 11 of your teammates and to win, I said it's a fantastic feeling.



Once they get the taste of it, the Europeans, when it was GB and I at the Ryder Cup, they didn't really know what it was like to win, but as soon as it went to Europe and then it became a competition, and remember what Seve said when they only lost by a shot, oh, no, no, no, we actually won this week because we only lost by one. It's a great feeling. Once they get the taste of it I think it will be off to the races. I think it will be a totally different event.

**Q. Nick, you're one team but you could have four or five different mother tongues.**

**NICK PRICE:** Yeah.

**Q. How much of a difficulty is that in trying to bring everybody together and build team unity and camaraderie, and do we over play it, I guess?**

**NICK PRICE:** We all love golf, that's the big thing, and we're all competitive. There was a time when people would sort of criticize us or maybe look at our team a little objectively and say really, how does a Japanese guy playing with an Australian guy be motivated to beat two U.S. guys.

But the same thing is like a Spaniard and a Swede. They can get together and it's all about competing. It's just a different mindset more than anything else. It's trying to get the guys -- you love the game, you love to compete, and once they get that taste of competition and you have the success, then you've created the correct situation as far as I'm concerned. That's where I'm sort of looking. I don't really look at the guys -- most of the guys speak English, understand English really well. They're obviously a little bit apprehensive to speak it. We speak golf language in the team room, we talk about golf and we talk about motivation and we talk about the humor out there and the funny things that happen, and anything that will bring that team together and bond them. It's not that difficult, it requires a little bit extra effort and a little bit more understanding.

I was lucky because I played all over the world and I had Shigeki Maruyama, a Japanese pal, a great friend of mine. We used to go out to dinner in Japan. Aussies and the Southern Africans, we all know each other really well. There's always been a bond. The Argentinians and the South Americans and the South Africans, we've always got on well together. So there's really not the whole cultural difference amongst us, and we all got there by playing golf and loving to compete.

**Q. Nick, just to go back on 1998, obviously you were playing in the only victorious team in the Internationals. How do you bottle that success and try to recreate it for this team coming up?**

**NICK PRICE:** That's the \$64,000 question. That's something that I've been trying to do the last two occasions. Just to go back and just explain when I first took over, so back in 2012 when I was first asked to be captain at Muirfield, I went to some of the players and there was

just a general feeling of apathy amongst the players as to, well, what are we going to do this time, which really stunned me, that really hurt because I was all gung ho, I was all excited about it. So I got to thinking and talking to some of the guys who had been on the team before and said, "What do we do here?" So I knew I had my work cut out as to how we're going to get these guys motivated, and to be honest, it's not rocket science. To me, it's just about making them aware, showing you have a captain and assistants who are really, really into it and keen about it, and that we do have a great chance to win.

It's not about individuals, it's not about -- it's about -- it is about our countries but it's about our team. I keep going back to the team because even on the U.S. team, you have guys from different states. Sure, they're all American and they play, but you know, they come together as a team, and that's what Europe did so well. Europe did that fantastically well for 12, 14 years. So I don't think the fact that we're from different countries really hinders us. In fact, it's just a question of trying to figure out how we can, as I say, get together and bond and be motivated.

**Q. Finish this off, a little off topic, if you don't mind, but for 40-odd years that 63 in a major was pretty special. Now that you guys are both tied for second-best score in a major, what did you think of what he did? Do you see it as kind of an evolution of scoring, if you will, and do you think we'll reach a stage in a couple years where people look at a 63 in a major the way we now look at a 64 or 65 used to be?**

**STEVE STRICKER:** Yeah, I think it's just an evolution of records and the type of player that's playing the game now. I mean, everybody's a strong player. There's a lot more offense, it seems like, from players. These young kids have brought a new level of play I think out to the tour, to the big stage where they're a lot more aggressive I think than the older-time players.

I don't know why I looked at you when I said older-time players. (Laughs.)

**NICK PRICE:** Don't worry.

**STEVE STRICKER:** It's just a different mentality. I was over there, it was a perfect storm for somebody to shoot a good score. The course softened up, there was light wind, we had just come off from a couple days of heavier wind and when all of a sudden you get a course that the wind layed down on and you made the cut already, somebody's -- a lot of guys felt good about their game I'm sure that day, but he made a ton of putts and that's what you're going to have to do to break a record like that. Yeah, I think it's just an evolution. I don't know if we're going to continue to see it, but it was meant to be broken. Records are, I think. He made a lot of putts to do it.

**Q. What do you think?**

**NICK PRICE:** Well, I think 59's imminent. I don't know how long it's going to take, but somebody's going to break 60 in a major. It's just the way the game is progressing, it's

incredible. How many guys have broken 60 now. It took a long time for Al Geiberger to break 60 and now we had -- I think Chip Beck was the next guy, and since Chip Beck there's probably been another eight or nine guys. I think it's just evolution, I don't know. It's going to happen. Incredible.

The way Jordan Spieth putted on that Sunday was just -- I mean, the guys putt -- listen, you putted well your whole life, you don't know what it's like to putt badly. You know what it's like to drive the ball badly, you don't know what it's like to putt badly.

No, the guys, they make so many wonderful -- the putting is just off the charts now it's so good, and that's what you have to do to survive out there now, I think. If you're a mediocre to average putter, you had better lift your game up, otherwise you're not going to get anywhere.

**MARK WILLIAMS:** Thank you, gentlemen. Captain Price, Captain Stricker. Good luck with your selections on September 6th and good luck to the teams, both teams.