

PRE-TOURNAMENT INTERVIEW
August 26, 2021



DAVIS LOVE III

Q. Davis, you played here back in the Buick Open days, but now you're making your first start here as a Champions player. Just your thoughts on being here at the Ally Challenge this week?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, glad to be back. It has been a long time since I played Warwick Hills and I'm excited to play the Ally and looking forward to a golf course that I haven't seen in a long time, but I know I at least have a little experience on it. A lot of these Champions Tour courses, I'm still the rookie learning the golf course, so I'm excited to play one that I know and that I played well on in the past.

Q. Do you have any particular memories that stand out from your time here?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, making a lot of birdies and not winning is what I remember the most. I played well here my first year here in '86 and then I made a lot of birdies around this place, but never did pull off a win. So hopefully now and in the future I can continue that and maybe catch up with Furyk and the guys that played well here and won.

Q. When you come back to a course like this for the first time in so many years, all the guys say it's played the same way for 30 or 40 years, does that give you a little bit of extra confidence knowing that you might still know the course as it is?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, for sure. The trees are bigger, we don't hit it as far, but it's still the same golf course and it's one that we're comfortable with. You obviously have to hit a lot of fairways is the main thing. So I'm looking forward to at least playing a place that I'm comfortable at, not having any recent experience, but it's always nice to come back to a place you're comfortable.

Q. I'm not sure if you've been out on the course yet, but 17 they've added more bleachers along the side and it's going to get even rowdier. What memories do you have from 17 specifically and what are you looking forward to about having the fans here this year?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, TPC Scottsdale claims and the Waste Management, their big exciting par 3 hole, but it started here, this was the first one where we were cheered and jeered, so I'm ready for it. I'm excited to continue that tradition and hopefully can get through there with some birdies.

Q. If a fan offers you a beer, what are you going to do on 17?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I'm not a beer drinker anyway, but hopefully I can get them riled up and hit it close. It's always fun, birdies are fun on those holes and bogeys are bad because you get picked on.

Q. How does your approach change when a course like this takes on a little bit of water like it has especially over the last week?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, yeah, it's going to be soft. Anytime you can shoot at the flags and it's soft, it's even more birdies. The three-day Champions Tour events are sprints, you've got to make a bunch of birdies. I did that last week in Seattle, I made a bunch of first day and then stalled out. Just got to keep going. So play aggressive, but first things first, you've got to hit the fairways. Since they're soft, you can keep it in there. Then you've got to hit a lot of good short irons and obviously beat up the par 5s. It's just an aggressive mindset on a soft golf course.

Q. Furyk won last year in his Ally Challenge debut and Champions Tour debut. How do you plan to follow that up?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I'd like to get a win on the Champions Tour anywhere, anytime. Yeah, this would be a good one. Great memories of making birdies here. I'm trying to chase these guys down and be on the leaderboard some, so it would be nice to do it this week.

Q. How much of your thought process in preparation right now is not only just playing, but thinking towards the Ryder Cup that's coming up pretty quickly? How much time do you spend on that, I guess?

DAVIS LOVE III: We're spending a lot. I got a couple text messages this morning I still have to answer. Had two interviews today about Ryder Cup with Ralph Lauren doing the clothes, so it's getting serious. I feel for Captain Stricker; things have changed daily for the last year. Now he's dealing with COVID getting bad again and having to put the team in a bubble. There's just all kinds of stuff going on, so it's day to day I think for the captain and the assistants right now.

Q. What is that excitement like, that buildup? Obviously you've been a part of it for a long time. Does it ever really change?

DAVIS LOVE III: It doesn't change. This one has been dragging obviously. I've gotten some clothes that say 2020 Ryder Cup, so reality's setting in that we're actually going to get to play. I saw a picture yesterday of the first hole grandstands, just incredible. I can't wait for the excitement and I know that the players are champing at the bit, too.

Q. Yesterday Steve talked I guess to one of the golf magazines, it looks like he's put the feud out, kind of preemptive strike on Bryson and Brooks. Do you anticipate that those two are just going to keep away from each other, everything will be fine for the team, or is that going to be a problem?

DAVIS LOVE III: For us that's about number 20 on the list of things to do. Captain's talked to both Bryson and Brooks and everybody else that's in the top-15 probably on the points list, so that one's not -- we've got way bigger problems than that coming into this thing obviously with COVID and he's got to make six picks. Those guys have their spot. We've had a lot bigger issues in the past with guys than this one.

I think this team, both Brooks and Bryson, want to win, they're competitive. The reason there's a little bit of a feud is because they're competitive just like Phil and Tiger, just like Arnie and Jack. Two big boys in the same room. We have a small sandbox to play in when we get to the Ryder Cup, everybody's on the same bus and those guys are both pros and they're both willing to do whatever the captain asks them. I've been very impressed with Brooks, the teams that I've been around him on. They're good teammates. Common goal, we all want to win.

Q. (No microphone.)

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I'm excited to get in the mix. I saw my name pop up a couple times on the leaderboard last week and I've not done a good job of playing around the lead on the Champions Tour. I'll be excited to get in the mix again on Sunday.

Q. What have you learned over the years about Steve as a leader?

DAVIS LOVE III: He's a very quiet leader. We encourage him to let us help him, but he's handling most of it on his own and he's very decisive. He's got two or three things right now that he's going to have to make tough decisions on and he's just very adamant. He asks for our opinions, but you can always tell that he's going to make it. Tiger tells us, "You're the captain, make a decision." Steve's very good at that.

Q. Obviously he's such a likable guy, like you said, but are there times when he has to like really not be sort of Likeable Steve and be like Captain Steve?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, I think Steve and I are both very similar in that we get very emotional, we don't want to be the bad guy, we don't want to hold guys down or tell them what to do, but when it comes time, he's very good at it. He did a great job in '17 of having some team meetings and setting the tone for the week at the Presidents Cup. I've seen that over three years now. He's a great leader and the guys love him. Obviously the guys that have been around him, like me and Jim and Zach, we really respect the way he handles things. He's very quiet about it. He doesn't make it about Steve and Nicki, he makes it about the team. He's a great captain and this is going to be a fun Ryder Cup.

Q. What do you think the emotion for him will be like on the first tee, especially because it's Wisconsin?

DAVIS LOVE III: Yeah, I think, in my time on Tour, this is the captain that has a home game

more than anybody. He's so into bringing golf to his home state, he's done so much for golf up there, it's going to be I think emotional for all of us that finally Stricker's home game is going to start.

Q. Now that Morikawa, DJ, DeChambeau are set, what do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of those five? What will the challenge be?

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, the captain has five guys that are great players but not a whole lot of Ryder Cup experience. I think going down the list, obviously we're going to pick for pairings, but obviously we need to pick some guys that have played before. That veteran leadership is important, or just a couple years of Ryder Cup experience is very valuable. We don't want to have six rookies, so hopefully we can find some guys that have played before somebody steps up this week. Like Tony, that was huge that a guy that was a member of the last team, was a great teammate, played well, so hopefully we can keep Tony in there at 6 and then pick some more guys that have played before.