

## ROUND 1 QUICK QUOTES

June 6, 2025



**THOMAS BJØRN**  
**DARREN CLARKE**

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**MODERATOR:** We'll get started, we're joined by Darren Clarke and Thomas Bjørn, currently leaders in the clubhouse.

You guys went 3-0 together in the '02 Ryder Cup. Is that the vibe that you guys had out there today and picking each other as partners for this event?

**DARREN CLARKE:** Yeah, I think so. I think Thomas and I, we know each other's game so well, and obviously you mentioned Ryder Cup history. You know, certainly for me knowing Thomas' game so well made it so much easier for me to go out there and free it up today. I really enjoy playing with him because I know he's there if I mess up, and likewise I try to be there for him. We have, it's like a "no sorry" policy. We're both trying as hard as we can and we both hit a lot of really good shots today and made the most of our opportunities.

**MODERATOR:** Thomas?

**THOMAS BJØRN:** Yeah, I think that's where we're at. I think we both, you know, when we're on our game, drive the ball pretty well, put it in play. Certainly on this golf course that's a nice thing to do. You've got to take the pressure away.

You can see that even with the guys we played with or guys around the golf course, the pressure comes easy on this golf course. It's a good designed golf course, but you've got to be in play off the tee because those iron shots into the greens, there's a lot of areas where you want to go and a lot of places you don't want to go. It becomes a lot easier if you have two balls on the green. I think that's where our game was at today, we tactically played it well but we also, our games matched a good tactic to shoot a good number.

**MODERATOR:** Do you guys like this format and what's the strategy going in tomorrow knowing that it's going to be a scramble now?

**DARREN CLARKE:** Well, we did OK in the Ryder Cup. Do we like the format? Yeah, of course we do.

Tomorrow we just -- you know, it would be very easy to overthink it. We just want to go out there and hit the ball the same way as we did today and hopefully we give ourselves as many chances as we did today and do the same sort of thing again. With a scramble, if I put it in play, Thomas can be a little bit more aggressive and vice versa. With the quality of the players that are here this week, you can't just -- you can't really throttle back, you've got to really go ahead hard tomorrow, so we shall see.

**Q. Not that you guys let each other (inaudible) but when it was just one of you, was there extra pressure? Did it feel like the 18th hole on Sunday just for that one hole?**

**THOMAS BJØRN:** When you have that shot that's important and your partner's not in the right place, you've got to -- you think about it a little bit differently.

But also on the flip side of it, I think in this format you take on a few more golf shots. You kind of -- it's just a different way of playing golf. Yeah, you are -- there's a little bit more thought to it than when you're on your own because you feel the consequences, you know.

**DARREN CLARKE:** I don't want him staring at me and he don't want me staring at him.

**THOMAS BJØRN:** You feel the consequences in a different way. When you're on your own, there's only one person who feels the consequences of your bad shots. Here it's two of you.

You've just got to -- I think we were tactically very, very sound today and did the right things when we had to. When we had two balls in the fairway or two balls on the green, we could be aggressive and that's why we holed more putts than we probably normally would, and we could take on a little bit more flags.

The couple holes where one of us was not in a great position, yeah, we just took it to the right place like you normally would play the holes, make your par and get on to the next hole. So you're flipping a little bit in your mind I think out there in how aggressive you can be in your mindset. We did it well today, but I think it's a lot easier when you're both playing well as well.

**Q. For either one of you, just what do you think of the design?**

**DARREN CLARKE:** I think the course is great. When we got here, Thomas and I played a practice round on Tuesday and the wind was blowing. We both come off and looked at each other, it's going to be a tough test this week.

I think thankfully we got a little bit of rain and that softened the course up a little bit, which makes it a little bit more gettable. But I think the course, the more you play it, the more you appreciate it.

As Thomas just said, off the tee it's very demanding, you've got to hit the fairways. If you don't, you could end up shooting all sorts of numbers. I think Strick's done really, really well with it and giving a tough test. Thankfully it's not blowing 20 miles an hour, we'd have to have a few extra balls in the bag maybe for that. A really good challenge.

**Q. We asked a couple other guys this, but do you remember the last time you played in a scramble?**

**THOMAS BJØRN:** Every week --

**DARREN CLARKE:** Every weekend round, yeah, yeah. (Laughs.)

**THOMAS BJØRN:** No, can't say that -- that's a different kind of format. It will be interesting to see how your mindset will be. You overthink things sometimes. In the end tomorrow in a scramble you try and put the ball in the fairway and try to put it on the green and give yourself the opportunities.

I think good putters in scrambles might have a little bit of an advantage. You have two putts from the same place so they might have a little bit of an advantage there that they get to see the line.

But tomorrow's another day, we'll take today and move on.

**DARREN CLARKE:** We'll take another 59.

**THOMAS BJØRN:** Fifty-nine would be OK.

**DARREN CLARKE:** We like 59.

**THOMAS BJØRN:** Fifty-nine sounds good.

**Q. Darren, as a team (inaudible) on the regular tour seem to like the Zurich Classic. Can you speak to why these formats, team play is so ingrained in where you --**

**DARREN CLARKE:** I don't think it's Irish necessarily, I think it's more Ryder Cups. The European guys, when we were on European teams for each other, pulling so hard for each other. Not to say Americans don't, but we grew up with a lot of match play and a lot of team things.

As I said, Thomas and I spent enough times in Ryder Cups and around Ryder Cups to understand that whole team ethos thing. And it's very easy to -- much easier to go out there, as Thomas said, if you're both playing nicely. I've got ultimate belief in Thomas and the same with me, so if we do hit a bad shot, so what, we're not trying to do it. I think it's just the European team thing that's in both of us.

**Q. Along those same lines, do you celebrate tonight a good day or do you wait to celebrate a good week?**

**DARREN CLARKE:** Oh, no, this is only this -- we're not that -- well, are we that stupid? No, we're not.

**THOMAS BJØRN:** We used to be.

**DARREN CLARKE:** Yeah, we used to be. Yeah, exactly. No, there's a lot of great players here this week and there's a long way to go just yet, but we're certainly delighted to shoot 59 to start.