

# The Walker Cup

Press Conference

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**Mike McCoy**

**Nick Dunlap**

**Gordon Sargent**



**THE WALKER CUP**  
ST ANDREWS 2023

JONATHAN COE: We're here with the USA team, Captain McCoy, Nick Dunlap, the reigning U.S. Amateur champion, and Gordon Sargent, the No. 1 ranked amateur in the world.

Captain, what has the past week been here overseas with the whole team?

MIKE McCOY: It's been a nice week. It's good to have a team assembled. We didn't pick the final slots until Sunday of the U.S. Amateur, so it's been kind of a whirlwind since then. It's nice we're all together. We've had a good week of practice.

JONATHAN COE: Nick, for you, you're obviously coming off an amazing summer including the U.S. Amateur win at Cherry Hills. How are you going to continue that momentum here at St Andrews?

NICK DUNLAP: Yeah, obviously continuing on what Captain said, it's been a lot the past few days and the last week. It's been cool just to get with the team. I feel like we've grown pretty close to each other the last couple days.

I think everybody is playing pretty well. I think we all have fairly good energy going into this week. Feel like we've got some good game plans, and yeah, ready to go execute.

JONATHAN COE: Gordon, for you, admittedly didn't have a ton of links experience coming into this week, so how have the last few days been for you and how valuable has that experience been?

GORDON SARGENT: Yeah, I don't feel like much of us have had links experience, but just getting over here Saturday morning and just kind of playing, getting adapted to the time zone was kind of huge.

But just figuring out where you're trying to hit it, not necessarily writing down clubs off the tee but more just

yardages you're trying to hit just because the wind is changing. Yeah, just trying to keep the ball in position.

The golf course is pretty generous, gives you a side to miss, and if you can keep it out of the bunkers and kind of go from there, you'll be in a good spot.

JONATHAN COE: Captain, you mentioned earlier that this is going to be the experience of a lifetime. Can you just expand on that?

MIKE McCOY: Well, it's been a two-year process almost, and so that's been part of the real enjoyment has been the two years leading up to this and getting to know the players and their families and their college coaches and watching them play. That's been a lot of the fun.

Of course this week is the -- this is it. We're going to do our best. We've taken it all in, and it's about time to get going.

**Q. We have to ask right away, are you representing Washington or Wisconsin or what are the Ws for on the hats?**

MIKE McCOY: The Walker Cup. (Laughter.)

**Q. The next question is why is one W bigger than the other W?**

GORDON SARGENT: This one fits my head a little better, so I went with this one. He liked that one. As long as they all have a W on them, we'll be good.

**Q. Did you have to have one made?**

GORDON SARGENT: We just had options.

NICK DUNLAP: A couple different styles of hats.

**Q. If we can get past the W questions for a second -- by the way, are you a Cubs fan?**

MIKE McCOY: Cubs?



**Q. Say yes.**

MIKE McCOY: Yes.

**Q. So the "fly the W" seal is the same thing -- anyway, can you just talk about playing the Old Course? Have you done it before? If not, what you found to be -- obviously coming here, Old Tom Morris laid this place out supposedly before God, and it's a course that nowadays a lot of people talk about the fact that it can't hold the length that you guys can put up against it but yet it's got a little quirkiness to it. Can both of you talk about the golf course and what you found interesting about it.**

NICK DUNLAP: Yeah, I think it's pretty cool for all of us, just the history behind it. Like Gordon said, none of us have been over here, much less played the golf course. We've seen it on TV, obviously with Cam winning two years ago now.

Like he said, it's fairly generous off the tee, especially if there's no wind. You just kind of keep it out of the bunkers. You've always kind of got one side to miss, especially with the fescue cut down.

But you never know what the weather is going to propose out here. It could blow 30, it could rain, it could be perfect.

I feel like we've got a pretty good idea of where the wind is going to be. We've gotten to play it in two different winds. Some start lines are different on a couple holes, but yeah, looking forward to it.

GORDON SARGENT: I think it's important to add that you come play links golf and you kind of expect the worst, but the past couple days we've had some nice weather. You don't really have to change much. Like you don't necessarily have to do anything different. Like if you feel comfortable with a chip, you can still chip it. You don't have to putt it.

I feel like we have good game plans, and like Nick said, played it in a couple different winds and all that stuff. Figure out where we're trying to put the ball and just go from there. But not necessarily changing the way we play golf by any means.

**Q. Mike, sorry to belabor the point about the hats, but Tiger Woods has educated us about the W means a win. I take it that's not the case. Are those hats going to be the ones the boys will wear in the match?**

MIKE McCOY: I don't know. I don't think so, but we may very well.

I think they came about, as well, when President Bush, he attends the matches over in the U.S., and so I think the hats started also as kind of a tribute to him as well as the Walker Cup.

**Q. Obviously this week, based on the rankings, you guys are very strong on paper. It would be a walkover. How important is it for you to stop complacency creeping in with your players?**

MIKE McCOY: Yeah, I think we all know that we're expecting a very competitive match. We certainly know they're familiar with the golf course.

I played on a losing team over here, so that's sort of scorched into my mind. We had a good team and got beat pretty handily.

I don't think anybody is taking it for granted. I know these two here are pretty locked in and are expecting -- they know they're going to have to bring their best stuff this week.

I think that's how we feel. We really are prepared for a tough match. I don't think anybody is complacent.

These guys are all competitors, and I think they're ready to go.

**Q. To the two players, a lot of golfers come to St Andrews and the Old Course, and they don't like it straight away. It takes a little bit of time to get used to it. What's your thoughts straight away on the Old Course?**

GORDON SARGENT: I think we all enjoyed it the first time we played it. Definitely different than what we're used to. Some may not like it because it's terrible weather, 20 degrees, blowing 40, but we got a nice pleasant day.

I think we all enjoyed it. Definitely different than what we're used to, but I think we all enjoy kind of variety. In the States you can kind of get some courses that you kind of get tired of.

But we've all had a good time. Played a few good courses the past weekend, too. I don't think there's anyone on our team that dislikes it.

Obviously going into the weekend, we're just viewing it as the course we're playing, and whether you like it or not, you're playing it. All just kind of having a positive mindset is big.

NICK DUNLAP: Yeah, I think it's really cool for me, just now being over here, just the energy the town brings towards this place. It's really cool for me to see.

Yeah, like Gordon said, it's a little bit different. We're kind of used to seeing trees and green grass and fairways.

But yeah, it's been really important for me to get my start lines. You're kind of aiming over gorse bushes, and I think that's something we've focused on the last couple days, and you just kind of dial that in and know where the wind is going to be, know where the miss is, and go from there.

**Q. Is there anything really surprising to you coming over? I know both of you have never been on this side of the pond before. Whether it's food or whether it's the courses or whether it's the playing conditions, is there something that's surprised you about being over here?**

GORDON SARGENT: Why we're tired at 2:00 p.m., yet at 9:30 it's hard to fall asleep.

I don't know. Probably a little surprised that the weather has been this good. Everyone tells us how bad the weather is, and obviously you prepare for the worst, but fortunate to have some good weather.

I think nothing necessarily surprising. That's why we came over here early, to get adjusted to the time zone, and then just playing as much -- putting in the prep work we need to put in so that we're ready.

NICK DUNLAP: Yeah, I think the weather is perfect. It's been better than 100 degrees and humidity back home.

But no, I haven't noticed much besides I can't sleep. Sleeping for four hours and you're up for two hours and sleep for another couple hours. I think we're all kind of getting adjusted to it and we're kind of getting in a little groove and a little routine, and yeah, ready to go.

**Q. Mike, it's pretty cool that on both sides, you've got unquestionably the two best amateurs in the world right now and for the past year or so, if not longer. Potential for them to maybe pair together? Secondly, what impresses you most now that you've been around them up close and personal for a few days?**

MIKE McCOY: Always a chance we could pair them. They've played a foursomes session this week.

I think what impresses me is just their professionalism, their approach to the game, their -- I don't think there's any question these two guys could go play on the Tour

tomorrow and be competitive right now. They're really seasoned. They're mature.

I've been very impressed really with the whole team's approach. They're a lot of fun in the team room, but when they're out on the golf course, they're seasoned veterans.

**Q. For both Nick and Gordon, can you describe how your relationship and friendship has kind of evolved since you were junior players in Birmingham to the week before U.S. Amateur having that time together at Castle Pines and then this week?**

GORDON SARGENT: I think it's a lot nicer being on the same team right now. But no, we both grew up in Birmingham, played a lot of junior golf together.

Then kind of went our separate ways for a little while, but yeah, probably the past two years kind of know each other pretty well. Had a good time at Castle Pines, played a lot of golf together, and yeah, had a great week at the U.S. Am. Fun time, and kind of felt like whoever won our match was really going to -- was probably the favourite to win the whole thing.

Yeah, it didn't go the way I wanted to, but after I felt like Nick was the best player there, and I think everybody knew it, too, and he went in there and took care of business.

Our relationship is pretty strong. We've played a lot of golf the last year, like I said. Lucky to be teammates this week.

NICK DUNLAP: Yeah, I appreciate that. No, I feel the same way. It's nice to be on the same side as him for once.

I feel like we kind of grew up being compared to each other a little bit, being from the same hometown and going to two SEC schools that are a little bit different. But it's been really nice to get to know him more than just the player that he is. Obviously hell of a player. His accolades stand for itself.

But like I said, it's been really fun getting to know him, getting to know his game a little bit better, and hopefully down the road maybe get paired together, and look forward to playing some more golf with him.

**Q. What was you guys' first impressions of each other when you were -- I guess it was probably eight, nine years old, something like that?**

GORDON SARGENT: I know we played SGGT together, and it was probably like, I just wanted to beat him. I'm sure like Future Masters --

NICK DUNLAP: High school golf.

GORDON SARGENT: I was just trying to beat him.

NICK DUNLAP: I always felt like I hit a long 25 yards by me now. But yeah, we've played a lot of golf together.

**Q. You've both achieved a lot already in your careers. Can you talk about what it would mean to you to win the Walker Cup this weekend?**

NICK DUNLAP: Yeah. For me at least, I've told a couple people this. I have a ball - I'm not sure exactly how I got it - from the very first Walker Cup here. It's sat on my nightstand ever since it was announced it was going to be played here.

For me, representing my country means a great deal. It's something that I haven't really gotten to do. You're playing for more than yourself. You're playing for your teammates, your captain, your coaches, your people at home, your family. It's going to feel a little bit different teeing it up Saturday morning in a good way, and whenever that flag gets raised, it's going to be a lot of fun.

GORDON SARGENT: Obviously feel similar to what Nick said. Just when you talk to people about the Walker Cup, it kind of hasn't -- it's starting to sink in a lot. Just thinking about that first tee, how cool it is and all that stuff.

But then also hearing like kind of it's cool to be on a Walker Cup, but to be on a winning Walker Cup team means the world.

Yeah, kind of everybody is putting in the proper prep work and everyone knows what it means to be a Walker Cup team, but our job is not finished.

Yeah, I think it would be a pretty special Sunday evening to be lifting the trophy.

**Q. Mike, can I take you back to Lytham in 2015. How much did that hurt at the time, and what did you learn from that week that you feel you can pass on to your players this week?**

MIKE McCOY: Well, it hurt a lot. We put a lot of effort into making the team, and for me, I was close to making some previous teams. We had a good team.

I think what I learned was really our preparation over there, the weather was -- the wind was blowing one particular direction, and the day of the match it was blowing twice as hard the other direction. We just found ourselves in

bunkers that we didn't even know were there. It was a mess right from the beginning.

Our pairings were screwed up, and it was really just -- I was pleased we had some different winds this week so the guys got a chance to see the golf course from a couple different directions.

**Q. Seems as though the weather is going to be pretty decent here for the weekend. Does that please you rather than probably normal Scottish weather?**

MIKE McCOY: Yeah, it certainly does. I think everybody is going to enjoy that a little more.

I mean, it is links golf, so I kind of like playing with a little wind myself, so I hope there's a little wind out there.

But I think it's certainly, for everybody involved, the fans and the players, I think a little sunnier day would be pretty nice.

**Q. On the format, how comfortable are you guys with foursomes, and knowing that you've kind of known you were going to be on this team, have you guys played any foursomes off this week? It's pretty much the format over here all the time.**

NICK DUNLAP: Yeah, knowing that it's just foursomes and singles, we had a practice session back in December, played a lot of foursomes there with a bunch of different guys, and I feel like it's big to figure out -- you can play with one guy and you feel like you like him, but then to play with a bunch of different guys, you really figure out what stands out to you.

Yeah, I played a pretty good amount of foursomes just kind of preparing for this week. Played the past two days foursomes, as well.

It's definitely a different mindset, but also I feel like we have pretty close-knit team and we know each other well. I'd be comfortable saying we could go out with anyone on the team and play foursomes and be where we want to be. That's definitely something we've emphasized is focusing on foursomes and kind of just going from there.

GORDON SARGENT: Yeah, exact same thing. We have 10 guys in this team. Everybody is pretty close to each other. We were before this week playing college golf against each other and then obviously with Stu, but we see him around all summer. Especially these last couple days, I think everybody is okay with playing with anybody.

Everybody's game, like I said, looks really, really good, and

 . . . when all is said, we're done.®

yeah, ready to get started.

**Q. Nick, you talked about a ball that you have from the Walker Cup; what year was that?**

NICK DUNLAP: It was the very first one. It's like -- it's a weird-looking ball I must say.

**Q. You have no idea where you got it?**

NICK DUNLAP: One of my buddies gave it to me in Huntsville.

**Q. How long ago?**

NICK DUNLAP: About a year and a half ago. It's been on my nightstand ever since.

**Q. This golf course you can play so many different ways. There's drivable par-4s out here if you want to, you can lay back, do different things. What's your thought or mentality on some of these holes? Would you rather lay back? Would you like to go for them? What are you thinking since you've been out there a couple days?**

NICK DUNLAP: For one, it depends on the wind. I think there's some drivable holes early if the wind is at a certain direction, and then obviously vice versa coming in.

But also you're playing with a partner, as well, and you don't really want to put your partner in the lip of a bunker.

For me anyway, I want whoever I'm playing with to be comfortable hitting that certain shot. If you're in the fairway, if I'm able to hit the second shot further than about six yards, we'll figure it out from there. But no, I think if the wind doesn't blow there's a lot of birdies out there, and then obviously if it decides to blow 30, it's going to be fairly difficult.

GORDON SARGENT: Kind of similar to what he said. It's kind of definitely depending on the format a little bit. It's pretty much player preference. Each hole seems to give you a side to miss it on, so if you want to hit driver, you have targets to hit it at.

But yeah, it's whatever you're comfortable with just because there's so many different ways to play the golf course. If you can avoid the bunkers, whether that's hitting a 4-iron off the tee or a driver, you're probably going to have a birdie look.

I feel like we've hit a lot of drivers in prep, especially on the holes that the wind kind of suits your eye. Like he said, if

you can tell me what the wind was, I might tell you my game plan.

I think we're prepared for everything just because we've seen a couple different winds.

**Q. What courses have you played over here besides the Old Course?**

GORDON SARGENT: We played Dumbarnie on Sunday and Kingsbarns on Saturday.

**Q. In '15 even before the matches started Bryson was hurt. There was that whole drama going on inside the team room about that. Eventually he came back but at that point it was a little bit too late. It doesn't sound like you're going to have the same kind of drama before the matches start. That's obviously a positive for you.**

MIKE McCOY: Yeah, that is a positive. Everybody is pretty healthy. Nobody is -- we've got the physio people in there. Everybody is stretching out. One guy had an ingrown toenail earlier in the week, and they took care of that. That was about the biggest problem we've dealt with.

**Q. Not throwing anybody under the bus, but who had the ingrown toenail?**

MIKE McCOY: I think it was Nick, Nick Gabrelcik.

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