



# GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER

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Dear Subscriber:

FIVE HOURS AND 28 MINUTES INTO the final day's play of the 44<sup>th</sup> Ryder Cup Matches, the European Team gained the half point needed to win. While the European side had assured a tie having already reached 14 points of the available 28, a tie would have left the cup in American hands—because the U.S. won in 2021.

The Europeans needed an additional half point for an outright win. That half point was secured on the 16<sup>th</sup> green when Tommy Fleetwood went dormie two over Rickie Fowler, which guaranteed at least a tie in that match and, therefore, half a point. Mr. Fleetwood then won the following hole and the match 3 & 1 over Rickie Fowler adding a full point.

Subsequently, Jordan Spieth and Shane Lowry tied, and Robert MacIntyre won his match 2 & 1 over Wyndham Clark adding a full point for the Europeans. The final score was 16½ to 11½.

THE RYDER CUP MATCHES nearly disappeared in the 1970s due to the indifference generated by repeated American victories. What changed that, and what ultimately ensured the matches' current prosperity is the subject of what follows.

At the suggestion of Jack Nicklaus, followed by a series of confirming events, it was decided that the Great Britain and Irish team should be expanded to include players from

continental Europe. In 1979, at the Greenbrier Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, the Ryder Cup Matches were first played under this format.

No one was surprised that The Greenbrier was the perfect host. Still under the erudite ownership and management of the CSX Railroad, the hotel hired Mr. Nicklaus to redesign one of its three golf courses - the Greenbrier Course - specifically for the Ryder Cup. With assurance, propriety and the calm aplomb for which the hotel was famous, the world's greatest players were welcomed in September. ABC's Jim McKay was there for the broadcast, but there were fewer than 5,000 spectators because the event was not widely known. Tony Jacklin and Seve Ballesteros played; Mr. Nicklaus, 39, for the first time failed to qualify; and Tom Watson excused himself for the impending birth of his first child.

Billy Casper and John Jacobs captained. It was all very civilized but did not make much of a difference in the result of the 1979 matches. The U.S. won 17 to 11.

What did make a difference was a breakfast two years later.

By 1977, American golf had produced a succession of globally-dominant players that included Sam Snead, Ben Hogan, Arnold Palmer, and Jack Nicklaus. Poised to walk onto that same stage was a covey of American players that would cut

an even wider swath. These included Tom Watson, Lanny Wadkins, Ben Crenshaw, and Tom Kite.



MARCO SIMONE  
ROME, ITALY

	EUROPE		U.S.A.	
	Holes Won	Points Won	Holes Won	Points Won
Friday				
Foursomes	22	4	10	0
Four-Ball	21	2½	16	1½
Saturday				
Foursomes	26	3	17	1
Four-Ball	13	1	17	3
Sunday				
Singles	58	6	54	6
TOTALS	140	16½	114	11½

Mr. Watson began 1977 by winning both the Bing Crosby National Pro-Am and the Andy Williams San Diego Open. In April at Augusta, he defeated Mr. Nicklaus by two strokes to win his first Masters. Three months later at the Open Championship played at Turnberry, they went head-to-head again. Mr. Watson overcame Mr. Nicklaus's three-stroke lead with just six holes remaining - a 60-foot putt at the 15<sup>th</sup>; birdie at the 17<sup>th</sup> to take the lead; and a 2-foot putt at the last to win.

Elsewhere, Mr. Crenshaw won the Colonial; Mr. Nicklaus his own Memorial; Al Geiberger shot 59; Hubert Green won the U.S. Open; Lee Trevino the Canadian Open; Mr. Wadkins the P.G.A. Championship and the World Series of Golf; and the United States won the Ryder Cup beating Great Britain and Ireland 12½ to 7½. Only 20 points were available prior to the changes made in 1979.

The 1977 Ryder Cup Matches were played in September at Royal Lytham & St. Annes. The competition had been founded 50 years before. Of the 22 times it had been played (in its alternating year format), the U.S. won 19; G.B.&I. twice; and there was one tie in 1969 the famous Nicklaus-Jacklin concession at the last hole. Overall, American teams had amassed 271½ points compared to 152½ by G.B.&I.

In 1977, three important developments took place that began the transformation of the Ryder Cup to the more competitive status we have today:

1.) Nick Faldo made his Ryder Cup debut at age 20 years 1 month 28 days. He was the youngest player, until Sergio Garcia (in 1999), ever to compete in the Ryder Cup.

Mr. Faldo began what would become the greatest lifetime performance in the history of this competition. Appearing on 11 teams between 1977 and 1997, the most of any player, Mr. Faldo would ultimately win the most matches [23] and the most points [25]; play the most holes [766] and the most matches [46]. [NOTE: At Royal Lytham in 1977, not only was he the youngest to ever compete in the Ryder Cup but also went 3-0-0, and in the singles defeated Mr. Watson, who was the reigning Masters and Open champion!

2.) At the last minute, Tony Jacklin was left out of the final day singles matches after a disagreement with his captain, Brian Huggett. Mr. Jacklin was understandably upset and the political decision seemed blind to the fact that Royal Lytham & St. Annes was where Mr. Jacklin had won the Open in 1969 - the first British subject to do so in 18 years.

3.) Most critically for the Ryder Cup, Mr. Nicklaus floated the idea of expanding the Great Britain & Ireland team to include European players.

"I sat down one night with Lord John Derby, the head of the P.G.A. of Great Britain," Mr. Nicklaus recalled for THE BOSTON GLOBE sometime later. "I said 'John, you know that for everyone on the American Team it's a great honor to make the team and it's a great honor to play in these matches. But frankly, when the matches start, there isn't much competition. We win every year. And I don't think that's right.'

"I said, 'You've got a European Tour that really you're part of, and I think if you included the European players and made it Europe versus the United States, I think you'd have some really great matches that would really add to the Ryder Cup.'

"So John agreed with me and he said he'd take care of it from his end, which he did. I suppose the most difficult aspect was getting the British P.G.A. to include Europe. So he got it through and then the Americans went along with it."

The point of including the Europeans and the immediate result of it was that Severiano Ballesteros could now be included in the Ryder Cup. The previous year, at age 19, Mr. Ballesteros finished second in the Open. Between 1979 and 1988, he would win three Open Championships and two Masters. Ultimately, he would win 50 times on the European Tour.

In addition to a larger pool of talent from which to select players, the decision to include Europe also resulted in a larger audience - a larger television audience.

While the regulations were now altered to allow for the possibility of a more compelling competition, it ultimately took three more Ryder Cup matches and a sea change of attitude on the part of the British tour to produce the competitive equity the Ryder Cup enjoys today.

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The 1979 Ryder Cup at The Greenbrier was the first to include players from Great Britain, Ireland and Europe. The final score indicated that Lord Derby and Mr. Nicklaus's decision to include Europeans had no effect

SOURCES INCLUDE:

*Us Against Them - An Oral History of the Ryder Cup*  
by Robin McMillan, 2004, Harper Collins

*The Ryder Cup - Golf's Greatest Event*  
by Bob Bubka and Tom Clavin, 1999, Crown

*20<sup>th</sup> Century Golf Chronicle*  
various contributors, 1993, Publications International

whatsoever. The U.S. won 17 to 11. Larry Nelson won all five of his matches including four against Mr. Ballesteros. Various accounts describe a general lack of spirit amongst the European team, bad behavior on the part of Ken Brown and Mark James, and an inability of their captain to alter any of this.

Walton Heath - sometimes referred to as the Walton Health Club by Fox Sports - in Surrey was the venue for the next Ryder Cup. By all accounts, the Europeans still did not have their efforts organized or energized and the American team was arguably the best of all time. Dave Marr captained, and the players were Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, Larry Nelson, Tom Watson, Tom Kite, Raymond Floyd, Hale Irwin, Johnny Miller, Ben Crenshaw, Bruce Lietzke, Jerry Pate and Bill Rogers. Between them, these 12 Americans had won 36 major championships.

On the European side, there were two important acrimonious developments:

1) Mr. Jacklin, who had won the most Ryder Cup points up to that time, failed to qualify for the team and was not selected as a captain's pick; and

2) Mr. Ballesteros, who had won the 1979 Open Championship and the 1980 Masters, was disqualified from joining the team because he had not played in enough European tour events. Incensed by the fact that he was not permitted to accept appearance money in Europe, the Spaniard had spent most of his summer playing in P.G.A. Tour events in America.

The captain's picks for the European team were Peter Oosterhuis, who had not been to Europe that year, and Mark James, who had behaved dreadfully at The Greenbrier in the 1979 matches. "Seve was arguably the best player in the world," Mr. Jacklin recalls, "and they banned him. And I thought, 'We don't deserve to win!' Then they invited me to go as an official in 1981, and I told them to stick it in their ear."

The revengeful irony of omitting Mr. Ballesteros and Mr. Jacklin from the 1981 team would not be evident for another four years. The bad feeling produced by their exclusion was *the* pivotal element that led to the health of the Ryder Cup as we know it today.

At Walton Heath, the American victory was 18½ to 9½. Four years and two matches after the inclusion of Europeans, the result was still terribly lopsided.

### The Breakfast

Astonishingly, during the summer of 1982, Mr. Jacklin was approached about captaining the 1983 European team. He was stunned to have been asked after the treat-

ment he had received in 1977 and 1981. However, with the provision that he had *carte blanche* to try to put it right, he agreed.

As the European player with the strongest record and greatest respect, and having also been treated badly in 1981, Mr. Jacklin was arguably the only man with a chance of convincing Mr. Ballesteros to rejoin the European Ryder Cup effort. At the end of a two-hour breakfast with the 25-year-old Spaniard, Mr. Jacklin put it simply. "Seve, I'd said I'd do it, but I can't do it justice if you don't come on board. But if you come and it turns out the way I believe it can, you'll be embraced by the British public like a hometown boy." Mr. Ballesteros agreed within a week.

On the team-building spirit side, Mr. Jacklin insisted on and received complete support for his team's respectful treatment. From the *Concorde* to cashmere, to their own caddies, to first-class accommodations, the European team arrived for the 1983 Ryder Cup in West Palm Beach on an equal material footing as the Yanks. The result at P.G.A. National in 1983 starkly contrasted the 1981 result at Walton Heath. On Friday, the Europeans struggled to a 4½ to 3½ lead. At the end of Saturday, the two teams were tied at 8 points apiece prompting Mr. Nicklaus, the U.S. captain, to tell his team that evening, "I do not want to be remembered as the first captain of an American team to lose on American soil."

Sunday's singles went back and forth and ultimately came down to the match between Mr. Wadkins and José María Cañizares. Leaving the 18<sup>th</sup> tee, Mr. Cañizares was 1 up. If he could tie the hole, he would win his match and the Europeans would win the Cup. However, Mr. Wadkins played a brilliant, 60-yard approach into the wind that finished a foot from the hole for birdie. Mr. Cañizares parred, their match was halved, and the American team won 14½ to 13½. Mr. Nicklaus was so relieved that he knelt in the fairway and kissed the divot hole left by Mr. Wadkins' approach shot.

While disappointed, the Europeans were heartened by how close they had come. A European team spirit had been kindled that outshines its American counterpart to this day. The Tony Jacklin Ryder Cup era was underway. "We will not be the favorites when we go to the Belfry in two years," Mr. Nicklaus commented. "This score was no fluke."

Despite the European team's newly found celebrity status and popularity, their luggage was lost on their return trip home from Florida.

In 1985, at the Belfry in Sutton Coldfield, the tide finally turned for the Europeans. Lee Trevino captained

the American side and Mr. Jacklin returned as captain for the Europeans. The Americans ended the first day with a 1 point lead, but the Europeans roared back to a 9-7 lead at the end of Saturday. Sunday was the first time in nearly 60 years that the Americans were beaten soundly (7½ to 4½) in the final day singles matches. The final score of 16½ to 11½ was the first European victory in 28 years. The Europeans were ecstatic.

Hosting the 1987 matches at Muirfield Village in Ohio had to be a thrill for Mr. Nicklaus, who served again as captain, but it was disappointment that he remembers most. "Captaining a U.S. team to its first loss at home at Muirfield Village in 1987 has to be my Ryder Cup low. Looking back, though, I'm glad I was in that position, because I wouldn't have wanted anyone else to go through all the criticism and anger and second guessing that came after that match."

The emergence of Mr. Jacklin's leadership combined with the rise of a strong, youthful European team, and the passing heydays of Messrs. Palmer, Nicklaus, Trevino, Irwin, and Miller would allow only two Ryder Cup victories for the Americans between 1985 and 1997. Messrs. Faldo, Ballesteros, Langer, Olazábal, Torrance, and Woosnam came together repeatedly for their team.

The now competitive health of the Ryder Cup attracts its audience and provides financial success. Without Mr. Nicklaus's suggestion to Lord Derby in 1977 the Ryder Cup might have faded into obscurity.

"When I am asked what my favorite Ryder cup moment is," said Mr. Nicklaus, "it's funny but I don't think of something that happened on the course. Making it more inclusive is my best Ryder Cup memory."



For C.E.P.:

*"... his initial taciturnity was something he wore like a professional suit, reluctantly, in a world which he frequently found unsympathetic to his affectionate character ..."*

John Le Carré  
SMILEY'S PEOPLE

Of the eight matches played Friday at Muirfield Village, the Europeans won six. While the Americans took 4½ points on Saturday, Sunday began with the Europeans ahead 10½ to 5½. The lead was a bridge too far and the Europeans won 15-13.

"It was *the* sweetest moment of all," Mr. Jacklin said referring to the first European victory on American soil. "While I understood what Jack [Nicklaus] was going through, the painful experience, I can't think of anyone else who has shoulders broad enough to bear the burden. He's such a strong man, mentally as well as physically, that if someone had to cope with such a loss, it's best it's him, that he takes it for America, because he will always come back, he is such a proud man and fierce competitor."

Having won two Ryder Cups consecutively and the second away, the Europeans had turned the tide. No longer were the matches considered an American arena.

The Jacklin Ryder Cup era was not an aberration: Tony Jacklin is still the most winning captain in Ryder Cup history, and his legacy was forged in 1977 [when he was not played in the singles], in 1981 [when he was not a captain's choice], 1983 [as captain, 1 point loss], 1985 [as captain, win], 1987 [as captain, first win on American soil]; 1989 [as captain, tie retains the cup]. To this day he remains the most cohesive force binding the European team effort.

At Medinah in 2012, the Europeans played for Seve Ballesteros, who died in May 2011 from brain cancer. It was the memory of his fiery competitiveness that unambiguously drove the European players and their captain. None of that would have happened if it had not been for Tony Jacklin, C.B.E., the most successful British player of his generation and the most successful European Ryder Cup captain ever.

Yours vry truly,

Gary A. Galyean  
Editor & Publisher

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