

Well it was a fantastic few days at Celtic Manor for the practice days of the Ryder Cup.

This was my first Ryder Cup behind the ropes and it was certainly a great experience to see the magnitude of the event at first hand, and get a sense of what the players go through in, what must be the biggest golf event of all.

As a putting coach to Ross Fisher and Edoardo Molinari it was pretty difficult to be able to do any constructive work on the practice putting green due to the time demands of the players this week. So it was just a case of being there as a support mechanism and walking the course with the players making sure they were happy with their preparation.

Both players have pretty hard on their putting thus year so it was just a case of trusting in the work they had done

On the Tuesday I walked the first nine holes with Ross who was paired with Ian Poulter against Luke Donald and Padraig Harrington. I then followed Edoardo on the back nine, who was playing with his brother Francesco against Rory McIlroy and Graeme McDowell.

One thing that was apparent from the start of the week is that the Europeans have a great team spirit, as the banter between all the players was great all three practice days. Two keys people contributing to that were Ian Poulter and Graeme McDowell who you can sense are very passionate about the event.

On the Wednesday the player's played 10 holes due to the inclement weather, so I split my time five holes each with Ross and Edoardo. Ross played with Lee Westwood against Peter Hanson and Padraig Harrington, while Edoardo played with Francesco against Ian Poulter and Miguel Angel Jimenez.

On Thurs the weather was a lot better and you could sense the atmosphere building amongst the players. On the Thurs the team played 8 holes. I walked these with Ross, as Edoardo seemed very happy with his preparation. Ross was paired with Ian Poulter against Graeme McDowell and Padraig Harrington.

Poulter and McDowell were like kids in a sweet shop, but their excitable and infectious personalities got the crowd involved and also the other players. The banter was fierce and the golf, even though only a practice round, was very competitive and of a high quality. Ross played great as did the other guys, which is always nice, giving them that ready to play feeling for the opening matches.

A couple of things stood out during the week, firstly how much the player's have to cope with off the course at a Ryder Cup, and therefore how difficult it could be to prepare. Secondly how bad the US team dresses! While finally, after not having seen

much of him up close, how impressive Rory McIlroy is as a golfer. Luckily he was on our side!

Upon reflection both Ross and Edoardo has good Ryder Cups. Ross in particular putted fantastically well over the first 2 days and was the stronger partner in his pairing with Padraig Harrington.

One of the things Ross has worked on this year is his tempo. When he gets too slow going back the club gets a shut and he struggles with his pace (see the first SAM analysis). When his tempo is better (due to brisker backswing) his rotation is better (club doesn't get as shut at the top of the backswing) which produces less face change at impact. His pace is also better as he doesn't have to hit at the ball as much. (see the training SAM data for the improved stroke). It was good to see him putt well at what for him was the biggest event of the year and a lifelong goal to make the team.