

# RBC Heritage

Wednesday, April 13, 2016

## Davis Love III

### Press Conference



JULIUS MASON: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, very pleased to welcome the birthday boy and five time RBC Heritage champion, Davis Love III, who is playing for the 28th time here, last time in won in 2003. Talk about returning to Harbour Town.

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, always excited to be back. I hated to miss last year. I wish you were saying it was my 30th time in a row. But I missed a few, unfortunately. But this is obviously one of my favorite weeks on Tour. I'm excited to be back. Obviously with the new changes to the golf course and the excitement over the sponsor, the great field, it's just an exciting week. Glad to be back and looking forward to another RBC Heritage.

JULIUS MASON: Not a bad Masters for you. And some of the other 50 and older. Talk about your making the cut at the Masters. Do you know how many holes in one you had in your career?

DAVIS LOVE III: No, I was just sitting with Paul Casey and Kevin Na and couldn't believe that I couldn't come up with a number. I'm not going to make it up, but I was guessing eight.

JULIUS MASON: That's an aggressive guess, but that's good. (Laughter.) Six.

DAVIS LOVE III: Six on Tour, and I was correct, I made one in a charity Pro Am and I made one last year on the Champions Tour in a Pro Am. So I made eight. Six on Tour and two others.

JULIUS MASON: We'll talk to the PGA Tour's John Bush about officialdom's with that particular count.

DAVIS LOVE III: Official six. But it was interesting that in some sort of competition I made all my hole in ones, not out playing for fun or practicing and just hitting extra shots. Paul Casey said he made a hole-in-one on No. 12 on Tuesday, with Ian Poulter last week. I said I'll take a hole-in-one on that on any day. Exciting way to finish my Masters. Obviously one of the biggest roars I've ever heard. A neat way to finish.

I was hoping with my daughter and granddaughter caddying for me on the Par-3 that I was going to make a hole-in-one, win some crystal and have a moment with them. I waited it all the way to Sunday to get my

Augusta crystal, but at least it.

**Q. You said you've gone through the list, any names that stand out to you right now? I know it's terribly early.**

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, it's early. We've been joking that Jordan had enough points last year, and probably did, was playing the majors. Obviously he continues to finish high in the points every week. And keeps piling them up, getting an insurmountable lead, I guess. Just impressed with his continued good play.

And I just had a bunch of our guys play well and made points. We had a bunch of guys in it until kind of the end on Sunday. Dustin keeps making points, Branden keeps making points. It's just impressive how the group, from one to 20, really, they all keep playing well. I think Daniel Berger was the only one that really made a big jump last week. We had a lot of guys make a lot of points to keep their positions, which is always good.

**Q. Do you have events to get guys together or will you do more one-on-one, or team things?**

DAVIS LOVE III: We're probably going to have some more dinners. Obviously we went down 40 guys on a points list for the first one, kind of early in the year. We obviously left some guys out that could be considered for the team. Obviously like Justin Thomas was just out of the points list. But we had to cut it off somewhere.

Now like we did with the caddie dinner, we'll probably start inviting guys that we think we need to bring into the fold a little bit. Jim Furyk was talking about Charlotte or PLAYERS we could have one.

I talked to Jordan yesterday really more about practice rounds. Now it's going to start warming up in Minnesota, when can we get there and make sure that everybody gets what they need to get done, done, really before the Olympics, before the playoffs, certainly. We want to get everybody that wants to go, Tom Lehman, and Jim Furyk, Steve Stricker, and I have all said we would just travel with them or meet them there and make sure they got a good practice round in.

We're going to start with Jordan on the schedule and then we could probably go ahead and take Dustin, too. Start working our way down the list as we get closer.

Obviously a couple more majors would solidify. Those guys at the top, I remember Dave Stockton sending me to play practice rounds in Kiawah just in case. We want to make sure everyone we think is going to play a chance to go up there and play a practice round.

**Q. One thing if you look at the list right now, if it were tomorrow, the Europeans would have five rookies, and you would have none. One of the things I think McGinley did well last year, last time was play his rookies together going in. Will you look at some rookies to add more into your schedule, or are you looking to play some of the guys you already know are going to qualify as you move into it together?**

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, you know, it is April. So I'm not really hung up on the points list. Like I said, we'll start with Jordan and working our way down. But there are a lot of points to be made, a lot of golf to be played. Plus we have four picks. That's why I'm saying we might take some guys to play practice rounds thinking that we want to include them in the team and if they make the team or if they are in the mix for a captain's pick they're already prepared.

But, yeah, we're not going to go in there -- I would doubt we go in there with the top eight in points all being rookies. That's why you have four picks, pick some youth or pick some partners. Our rookies have played well in the past, as well. We picked Rickie Fowler in 2010, he played great. I'm not opposed to picking a rookie especially if he's a good match for one of the veterans.

**Q. I would imagine you haven't had any trouble this year getting practice rounds for players. Do you have them coming up to you asking you for practice rounds or are you the one saying come on, let's play?**

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I kind of blew off Justin Thomas yesterday because I was too tired after playing a long Pro Am on Monday. Yeah, they want to play. Justin wants to play, one, because we're friends, and two, because he wants to learn about this golf course and he wants to find out what the Alabama team is going to do this week on Sea Island.

I'm playing with a lot of them in the tournaments, which has been really nice. I got Kuch and Dufner this week, and got to play with Strick, and I played a lot with a lot of our guys so far this season. So that helps. Obviously the pairings as we get closer, maybe we can pair some guys together that we want to see play together in the Ryder Cup. But I'm not having trouble getting games, that's for sure.

**Q. How do you feel after yesterday's**

**announcements that Stricker is going to be the Presidents Cup captain, sort of the routine has been Ryder Cup and then Presidents Cup. In your mind, would this preclude him from ever possibly being a Ryder Cup captain in the future?**

DAVIS LOVE III: I think what we went through with the task force and the committee, we're going to look at the most qualified guy, no matter what. I think when you've seen the last two Ryder Cups are Watson and me, it's a blank sheet of paper. We're going to pick whoever we think is best for the job, whether they've done it before or what their record is. If they're a leader, which is why Steve is Presidents Cup captain. The guys really respect him. He's a leader. He's a father figure and quite a steadying influence to a lot of the young guys, helped a lot of the younger players in their career. And even got Jimmy Johnson caddying for Justin Thomas, he's sharing his caddy.

He's just always been a great guy on Tour. I think it's a great role for him, especially after Jay had him as assistant captain. They'll see him a lot this year at the Ryder Cup. It's a great fit. And down the road if he's the right guy, he's going to be the right guy. I don't think whether he's been Presidents Cup captain or not makes a difference.

**Q. Is there anything you took or anything that you learned out of your last captaincy in the last day, you had the lead and they came back? Did you make a mental note of, oh, yeah, next time this is what we are going to do different?**

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, the assistant captains and I have talked a lot about the order of play, what we say to them on Saturday night. I think we can do a better job of having the speech when you're seven points down at halftime or tied or seven points behind. I think a really good coach knows what he's going to say no matter what the situation is.

I don't think we really -- we were really cocky going in, but we weren't thinking we'd have a four-point lead on Saturday night. We'll be a little bit more prepared what to say and we'll know our players maybe a little bit better this time, to know if they get off to a rough start on Sunday morning or a hot start, what do we say to them, how do we handle them. Who is going to talk to who. That's what Paul did really well in 2008, he knew his guys really well, and he had Raymond Floyd that was going to go talk to these guys if there was a problem, and not Paul. And I think we're going to have a little bit more experienced assistant captains in our group this time. Whoever they are, we'll send Tom Lehman to talk to one group and I'll talk to another group of players, and we'll know what to say if things start to go good or bad, one or the other, they guys are going to be excited or nervous, we need to know what

to say to them when momentum shifts one way or another.

**Q. Sort of in the same vein, but since two-thirds of the points in this events are from the two-man matches, is there anything different about that approach, maybe having these guys play practice rounds together? Maybe know some of your pairings a few months out? How do you address that point?**

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, I'd like to do exactly what we did at Medina, tell them early who they were going to play with and how many matches they're going to play, and then go win a whole bunch of matches. We don't know it's not always going to work out perfectly like that.

I think we have a system where we know what guys want. They want to be prepared. They want to be ready when they get there. They don't want any surprises. That's one thing that Jack Nicklaus talked about was making sure we were prepared and confident when we got there and that we felt like we were ready when we showed up there on Monday. We'll be prepared for that. Our guys will know what they're doing.

We know better now going through this process the last three Ryder Cups really have been kind of a little bit on the inside. And I think we know what the players want, especially when they're going to go through the Olympics and the majors and the playoffs. They're going to be worn out. We don't need to throw anything at them. They need to just show up and you two guys are playing together, and maybe this guy. Not a whole bunch of wild cards thrown at them on Tuesday or Wednesday.

**Q. Just curious, you talked about going to Augusta. Have you surprised yourself this year that you've played so steadily or are you frustrated you haven't played better?**

DAVIS LOVE III: I'm surprised that I've finished 60th to 45th every week, because I'm hitting it really well. I'm not playing that well. The difference between hitting the ball and scoring, I'm not really scoring. So I'm a little disappointed where I've been. I had a lot of great holes at the Masters. I made a hole-in-one at 16, but I sure hope they don't show my first three shots there on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, because they were all the same club and they were all wide right.

I'm just not consistent. I think Jordan said it best, I'm not quite as mentally disciplined as I should be over every shot. I can get better at that.

But I'm hitting the ball really well. Jack Lumpkin and I went to work back before Bay Hill, to get ready for the

Masters and I hit a lot of good shots at the Masters. I was prepared to play, I think mentally 12 got me and I had a couple of bad streaks where I made three or four bogeys in a row, which is not hard to do there. A little disappointed in my finish there. I kind of felt like I really had a chance to finish high, and at least get back in it for next year and didn't pull it off.

But a lot of great tournaments coming up. Obviously this week's a high point in my schedule and then Charlotte and The PLAYERS, a lot of great tournaments coming up.

**Q. The reaction to what happened to Jordan on Sunday, what would you say your toughest loss was, and how long did it take you to recover?**

DAVIS LOVE III: Well, every time I see something like that I think back to the '95 U.S. Open. I had a putt to win and then I had a putt to get in the playoff and then I made the putt to not be in the playoff. So it's -- I'll never forget. I bogeyed the last two holes and I could have won the U.S. Open. You never forget it. Just maybe you think you're never going to have another chance. At 22 you're going to have a lot more chances. I'm sure he's looking at it differently. It doesn't matter if he wins five Masters and five of every other major and breaks Jack's record, he's still going to look back and go, I could have won that one. He'll never get over it.

He got a lot out of his game last week, the way I looked at it. He survived without his "A" game and he almost won the golf tournament. I was really impressed with the way he played, not really having it. And then the way he handled himself after. I think he learned a lot from it. It's hard, but he learned a lot from it.

**Q. When you're playing an event like this, do you try to separate yourself from the captaincy and concentrate on your own game? Are you tempted to look at some of the guys and see how they're playing?**

DAVIS LOVE III: No, I'm here to play, for sure. Playing with like Kuch and Jason tomorrow is just another time to spend with them to get to know them a little bit better. I think that's the benefit. They're not in -- they know it -- they're not in a tryout. I've watched them play a lot of golf over the last 10 or 12 years, both of them. So I know how they play. They just need to make points and they know that.

But sitting down -- I just sat down for 15 minutes with Kevin Na and Kevin had some really good tournaments in the fall and the points didn't count. We talked about that, I'm getting to know him better. If he makes the team I'll know Kevin a lot better than I would if I'm not out here playing this week. I use all those

opportunities. My focus is -- I have been pounding balls for the last, whatever, three or four weeks, just to come here and watch guys play. I'm here to play for myself.

And then as an added benefit -- now, if I don't play well and I'm in the middle of the pack on Sunday, I'm not going to hang around and watch guys finish. I know what they're doing and I know how they play. It's just getting to know them better personally is the biggest thing. Hitting balls on the range by Bryson, he's going to think I'm starting to stalking him. I put my bag down a lot by Bryson. I don't know him. I need to get to know him. And I knew Jordan Spieth in '13. And Freddie said you're in charge of him, since you know him. But just in case Bryson has a hot year I want to get to know him better. I'm doing some stuff like that. And he's a great kid and I've known him a long time, watching my son play in the same tournaments. But that's the benefit for me being out here, is I'm around the guys that are going to make the team or could make the team.

**Q. How are renovations going on the ocean course at Sea Pines?**

DAVIS LOVE III: They're going very well. We need a little bit more warm weather and a little less wind. I'm sure that our neighbors over there want less wind, so that the dirt quits flying around. They're going very well. Just like they did here. They've got a good group here in management. They know what they're doing. They've built a lot of golf courses. We're moving right a long. I've got my caddie's brother, Tom Webber over there, so I've got a good connection to make sure the dirt gets pushed in the right direction.

My brother has been up here a ton, we're only two hours a way. I probably visited this course more than any course we've ever built. We love the progress. And we certainly love the golf course here. The golf course is in perfect shape and love the changes.

JULIUS MASON: Davis, back to Ryder Cup. It's hard not to be impressed by the way the Europeans were playing last week. And I have to think that your counterpart captain, Darren Clarke, is pretty pleased with what he saw last week. Any observations on your end on the European performances?

A. Like I pointed out earlier, they've got a lot of rookies. I played with Rafa Cabrera Bello the first two days last week and made a new friend. He's a great guy, and fun to play with. He's a heck of a player.

And I think they've got a youth movement. And I'm sure that Darren wants some veterans in there. But that's the beauty of having -- he's got three picks. Obviously Danny winning the Masters was great.

Gives them a boost.

But they've got a bunch of guys playing well, and we've got a bunch of guys playing well. And I think we're -- I did a lot of stuff with Darren over the last month and talked to him a lot, we're both happy with the way things are going on both of our sides.

JULIUS MASON: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

DAVIS LOVE III: Thank you.