

## TALKIN' GOLF

with Charlie Epps

## All the Presidents Men

**I**t's been a few weeks now, but I wanted to share with you some of my thoughts from the Presidents Cup at Muirfield Village—Jack Nicklaus' place in Ohio—which put a cap on the 2013 PGA Tour season.

Team events like the Presidents Cup and Ryder Cup are some of my favorite competitions in golf. They're the ultimate all-star games, and unlike in most other sports, the players really care about winning.

I spent that week with Angel Cabrera and the International team. While I was there, I hung around the U.S. team some as well. Of course the U.S. won, 18.5-15.5, but it was close at the end. Angel had some extra motivation to beat Phil Mickelson in singles. More on that in a minute.

Behind captain Fred Couples, the U.S. built a big lead through the first two days of Four Ball and Foursome matches, but the Internationals closed hard. One of the reasons the U.S. team was so successful is that they have a chip on their shoulder from the last decade of Ryder Cup matches.

Only once in the past 10 years has the U.S. won the Ryder Cup. Last year at Medinah was especially heartbreaking for the U.S., as Great Britain & Ireland stormed back from a 10-6 deficit to win the cup with one of the greatest comebacks in the history of the event. The U.S. lost eight of the 12 Sunday Singles matches after it looked like they had it wrapped up on Saturday.

You could tell the U.S. team really wanted to win this year's Presidents Cup, and I think playing for Fred Couples is a big reason why. Freddy just has a way about him that makes the players really comfortable. The U.S. guys want to play for him—that's not the case with every captain—and I think Couples should be the next U.S. Ryder Cup captain after Tom Watson leads his team at Gleneagles in Scotland next year.

Couples also did a great job with his pairings. Tiger needed a new partner, and Freddy used the opportunity to allow Steve Stricker to mentor rookie Jordan Spieth, who played well and justified his captain's pick. Stricker was perfect in that mentor's role for a young player like Spieth, and the two obviously thrived together.

Tiger went out with Matt Kuchar, and the two looked unbeatable. There's something about Kuchar's laid-back attitude that meshes well with Tiger. He's not afraid to tease Tiger, and I think Tiger appreciates that. Those two will be a tough team to beat for the near future.

While many eyes were on Spieth, the U.S. phenom they called "The Kid," I was watching the other promising youngster at the Presidents Cup. I was very impressed with 21-year-old Hideki Matsuyama, who I believe will go on to become the first Japanese major championship winner. In fact, I'm tempted to put a little action on him to win the Masters next year. He reminds me of a young Angel Cabrera in that he has a unique swing that is his and his alone. He plays "his game" with "his swing" and isn't tempted to emulate someone else.

Hideki tied for sixth at Muirfield in the British Open, tied for 10th at Merion in the U.S. Open and scored a top-20 finish at Oak Hill in the PGA Championship. After his final round at the U.S. Open, he returned to the practice area and worked on his game for two hours. I asked him why, and he said, "Hey, it was the perfect place to practice." I like that kind of dedication.

Angel likes to tease me about Phil Mickelson being "my hero." Angel loves to give me a hard time. Just because I've said I admire Phil's ability and gambling nature on the course, Angel calls Phil my hero. So when they were matched up against each other in Singles, there was some pressure on Angel to take down Mickelson. When Angel beat him 1 up on the 18th green, Angel couldn't wait to tell me, "Yo vencí a tu héroe!"

For the record, Mickelson isn't my hero. But I like his fearlessness on the course. **TL**

*Known as "The Golf Doctor," Charlie Epps has been one of Houston's most respected PGA golf professionals for more than 30 years. In 2012, Charlie was inducted into the Texas Golf Hall of Fame and recently joined Arnold Palmer and Jim Nantz as an official spokesman for Insperty. Listen to "The Charlie Epps Golf Show" 8-9 a.m. Saturday mornings on 1560 AM in Houston and YahooSportsRadio.com everywhere else.*

THE DOCTOR  
IS ONThe  
Charlie Epps  
Golf Hour

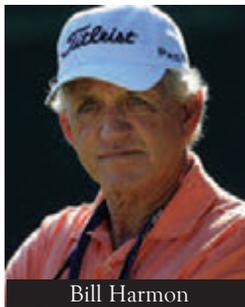
Presented by



Tune in 8 - 9 a.m. Saturdays for exclusive PGA Tour insider talk, interviews and golf instruction.



Bruce Davidson



Bill Harmon



John Granato



Mark Button

**YAHOO!**  
SPORTS RADIO  
**1560 AM**

yahoosportsradio.com  
1560thegame.com



**CHARLIE  
EPPS**