



Bragging rights

When Europe meet the U.S., form goes out the window and everything is up for grabs — not least one of the oldest cups in world of sport. This September sees the Solheim Cup and then the Ryder Cup, with the ladies striking first

SOLHEIM CUP

**31 August – 6 September
Inverness Club, Toledo, Ohio**

The fiercest of transatlantic rivalries will be renewed on 31st August, with 12 of Europe's finest female golfers defending the coveted Waterford Crystal Trophy on Ohioan soil. Trailing 10-6 since the biennial meetings began in 1990, Scottish captain Catriona Matthew will draw inspiration from the one-point victory at Gleneagles (Scotland) in 2019, but this is a different ball game altogether.

In 2013, the single victory Europe have enjoyed on American soil in 30 years marked an uncharacteristically poor campaign for Matthew as a player — her poorest Solheim Cup in nine

appearances. The visitors ran out 18-10 victors in Colorado, with 17-year-old Charlie Hull making her debut at Captain's Pick.

In terms of players, Hull is currently the only Colorado survivor to be in the 2021 line-up, and her 9-3-3 (won-lost-halved) record over four Solheim Cup campaigns proves that she deserves the spot. Hull will line up with Emily Kristine Pedersen

(DEN), Alice Hewson (ENG), Sophia Popov (GER), Carlota Ciganda (ESP) and Mel Reid, plus the six captain's picks yet to be announced. Reid acted assistant captain to Matthew, who made her bow as captain

Europe will be without Suzann Pettersen who, having played in just three LPGA Tour events following an 18-month maternity leave, made a 7-foot putt on the

18th hole to secure the victory for Team Europe in 2019, and then retired from golf altogether.

U.S. Solheim Cup captain Pat Hurst selected Major champion and five-time Team USA member Michelle Wie West as an assistant captain to join Angela Stanford in supporting her this September. Her team will be anchored by 23-year-old Nelly Korda (2021 Women's PGA Championship winner and world number one) who was a rookie in 2019, her sister Jessica Korda, Lexi Thompson, Danielle Kang and Brittany Altomare, all of whom played at Gleneagles. There are still places up for grabs in the U.S. side and whoever steps up will not take the role lightly as the home side look to avoid a repeat of 2013 and to wrestle back the glass Cup — before heading back to Europe in 2023, and to Finca Cortesin, Andalucía, Spain. solheimcup.com ►



Above: Morgan Pressel of the U.S. Team putts during the 2019 Solheim Cup at Gleneagles Left: Europe captain Catriona Matthew lifts the Cup



RYDER CUP

21-26 September
Whistling Straits,
Kohler, Wisconsin

Steve Stricker captains the U.S. Team in his home state of Wisconsin when the delayed 2020 Ryder Cup gets underway at the daunting 'Irish Links' Whistling Straits on 21 September. Stricker, who was one of Jim Furyk's non-playing vice-captains when the U.S. lost in 2018. He tasted victory as a player in 2008, and loss in 2010 and 2012. And Stricker returns the favour this year, with Jim Furyk, one of his vice-captains, alongside Zach Johnson and Davis Love III. Stricker also wants Tiger Woods to join the captain's team in a non-playing capacity.



Above: U.S. captain Jim Furyk and European captain Thomas Bjorn pose with competitors of the Junior Ryder Cup ahead of the 2018 Ryder Cup in Paris

World number two, three and four – Dustin Johnson, Justin Thomas and Collin Morikawa – have all secured a place in Stricker's team, with Bryson DeChambeau, Brooks Koepka and Xander Schauffele also in. Stricker has six captain's picks available, with Patrick Reed, Patrick Cantlay, Tony Finau and Jordan Spieth considered among the favourites. PGA Championship winner and 12-time Ryder Cup veteran Phil Mickelson is also in with a chance.

Irishman Pdraig Harrington will feel at home as captain, with rugged fairways, windswept greens and more than 1,000 bunkers. Representing Europe six times as a player (with four tournament wins), Harrington has picked Martin Kaymer as one lieutenant, the only European or American player to win a Major at Whistling Straits (2010), and compatriot Graeme McDowell as the other. World number one and 2021 US Open winner John Rahm (Spain) leads the charge, with Englishmen Tommy



Fleetwood, Tyrrel Hatton, Paul Casey, Lee Westwood and Matthew Fitzpatrick all qualified. Rory McIlroy (Northern Ireland), Viktor Hovland (Denmark), and Victor Perez (France) are also in the line-up, with Bernd Wiesberger (Austria), Robert MacIntyre (Scotland), Shane Lowry (Ireland) and Justin Rose (England) all vying for Harrington's three remaining picks.

Team Europe are the reigning champions going into the 43rd Ryder Cup after a 17½–10½ victory in 2018 at Paris' Le Golf

National. The U.S. however, have won 27 of the 42 meetings to date (against Team Great Britain and Ireland prior to Team Europe in 1979) and plenty of blood has been shed. This meeting will be no different, with Team Europe having taken the spoils for a narrow majority of the modern Ryder Cup era. All eyes on Wisconsin before the Ryder Cup heads to Italy for the first time in 2023 in the shape of the Marco Simone Golf & Country Club in Rome.
rydercup.com ■