

SPORTS

Don't Get Me Started

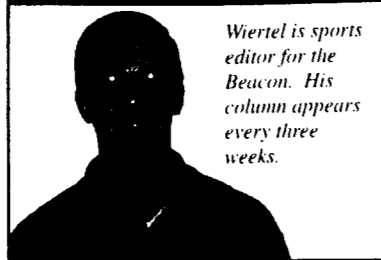
U.S. team goes for the "green"

This weekend is one of the most exciting weekends for golf fans. Starting today and continuing throughout the weekend, The Country Club at Brookline will host the Ryder Cup. Every two years, players representing the United States and Europe battle each other for the right to retain the coveted Ryder Cup. Players compete in several formats including alternate shot, four ball and singles matches. But like all major sporting events, the Ryder Cup can't pass without its own round of controversy.

As purses grow on the PGA Tour and players make more money each year, the Ryder Cup also produces increased revenue for the PGA of America. Not like they are making enough money already, some players feel that they should be paid for playing in the Ryder Cup. This issue wasn't even thought of until American washed up hack Mark O'Meara, made it an issue at the last Ryder Cup in 1997. He felt that the PGA of America was making all of this money and that it was only fair for the players to get paid. In '97, O'Meara and the rest of the American team for that matter, played uninspired golf. They did not make a single putt when the pressure was on and they were repeatedly outplayed by the underdog Europeans. At that point in time, it was an insult that he asked to be paid especially after the pathetic performance he and the team had.

But the issue was kept alive the last two years and was brought up this summer when O'Meara, his good friend Tiger Woods, and David Duval began to make it an issue again. But they were met with much resistance

Matt Wiertel



Wiertel is sports editor for the Beacon. His column appears every three weeks.

from other Ryder Cup teammates and from the American captain, Ben Crenshaw. Crenshaw vented his anger at a press conference when the controversy was at its height when he said, "It burns the hell out of me to listen to their viewpoints." Even other players went as far to say that the dissenters shouldn't play if they felt it was such a major problem.

After seeing the backlash to the notion of paying the players, O'Meara and his circus troupe have revised their requests. They now feel they should be given money which could be given to a charity of their choice. Even this request is ridiculous beyond belief. O'Meara and the others apparently don't get it. For years golfers have proudly played on the Ryder Cup teams without ever mentioning this notion of being paid. Actually, the players already receive five-thousand dollars compensation for their involvement in the tournament, in addition to as much Ryder Cup memorabilia they can fit into their Towncars.

For the most part, the Ryder Cup team is composed of true Americans who take the opportunity to play on the team as a privilege. On the contrary the Tiger Woods, David Duval, and Mark O'Meara types feel that be-

cause they are so successful and make so much money they deserve to play. Players like Payne Stewart, Tom Lehman, and Davis Love III know what an honor and privilege it is to play in this tournament.

This is where the problem lies with the American team. The team lacks the camaraderie and passion that the European team has each year. The Americans focus more on how much money they aren't making instead of focusing on the task at hand. Although the Europeans are inexperienced, the majority of the American team doesn't have a Ryder Cup record to brag about. The supposed next Jack Nicklaus of golf, Tiger Woods went 1-3-1 at the '97 event held in Spain. Mark O'Meara also has little to show for a Ryder Cup record, 4-7-1, even though he thinks he isn't washed up. Someone might want to mention to Mark that he actually is. And the final stooge in this greedy triumvirate, David Duval, hasn't even played in a single match and he has the gall to call the Ryder Cup an exhibition. These are the types of players who shouldn't be allowed onto the team.

Even though the Americans on paper should pulverize the Europeans, I predict them to get dumped. European upstarts like Sergio Garcia and Lee Westwood will put a muzzle on the cry baby American squad. It's time for these guys to grow up and come back down to reality. If they want to donate money to charity why can't they plunge into their own warehouses? Oops I forgot these are the same bunch of guys who don't even give autographed memorabilia to deserving fans.

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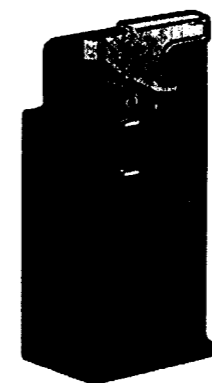
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