

My Ryder Cup

by Sergio Garcia

Playing in the Ryder Cup is a difficult feeling to describe. It kind of feels like contending on Sunday in a major—it's that level of pressure every single day, every single shot. It's nerve wracking, but at the same time it's an extremely exciting environment to be in.

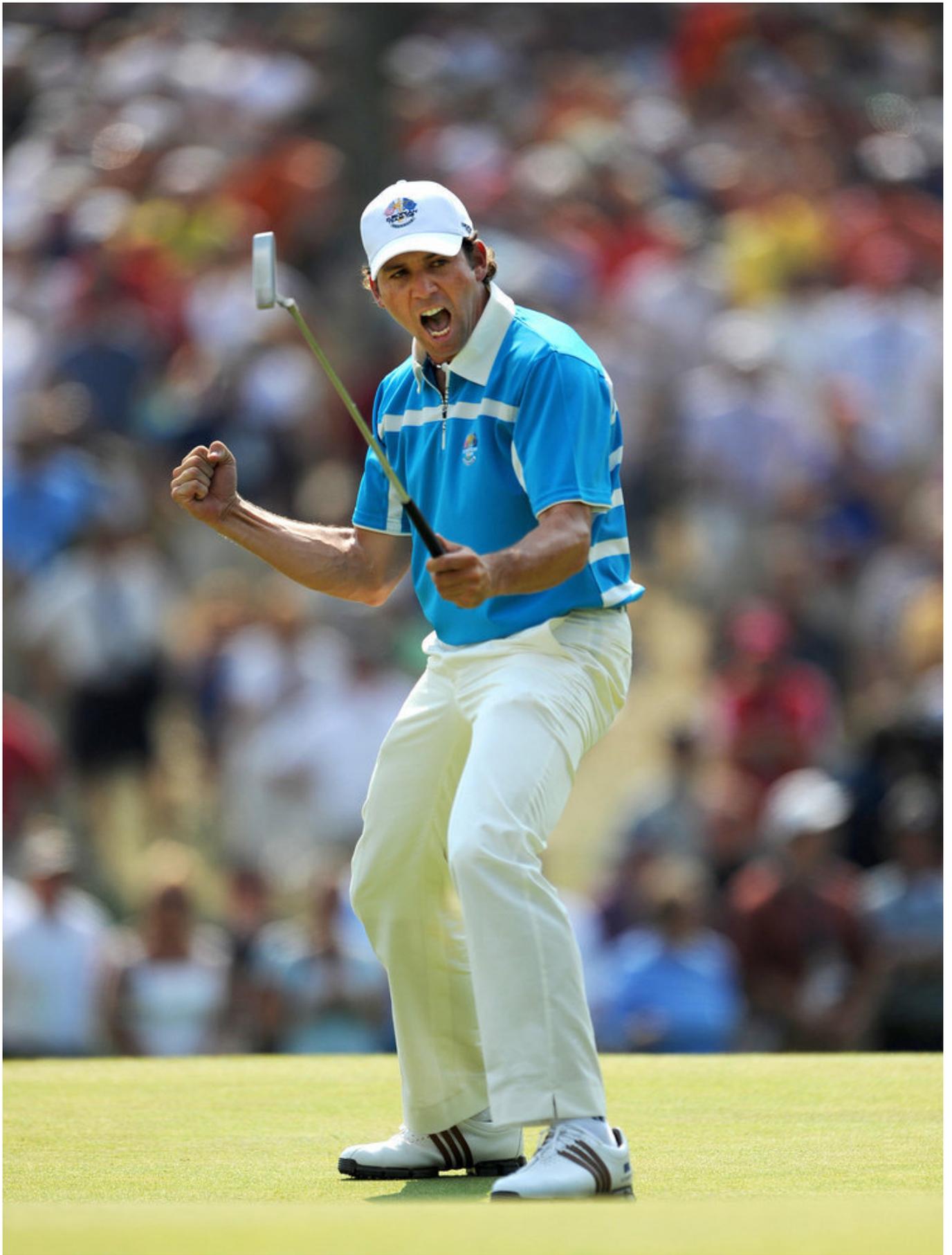


When I was 15, I went to the Ryder Cup at Oak Hill in Rochester, NY. I remember walking around the course and instantly falling in love with the Ryder Cup atmosphere. You could feel the energy from the players, you could hear the energy from the crowds... everything about it was amazing. From that point on, I knew that some way, somehow, I needed to be a part of that.

As I look back on how I felt that day compared to how I feel heading into my eighth competitive Ryder Cup, nothing has changed. To this day, it has remained an honour and an incredible experience every single time I get to represent Team Europe.

The competition is fierce and the crowds are unbelievable, but for me, one of the things I like the most about the Ryder Cup is getting to know the other players in a much more personal way than you do in a regular Tour event.

I remember the first time I stepped up to the tee as a Ryder Cup competitor—it was 1999, and fortunately for me, I was playing foursomes with Jesper Parnevik and he hit the first tee shot. As a rookie, being able to sit back and watch someone else tee off first made it a little bit easier for me on that first drive... but as soon as I got to my second shot, the nerves kicked right back in. After a couple holes, I was able to get my nerves back under control, which freed me up to finish 3-1-1 in my first Ryder Cup.



I love team competition and I think the Ryder Cup brings out some of my best golf because of that team environment. In golf, we don't get to experience team competition very often, so when a Ryder Cup comes around, I know I'll be surrounded by great guys who always support one another. When you're with a team, all that weight that is normally placed on the shoulders of one person is handled together as a group, so I think that has helped me to perform well in my Ryder Cup career.

Playing in front of my home crowd in Europe allows me to feel surrounded by that European energy, which makes it a little easier to compete. The European crowds are massive and they are all cheering us on, non-stop. When you hit a great shot, the crowd can be heard across the course and it makes for an amazing feeling. In the U.S., there is a thicker energy. The crowds in America are much tougher to play in front of; they get a little bit rowdier—even a little bit borderline at times—but like any Ryder Cup, it is an incredible challenge that only pushes me to play better.



The Ryder Cup brings so much enthusiasm to golf fans—and really to all *fans* in general. The Ryder Cup attracts viewers that may not watch another golf tournament all year long. To me, it's right there on the same level as the finals of the soccer World Cup as one of the biggest events in all of sports. It has an incredible importance to golf and to sports.

The importance of the event is especially felt in Spain because of what Seve did. He was the guy that brought Continental Europe to the Ryder Cup team and he's the one that really pushed on the Americans. Thanks to his charisma, energy, and what he brought to the team, we started to win some Ryder Cups from the Americans—which was something we had struggled to do up until that point. Because of all that, the Ryder Cup has a special connection within Spain and within European golf. We always know that we're going up against the United States, which tends to be where a lot of the best players come from, so to be able to take on such a strong country and a strong team is an amazing experience every time.

When you win the Ryder Cup, it's hard to describe. It's an amazing feeling, like a rush of energy running through your whole body. The happiness that it brings not only to yourself, but also to everyone around you is special to experience.

When you lose, it is tough—nobody likes to lose and the pain is always magnified in a Ryder Cup. However, at the end of the day it is just a game, so as long as you've done your best and given everything that you could there's not much more you can ask of yourself.



It's difficult to pick out a single favourite Ryder Cup memory. I've had so many great memories, even when I'm part of the losing team, like in '99. But even with the loss, it was unforgettable to be part of that team as a rookie. We played so well the first couple of days and unfortunately we couldn't get through the finish line, but experiencing the emotions that we went through as a team still sits with me to this day.

Looking forward, there's no doubt that I am excited to play again this year at Hazeltine. I know it is going to be tough—I know the Americans are eager to win back the cup and they will do everything they can to keep us from retaining it. But like we do in every Ryder Cup, we're going to take on all those challenges and try to come out on top, so we can bring the cup back home to Europe.

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ABOUT EUROPE

About TaylorMade Golf Company

Headquartered in Carlsbad, California, TaylorMade Golf Company sells golf equipment, footwear, apparel and accessories under the TaylorMade, adidas Golf, Adams and Ashworth brands. TaylorMade Golf Company posted 2014 sales of €913 million.

About the adidas Group

The adidas Group is a global leader in the sporting goods industry, offering a broad portfolio of footwear, apparel and hardware for sport and lifestyle around the core brands adidas, Reebok, TaylorMade and Reebok-CCM Hockey. Headquartered in Herzogenaurach, Germany, the Group employs more than 55,000 people across the globe and generated sales of around € 17 billion in 2015.



