

SPORTS

U.S. Caps Dramatic Ryder Cup Rally

BROOKLINE, Mass.—With a wink of the eye and a wag of the finger, Ben Crenshaw insisted against all odds his beleaguered Americans were destined to win the Ryder Cup.

He made a believer out of everyone Sunday.

His players took to heart his tearful talk about destiny, playing like they had nothing to lose and finally living up to their potential. The gallery caught on, too, stomping and cheering as the greatest comeback in Ryder Cup history unfolded before their eyes in an electric atmosphere that riled the Europeans.

At end of a wild and delirious day at The Country Club, Justin Leonard, Hal Sutton and the rest of the Ryder Cup stars sprayed champagne over a balcony and sang the national anthem with thousands of fans still trying to grasp the magnitude of the victory.

Then, Crenshaw stepped onto a stone wall and held up a prize far more valuable than the \$63 million in revenue that threatened to divide his team.

The Ryder Cup is staying in America.

"What transpired is a moving experience," Crenshaw said. "I do believe in fate."

The Americans won 8½ points from the 12 singles matches Sunday, giving them a 14½-13½ victory and their first Ryder Cup victory since

1993. "We came up short," European captain Mark James said. "We gave it our best shot."

As much as Crenshaw believes in fate, he played a part, too.

He sent out his six best players to create a chain-reaction of momentum, and it paid off with six decisive victories that swiftly turned the tide. He cried with joy when Justin Leonard delivered the decisive blow, a birdie putt on the 17th hole that was as long as the Americans' odds of winning the Ryder Cup.

"I never stopped believing," a choked-up Crenshaw said. "I'm stunned. This is so indescribable."

That victory came on the 17th green was only fitting. Across the street is the house where Francis Ouimet lived when he won the 1913 U.S. Open on this course and made golf popular in the United States.

Leonard's 45-foot birdie putt unleashed a torrent of emotion that had been building throughout an electric day at The Country Club, where fans cheered every American victory and every missed putt by the Europeans.

Although one match was still on the course, the putt — followed by Jose Maria Olazabal's miss — guaranteed the Americans 14½ points, the amount they needed to win, but an amount few believed they would get.

"This was history being made to-

day, and we all wanted to be a part of that," said Hal Sutton, the rock-solid star of the U.S. team who contributed 3½ points. "This is the greatest moment in golf right now."

The Europeans didn't think so. They took exception to the player celebration after Leonard's putt because Olazabal still had a 25-foot birdie putt to tie the match and keep alive Europe's fading hopes.

"It was very sad to see. It was an ugly picture," Olazabal said.

"It's about the most disgusting thing I've ever seen," said assistant captain Sam Torrance. "This is not sour grapes. The whole American team, and spectators ran right across the green over Olly's line. He still has a putt to tie the hole. We could still take the Ryder Cup home. It was disgusting."

The Americans overwhelmed Europe in the first six matches, closing all of them out before the 17th hole.

"When you get the first matches that easily, the crowd is going to get more involved, and that's all it takes," Jesper Parnevik said. "They just got huge momentum going."

Even David Duval, who referred to the Ryder Cup as an exhibition, showed how much it meant by repeatedly shaking his fists and cupping his hand to his ear, asking the gallery for even more noise — maybe too much noise.



Despite a 10-6 deficit going into the final round, despite the fact no team has ever come back from more than two points on the last day, Crenshaw refused to give in.

"I've felt it all week," Crenshaw said. "I know how these guys can play. I know how determined they are. Darned if we didn't pull it off."

Crenshaw had that feeling once before. He won the 1995 Masters after the death of his longtime teacher Harvey Penick. The victory came out of nowhere, and Crenshaw said at the time he felt it was Penick's spirit guiding him along.

In much the same way, Crenshaw willed his team to victory on this course, which has a long history of U.S. victories.

"It's all because of Ben Crenshaw," Davis Love III said. "He fired us up, made us believe we could do it."

Underwood's Mother Says 'Cult' Is Responsible for Son's Troubles

LANSING, Mich. — Dimitrius Underwood's mother claims her son's apparent suicide attempt and his recent erratic behavior have been influenced by a "cult that's posing as a church."

Underwood, a defensive end from Michigan State who walked away from a multimillion-dollar NFL contract with Minnesota, only to resurface in Miami, slashed his own neck Sunday and was found bleeding on a Lansing street, police said Monday.

"He was somewhat despondent," police spokesman Lt. Ray Hall said. "He was upset, physically upset."

Before she left Monday for Lansing from her Philadelphia home, Underwood's mother, Eileen Underwood, said she wanted to speak out against "a cult that's posing as a church," which Underwood began attending while he was at Michigan State.

"There are controlling spirits in there," Eileen Underwood, an ordained minister, told The Miami Herald. "I visited one time and the pastor was talking about if a young man and woman in the church are dating and then they break up, he won't let them date anyone else for six months."

"That's not in the Bible. I know the Bible. That's just someone trying to control people. It's a den of witches sitting up in there."

Eileen Underwood declined to name the church, but said she might take legal action against it.

Underwood's sister, Andrea Underwood, said one member of the church who recruited Dimitrius Underwood always seems to be around when Underwood acts in a bizarre manner.

Underwood was the Minnesota Vikings' second first-round draft pick in April, but left training camp after one day, saying he could not resolve the conflict between playing football and serving God.

"It just seems like Dimitrius is fine until this man shows up, and then he starts doing all these bizarre things," Andrea Underwood said.

Underwood gave football another chance in August when the Dolphins claimed him on waivers, but attended only two practices before dislocating his left shoulder in a preseason game. He had been expected to begin practicing again with the Dolphins this week.

On Saturday, Lansing police arrested Underwood on a warrant accusing him of nonpayment of child support. A \$500 bond was posted for him about three hours later, but Underwood refused to leave the jail for another hour, spending the time talking to another inmate, Hall said.

"I think Dimitrius' behavior over a little bit of time here has been a little bit unusual," Michigan State coach Nick Saban said Monday.

"We tried to help the guy last year; I know the Dolphins have tried to help him now, and I've talked to him on several occasions. ... Maybe now someone can help him and he can do well."

Hall said Underwood slashed his neck with a knife at the home of the mother of his twin 17-month-old children. He was staying there during the Dolphins' off week.

No one in the home saw him cut himself, but several people in the neighborhood saw him running down the street afterward.

Hall said physical evidence at the scene and witnesses' statements convinced police Underwood used the knife on himself. The officer would not describe the knife, other than to say it was a common household knife. He declined to say if Underwood wrote a suicide note.

Underwood was listed in fair condition Monday at Sparrow Hospital after undergoing surgery Sunday.

The 22-year-old player cooperated with police when they found him about 12:45 p.m. Sunday, and has spoken with police since, Hall said. He declined to say if Underwood gave them a reason for his actions, but said police are close to com-

pleting their investigation. "Our attention is turned toward safeguarding his good mental health," Hall said.

Underwood played defensive end at Michigan State for three seasons before sitting out his senior year with a sprained ankle. The Vikings made him their 29th draft pick overall.

He signed a five-year, \$5.3 million contract Aug. 1, but walked out of training camp the next day. Underwood told coach Dennis Green he had no desire to play football.

The Vikings released him Aug. 11. Underwood sacrificed a \$1.75 million signing bonus by leaving.

"Hopefully, he'll be fine and then find the kind of assistance, help that he needs to do a good job, and I'm not talking about football," Green said Monday. "Because when you're in the hospital in serious condition, then football is very secondary for the things that he needs as a young man of 22."

He was claimed on waivers by Miami after 23 other teams passed on him, and is now getting a base salary of \$395,000 in the first season of a five-year contract with Miami.

On Monday, Dolphins coach Jimmy Johnson said he spoke with Sparrow Hospital nurses about Underwood's condition.

"I have passed on the word that we are 100 percent supportive of him. Our No. 1 concern is his health and well-being, and the No. 1 thing we want to do is for him to get well," Johnson said.

Division I-AA Top 25 Poll

The ESPN/USA Today Division I-AA Top 25 college football coaches poll, with number of first-place votes, record in parentheses, total points and last week's ranking: (thru games of September 25)

- TEAM PTS PVS**
1. Geo Southern (23) (3-1) 757 1
 2. Troy St (2) (3-0) 714 3
 3. Montana (2) (3-0) 692 2
 4. Appalachian St (2-1) 679 4
 5. Northern Iowa (1) (4-0) 644 5
 6. Hofstra (4-0) 608 6
 7. Tennessee St (2) (4-0) 545 8
 8. Hampton (1) (4-0) 519 9
 9. Southern (4-0) 502 10
 10. Illinois St (3-1) 449 13
 11. Villanova (3-1) 409 14
 12. Youngstown St (3-1) 387 15
 13. East Tennessee St (4-0) 309 T18
 14. Delaware (3-1) 307 7
 15. Lehigh (3-0) 302 16
 16. Massachusetts (1-2) 295 11
 17. Florida A&M (2-2) 258 T18
 18. Western Illinois (3-1) 248 12
 19. North Arizona (2-1) 242 20
 20. Jackson St (3-1) 214 21

21. Eastern Kentucky (3-1) 205 22
 22. South Florida (2-2) 123 17
 23. James Madison (3-1) 75 NR
 24. McNeese St (1-2) 68 25
 25. Elon (4-0) 57 NR
- Dropped Out: No. 23. Northwestern St, No. 24. Montana St.

- Others Receiving Votes:**
- Southern Ill 49, Southern Utah 48,
 - Sacramento St 43, Portland St 40, Connecticut 36,
 - Northwestern State 35, Furman 32, Richmond 23, New Hampshire 19,

- Delaware State 16, Western Kentucky 15, SW Missouri St 12,
- Howard 12, Stephen F. Austin 11, Maine 11, Murray State 9,
- Colgate 9, Montana State 8, William & Mary 7, Alabama A&M 7,
- Sam Houston State 5, Grambling 5, Eastern Washington 4,
- Eastern Illinois 3, Samford 2, Harvard 2, Bucknell 2,
- Chattanooga 1, Bethune-Cookman 1.

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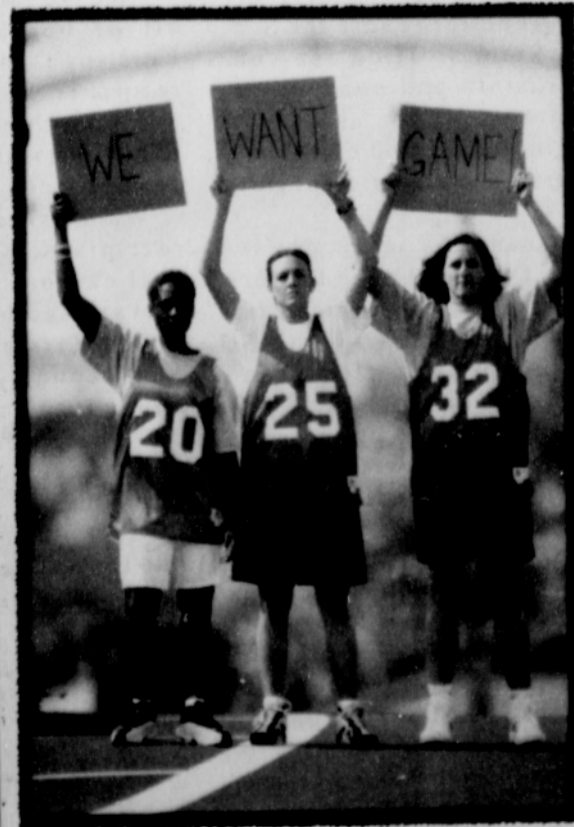
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