

## Paul McGinley: Leading a multinational team of individuals

January 2013 Paul McGinley, the Irish Tour professional, had just been named Team Europe Ryder Cup captain from a field of five nominations, chosen by the players committee who represent the golfers themselves. He would lead the team at the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles, Scotland, in September 2014. This wasn't McGinley's first captaincy, having already captained the Britain & Ireland team at the Vivendi Seve Trophy in 2009 and 2011, but the Ryder Cup was definitely the most prestigious. McGinley had strong Ryder Cup credentials, which included playing and holing the winning putt at The Belfry in 2002, as well as playing in both 2004 and 2006. He was vice-captain to Colin Montgomerie in 2010 and José María Olazábal in 2012. All five Ryder Cups that he was involved in were as part of winning teams. He would be leading his team of 12 players against the American team captained by the legendary Tom Watson. Paul described his excitement:

*This is a position that I'm really thrilled to be in and it's also a very humbling experience. I can't wait to get into the role of being the captain. I'm relishing the thought of taking on one of my great heroes, Tom Watson. I've never had an opportunity to go up against him in a playing sense. To go up against him in a captaincy sense will be a real thrill for me.<sup>1</sup>*

Tournament Committee Chairman Thomas Björn said:

*I think that, as a captain, he will bring the Tour even more together. He is one of us. There has never been a distance to Paul. He's a guy you can talk to. He's got great opinions and he's been fantastic in The Ryder Cup.<sup>2</sup>*

Yet, in the midst of his excitement, McGinley knew that this was not going to be an easy role. There were huge challenges facing him, including bringing different nationalities, cultures and personalities together effectively against a team from a single nation; creating a team from world-class individual players in a sport that is highly individualistic; not knowing for certain until a matter of weeks before the tournament who would even be in the team; and developing three different strategies for the three different disciplines within the same tournament. McGinley wondered what would it take for him to be able to lead his

---

Lisa Duke is a Research Associate of London Business School. Randall S Peterson is Professor of Organisational Behaviour at London Business School. This case was written under the auspices of the Leadership Institute at the London Business School.

London Business School cases are developed solely as the basis for class discussion and are not intended to serve as endorsements, sources of primary data, or illustrations of effective or ineffective management

© 2018 London Business School. All rights reserved. No part of this case study may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, photocopying, recording or otherwise without written permission of London Business School.