



# The Captain Myth: The Ryder Cup and Sport's Great Leadership Delusion

*Richard Gillis*

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The War on the Shore, the Battle of Brookline, the Miracle of Medinah: the Ryder Cup is golf's - and arguably one of international sport's - most intense, high-profile tournaments. Two teams tussle through 28 matches over three days for no prize money but enormous national pride. And purportedly in charge of those two teams are the captains, whose reputations are shaped forever by their players' results out on the course. Justin Rose's unlikely 35-foot on the 17th green at Medinah Country Club set up Europe's triumph - and one of modern sport's most remarkable turnarounds - in the 2012 Ryder Cup. It also established Davis Love II as 'a bad captain' and saw Jose Maria Olazabal feted for a series of leadership masterstrokes. In reality, neither captain had much to do with that putt being sunk. Yet the pressure remains on the captains to lead their team to victory. As each Cup passes, more theories are put forward about how to win. Some of these combine traditional golfing nous with cutting-edge sports psychology. Others are red herrings that have led captains down any number of blind alleys. So what can a captain do to win the Ryder Cup? Using exclusive interviews and saturation reporting, Gillis shows how strategy has evolved since the very first match in 1927, exploring the enduring and often surprising role played by some of the game's greatest stars including Walter Hagen, Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, Tony Jacklin, Seve Ballesteros and Paul Azinger. The Captain Myth uses golf's greatest event to examine some fundamental questions about leadership, teams and motivation.

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