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GB&I close in on victory in Team Cup



Justin Rose's Great Britain and Ireland team are heading for a convincing victory over Continental Europe in golf's Team Cup at the Abu Dhabi Golf Course designed by Peter Harradine.

GB&I require only two points from Sunday's 10 singles matches to avenge a four-point defeat in this competition two years ago. They won seven and half points out of 10 over two sessions of five foursomes contests.

Rose and partner Aaron Rai suffered GB&I's only setback in the Saturday afternoon set of matches, convincingly beaten 4&2 by the French duo of Matthieu Pavon and Romain Langasque.

Otherwise it was a clean sweep for the former world number one's team, with LIV prospect Tom McKibbin maintaining a 100% record.

The 22-year-old from Northern Ireland combined with Englishman Matthew Jordan to clinch a narrow one-up victory over Thorbjorn Olesen and Niklas Norgaard.

The UK pair carded five back-nine birdies, including the last three holes, to clinch their point.

McKibbin's prospective team-mate on the breakaway LIV circuit, Tyrrell Hatton, partnered fellow Englishman Matt Wallace to a 3&2 win over Danes Rasmus Hojgaard and Rasmus Neergaard-Petersen.

Hatton has collected two and half points out of three so far, as has DP World Tour veteran Paul Waring. But the 39-year-old, who won his biggest title here in Abu Dhabi last November, claims the overall match is far from over.

"It is still not done until that trophy is lifted," Waring, the Dubai-based pro who partnered Matt Jordan and then Laurie Canter to Saturday victories, told BBC Sport.

"It is going to be 10 individual performances now and I think everyone knows this isn't done.

"It all comes down to how we come out and hold ourselves tomorrow, and deliver the best performance we can to get this job done."

Nevertheless, his team's overall position could hardly be stronger after what have proved to be two very one-sided days.

Great Britain and Ireland doubled their first day lead in Saturday's opening session by taking it 3½ points to 1½, and they led 7-3 heading into the second set of foursomes matches.

In a dazzling opening contest, there were no dropped shots before Hatton rolled in a 65 foot eagle putt at the last. It meant he and Wallace snatched a dramatic half against Olesen and Norgaard.

The Danes were two up after 10 with the two pairings finishing a combined 15-under-par.

Rose's deft pitch to the last helped seal a two up victory alongside Tommy Fleetwood against the continental captain Francesco Molinari and Julien Guerrier. It edged Rose's team 7-2 ahead.

But moments later Pavon and Langasque closed out the continent's only morning success, 3&2 against Jordan Smith and Canter, which cut the arrears to four points.

Earlier, Rai and McKibbin maintained 100% records with a 4&3 trouncing of Hojgaard and Neergaard-Petersen.

Waring and Jordan were even more convincing when they easily clinched a point against Matteo Manassero and Antoine Rozner.

Their performances were in keeping with a commanding display by their team-mates, which will surely have caught the eye of watching Ryder Cup captain Luke Donald.