

Ryder Cup – ‘best ever’



The last few days at Gleneagles have resulted in an historic win for the European team. The First Minister is himself no mean golfer and says that this Ryder Cup will be remembered as the sport's best ever tournament.

At the conclusion of the competition which saw Europe retain the trophy after recording a 16.5-11.5 win following a thrilling final day's play, the First Minister said:

“Huge congratulations must go to the European Team for retaining that famous trophy and rewarding Paul McGinley's magnificent stewardship with such a convincing win. He has proven himself to be hugely inspirational and a leader among men, and has worked tirelessly, not just over this past week but since he was appointed in January last year, to prepare his side for none of the biggest week of their lives.

“I had the pleasure of watching an enthralling contest between Scotland's Stephen Gallacher and Phil Mickleson – at one point they were ten under par between them – and Stephen acquitted himself well in a match which was played in the best traditions of the sport.

“Gleneagles and its magnificent setting have shown the world the very best that Scotland has to offer. This event has had the finest facilities, the warmest welcome to thousands of people from around the world, and – with condolences to our US friends – the best of outcomes.

“Each day 45,000 spectators from 75 countries have enjoyed some of the best sporting moments and half a billion homes have seen the splendour of the course via TV on each day of the competition. There can be no better advert for Scottish tourism.

“It was predicted that the economic impact of staging the Ryder Cup at Gleneagles would be £100 million and I am confident that we will reach that figure or indeed exceed it.

“And this impact is being felt across Scotland. Carnoustie Links has been welcoming around 120 golfers a day – bringing in about £15,000 a day – while Gailes Links in Ayrshire has seen visitor numbers shoot up by almost 75 per cent, the vast majority coming from the United States and Europe. And Glasgow Airport has experienced a 5 per cent rise in passenger numbers compared to the same period last year.

“But Scotland’s track record of hosting world-class golfing events will not end at Gleneagles. Plans are already in place to continue the legacy and next year we will host two Major Championships; The Open Championship at St Andrews and the RICOH Women’s British Open at Turnberry. Further agreements with both event organisers are already in place going forward. Added to that, the future of the Aberdeen Asset Management Scottish Open has been secured for years to come and agreement reached to support events across the ladies, seniors and satellite tours. It is clear Scotland that will be a leading golf event destination for many years to come.

“Gleneagles has looked absolutely magnificent this past week and I have no doubt that golf fans far and wide will agree that this has been the best Ryder Cup ever staged. Scotland has excelled in every aspect and I am absolutely delighted to have been part of such a spectacular event.”