

So Why the Pink Jackets?



Even after the skies cleared over Ireland, it kept right on pouring. First came the tears of Darren Clarke, the inspiration of this Ryder Cup, and then a shower of champagne as the Europeans celebrated another romp.

Ian Woosnam popped the cork off the first bottle, dousing his team on the 18th green and later drinking it so quickly that it shot up his nose. Clarke toasted the delirious Irish crowd by guzzling a pint of Guinness from a balcony and raising the empty glass like a trophy.

There's no doubt who owns the Ryder Cup - and not just the shiny gold trophy. The Europeans wanted to win this one for Clarke and the memory of his wife, Heather, who died of breast cancer in August. They wanted to win for Woosnam, their pint-sized captain who made all the right moves once the tournament started. Mostly - as always - they wanted to win for each other.

Clarke didn't know if he would play - if he could play - in the Ryder Cup so soon after his wife died. But he accepted a captain's pick from Woosnam and was determined as ever to bring his best game.

Only six weeks earlier, team-mate Pdraig Harrington heard the news they had all been expecting when he was about to board a plane to Chicago, to play in the US PGA Championship. Unsure of what he should do, he was ultimately swayed by Clarke's insistence that Heather would have preferred their friends to keep playing. And so instead of attending her funeral, Harrington chose to donate his prize money to breast cancer research.

Clarke won all three matches he played, carried along by some of the loudest cheers ever heard at this event. Indeed the whole of Ireland appeared to roar Darren Clarke to victory, they shared in his tears as the heartbroken man from Dungannon saw the Ryder Cup home, and they probably raised a few glasses of the black stuff to one of their own.

"It was like an 80,000-seat stadium around one tee box," Johnson said of the start of their match. "Frankly, it was like that on every tee box for him. Well deserved, too."

"It's done a lot for me for people to show me how much they care," Clarke said. "And it's done a lot to show how much they cared about Heather, and that

means a lot to me. It's been a difficult week. From the minute I got here, I was determined to get myself ready, and I was. I played the way Woosie wanted me to."

"The Ryder Cup is not supposed to be about one man. Yet this one was," said Britain's top-selling tabloid newspaper "This one's for you Heather" trumpeted the Daily Mail. Even the Financial Times adorned its front page with a picture of Woosnam holding the Cup aloft as his grinning players, who were appropriately wearing pink blazers - the official colour of the Breast Cancer charity, applauded him.

In the UK and the States it's hard to hide the fact that it's officially Breast Cancer Awareness month. There are fundraising luncheons, races, walks and other activities scheduled throughout both countries. Hundreds of pink items - pins to apparel - are sold with proceeds going to cancer programmes.

In the UK each year 38,000 women are newly diagnosed and 13,100 women die from breast cancer and according to the American Cancer Society, more than 40,000 women in the USA will die from it this year and another 212,000 will be diagnosed with it. In Bahrain over 70 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed every year with 15-20 deaths resulting from the disease.

The campaign to raise awareness of breast cancer started in 1985, and earlier this year, King Hamed's wife HH Sheika Sabeeka as Honorary President of the Bahrain Cancer Society led the screening campaign aiming to save lives through early detection.

While breast-cancer education has made giant strides, and self-exams and mammograms are routine for many, myths still persist. On the facing page, experts from the University of Michigan Comprehensive Cancer Centre debunk some of the most common: