

RYDER CUP & THE BEAUTY OF MATCH PLAY

A year after the drama of the 2015 Solheim Cup and fresh off the amazing display of golf we watched at last week's Ryder Cup, I can't help but wonder what Suzanne Pettersen is thinking.

Patrick Reed is suddenly America's favorite son. A local newspaper in Minnesota's headline read: "Reed, white and blue." He would not be getting all this adulation and exposure if it weren't for his passion and the way he plays match play. I love it.

Example: in the first session Friday when he and his partner, Jordan Speith, had a commanding lead at the 9th hole, they made the Europeans hole out a putt that Sir Nick Faldo described as being an inch under two feet. Clearly, as one of the commentators said, "the Americans are trying to send a message." Exactly! That's what you do in match play, make your opponents hole out some putts and give them others – it's all about getting into the opponent's head.

What I don't love is why it's OK for the guys to do this but not the girls.

Example: This time last year in Wurttemberg, Germany, the golf media was going crazy over a small putt that Europe refused to concede during a pivotal point in the fourth session of fourball matches. To refresh your memory, Suzanne Pettersen was fiercely, and wrongly, criticized for trying to do the very thing Patrick Reed does every time he plays match play.

It seemed like everyone jumped on the bandwagon against Suzanne, suggesting she was unsporting and not playing in the spirit of the game. BS...she was playing the game of match play. No one from Europe conceded the putt, Alison Lee picked up the ball after she boldly attempted to make her birdie putt, hole to Europe, end of story. And, before you say, ah, but the European team of Pettersen and Hull were walking off the green, giving the impression they had conceded the putt. The fact check report will confirm Pettersen was behind the green, out of the camera shot, and Hull was walking over to her saying, "We're not giving them that putt."

This is the beauty of match play, and as David Feherty said, "The only thing wrong with the Ryder Cup is that it's only played every two years."

I truly hope the Olympic committee is taking notes for the format in Tokyo four years from now: No. 1 on their note pad should be match play; No. 2 should be match play; and No. 3 should be match play. Throw in a mixed team event and you will have the sporting world riveted.

Can you just imagine a mixed four ball with the USA and Norway duking it out for the gold medal? Potentially, Reed and Pettersen could be playing match play against each other... Now you're talking!