

Lowry's star on the rise

It was hardly the greatest surprise in the World that Darren Clarke was selected as Ryder Cup captain for the 41st renewal of the biennial contest at Hazeltine in Minnesota next year.

Clarke after all played in the contest five times and featured on the winning side on four occasions. He was also a vice captain to Colin Montgomerie and José María Olazábal in the European wins in 2010 and 2012.

He made his Ryder Cup debut in Valderrama in 1997 but his most emotional and unforgettable performance was at the K Club in 2006 when just six weeks after his first wife Heather passed away he inspired Europe to another memorable victory.

Plotting another Ryder Cup victory against the United States will certainly occupy much of Clarke's time over the next year and a half and although the 2011 British Open Champion has a hard act to follow in Paul McGinley he certainly won't be found wanting in his quest for glory.

Irish golfers have made an incredible contribution to European Ryder Cup success over the years next year's time could be well represented once again.

If Shane Lowry can build on the form he has displayed on the PGA Tour over the last two weeks then he will certainly join fellow Irish golfers Rory McIlroy and Graeme McDowell in contention for a place on Clarke's team.

But for two late bogeys in his closing round at the AT & T Pebble Beach Pro-Am in California Lowry would have finished a lot higher than a tie for 21st place.

A week previously he finished in a tie for seventh at the Farmers Insurance Open.

Ranked 76th in the World at the time of last year's Irish Open where he missed the cut Lowry kick started his year with a tie for fourth at the Scottish open followed by a brilliant tie for ninth at the British Open. Ranked 44th in the World at the end of 2014 the Offaly man has risen to 40th and is due to make his debut at Augusta next in April. A star on the rise without a doubt!

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