



## 22 QUESTIONS, 22 ANSWERS

*An interview with Bernd Wiesberger*

*Why the superstar believes that Austria should host the Ryder Cup and what his favourite number is.*

**1. Bernd, do you remember the first time you hit a golfball?**

Unfortunately, I can't remember the first time, but I'm pretty sure it was in Bad Tatzmannsdorf and it obviously awoke my enthusiasm from the start.

**2. And your first tournament win?**

I can't remember that either. I played in a lot of club tournaments as a young player and spent a lot of time on golf courses. The first victory that I can remember was a kids' tournament in Bad Gleichenberg. I think that was in 1995.

**3. At least 90% of Austrian kids want to become Olympic or world ski champions. Why did you choose golf?**

I think it was just that I liked the environment and it gave me a certain feeling of euphoria. My parents run the pro shop in the local golf club and it was only about five minutes from our house.

**4. Was there a specific moment when you made that decision: I want to be a golf pro?**

No, there wasn't really a certain moment. During the last few years of my amateur career, it was very much on my mind and I realised that this was the route I wanted to take.

**5. Three wins on the European Tour, plus a major, namely the 2014 PGA Championship on the final day, and now established in top international rankings. Are there any limits for Bernd Wiesberger?**

My aim is to stay at this level for a long time and to keep playing top international tournaments. I can always come up with a surprise on a good week.

**6. As an Austrian, are you able to say: I want to be number 1 in golf?**

It's not forbidden at least, as far as I know (laughs).

**7. As an Austrian, are you able to say: I want to be in Team Europe for the Ryder Cup?**

I believe I've lived up to this honour with my results at the start of the



COMPETITIVE GOLF  
///

## Local hero

Bernd Wiesberger is currently the top Austrian tour player and is on course to take Team Europe to victory in The 2022 Ryder Cup.

current season. As long as I can maintain this level, that aim doesn't seem so far away.

### **8. Can Austria say: we want the 2022 Ryder Cup?**

Why not? I've had confirmation from a few sources that the Austrian bid is very strong and it's the strongest nation in certain areas. The bid means that golf is represented more in the media and that's a step in the right direction for the development of golf in Austria as a whole. The Austrian bid certainly has many strengths. We are definitely the strongest nation in many respects.

### **9. Why do you believe that Austria, and more specifically Vienna and its Fontana GC, is the right place to host the 2022 Ryder Cup?**

Fontana already has experience with European Tour tournaments. Its proximity to Vienna and central location in Europe are definite plus points for the bid. Austria is also well known for its superb organisation of major events and its wonderful hospitality.

### **10. The Austrian government is giving the bid its full backing – is that a positive factor from your point of view?**

An event like this couldn't happen without political support. The Austrian government has recognised the huge potential of this bid, both before and during the event itself in 2022, and long after.

### **11. What do you think are the other points in favour of Austria as the 2022 Ryder Cup venue?**

The great atmosphere and quality of the course at Fontana GC, excellent connection to transport routes and superb infrastructure.

Particularly important, the incredible support from both the golfing and non-golfing communities in Austria.

### **12. You are very familiar with the course that Austria is proposing for the 2022 Ryder Cup, reaching fourth place there in the Austrian Open in 2006 as an amateur. Does the course bear comparison with the other European Ryder Cup courses – after all, you've played a few of them?**

I think that Fontana has made its mark as the host for Challenge Tour and European Tour tournaments. There are only a handful of courses around the world at most that wouldn't have to be redesigned and adapted to a certain extent in order to be suitable for the Ryder Cup. The redesign plans for Fontana are well known and will certainly ensure a great atmosphere for an exciting match play format.

### **13. You've played with all the top stars of the golfing world, from Rory McIlroy to Phil Mickelson and most recently Bubba Watson at the Masters and Jordan Spieth at the WGC event in Akron. Has Austria's Ryder Cup bid come up in conversation?**

It's not a subject that's being discussed much among the players. Apart from anything else, there's usually not time for much conversation like that on the course.

### **14. There's still a while to go until 2022. Time for Austrian golf talents to reach the top as potential Ryder Cup players. You yourself are incredibly active as a home golf superstar. What are the reasons behind your support for Austria's largest upcoming talent tournament series?**

I'm pleased to be working with the Austrian Golf Association as a

“

*The Fontana redesign will be amazing: the course is perfect for creating the **best possible atmosphere** and for the match play format. It's only **30 minutes** from **Vienna**. It doesn't get better than that!*

”

patron of the Austrian Juniors Golf Tour youth series. It's important for young people to have one or more series in which they can measure themselves against or with one another. There was a series like that when I was starting out and it really helped my development.

**15. As a golf pro, your 'workplace' is the whole world and you must have seen almost all of it. Nevertheless, you always like coming home and you even train at home. Why?**

I think everyone likes coming home from 'work' to relax and recharge your batteries. I also think the training conditions are perfect here.

**16. What's the particular appeal of Vienna for you personally?**

I really have been almost everywhere and Vienna is the perfect, most beautiful city. Not too large, but cosmopolitan in attitude, with fantastic culture coupled with great Austrian hospitality.

**17. How would you describe our country to people who've never been to Austria before?**

Lots of mountains, a few lakes, snow in winter, warm in summer. Everything your heart desires.

**18. Back to the subject of the Ryder Cup: which is the first Ryder Cup that you remember as a golfer?**

Valderrama in 1997.

**19. Which Ryder Cup captain has made the greatest impression on you so far?**

I think each one has really succeeded in bringing it's own particular

flavour to the team, but most people agree that Paul McGinley was the best person overall to ever lead Team Europe.

**20. What are your top three Ryder Cup memories?**

GMac's putt in Wales, Jamie's wedge in Gleneagles and Tiger's putt into the water in Valderrama (at least from a European point of view) ;)

**21. Imagine we are looking into a crystal ball. The Ryder Cup comes to Austria in 2022: what role will Bernd Wiesberger play then?**

Ideally, getting five points for Europe ;)

**22. What is your favourite number?**

1, as in a hole-in-one.

## Good to KNOW

.....

Born: 8/10/1985

.....

Turned pro: 2006

.....

European Tour victories: 3 (Ballantine's Championship 2012, Lyonesse Open 2012, Alstom Open de France 2015)

.....

Other victories: 3 (2 times Challenge Tour, 1 Asian Tour - CIMB Niaga Indonesian Masters)

.....

Teams: Royal Trophy 2013 (winner)

.....

Best Masters Rookie 2015 (tied 22nd)

.....

www.bw-golf.com

.....





photo: Gepa pictures

COMPETITIVE GOLF

///

## **Role model**

Bernd Wiesberger is a great example for many young Austrian golfers and inspires them, just like it would inspire them if The 2022 Ryder Cup were to be held in Austria.

*Bernd Wiesberger (AUT) victorious at the Lyoness Open 2012.*