



COMMUNICATION IS KEY

# BERNHARD LANGER

European captain 2004 (won 18½-9½)

“The key to our success was communication. One of the most important things a captain can do is to make sure every player has been communicated with and feels appreciated. Whether you are a superstar like Tiger Woods or a rookie who is there for the first time, everybody has played well and deserves to be there, so it is important for the captain to take every player aside and say ‘this is why you are sitting out this morning or tomorrow’ or ‘this is why I’m playing that guy and not you’. It doesn’t mean that you’re not as good a player, it just means that he goes

better with that guy in foursomes or hits the ball longer and makes more birdies in fourballs. You need to explain your thinking so the player understands what is behind your strategy and that it’s a team effort and what is good for the team is ultimately good for him.

But if you don’t communicate that with some of the guys, they sit out and wonder what is going on and whether the captain doesn’t like them as a person and then they get kind of mad, which doesn’t help the team.

I am also a very strong believer that every rookie should have played at least

one match or better two matches before the singles. Because on Sunday there are 12 points available. You can lose a fourball match where you can throw a rookie in with an experienced guy and let him taste the atmosphere and what it is like and let him get rid of the nerves and the jitters. If he messes up a few shots here and there he has got a partner to rely on. I would never make my rookies sit out until Sunday, I think that is a bad move, period.

The other thing I did was to instill confidence in the players by telling them they were the very best Europe had, and



that they had qualified for this, so when they got out on the course and it was a difficult environment with a tough course, a partisan crowd and lots of pressure, they needed to embrace it. Embrace the circumstance; don’t buckle under it. Enjoy it, actually go out there and have fun. They did that and it was awesome.”

**‘A key thing was instilling confidence in my players. I told them they should not fear the pressure they faced but embrace it’**