

When rain halted play at the 2010 Ryder Cup and the US team's kit leaked, they turned to the European team's supplier of apparel, ProQuip, whose clothes kept everyone dry.

Swinging in the rain

It was dubbed 'Nick Faldo's Revenge' by UK media because of a quip made by the former European Ryder Cup captain at Valhalla in 2008. "See you at Celtic Manor in two years and remember to bring your waterproofs," he said at the closing ceremony. His words turned out to be strangely prophetic, and last October's Ryder Cup, held at the Celtic Manor in Wales, was a wash-out. For the European team, whose official supplier of 'weatherwear' was Scottish outerwear brand ProQuip, the wet weather did not pose too much of a problem. But for the US team, the deluge made for an embarrassing situation, as the apparel and equipment they had brought with them turned out not to be as 'weatherproof' as they would have liked.

US team officials were forced to buy new waterproofs for the team and turned to ProQuip. The outerwear company had a stand in the merchandise exhibition tent at the course and put together between 25 and 30 combinations of jackets and trousers for the US golfers and their caddies at a cost of over £4,000.

US team captain Corey Pavin told reporters on the first day: "We were disappointed with the performance of [our waterproofs] and we just fixed it. They were not doing what we wanted them to do so we went out and bought some more waterproofs."

ProQuip managing director, Richard Head, was more than happy to come to the rescue, if a little surprised at the events that were unfolding before him. "We had no inkling that they would need new suits," he said. "But having seen them on the practice round, they looked a bit wet." He continued: "Obviously it's risky here at this time



Europe's Ryder Cup star, Miguel Angel Jimenez, was relieved that his outerwear kept him dry in the torrential rain. ProQuip was the preferred weatherwear provider to the European team.

 ProQuip



The European Ryder Cup team, wearing their TourFlex suits provided by ProQuip.

 ProQuip

of year to have the Ryder Cup. I think it's hard for people overseas to understand the fluctuations of the weather. We are only ten kilometres from the sea and it's a micro-climate here. This is the most extreme weather I've seen at a Ryder Cup."

Mr Head's allusion that the US team underestimated the changeability of Welsh weather was a reasonable one. Certainly, the name of the clothing suppliers they chose, Sun Mountain, suggests they were hoping for brighter playing conditions. However, media reports at the time suggested that people at Sun Mountain claimed that part of the trouble was the stitching specifically requested by the US team which caused "significant leakage problems".

Indeed, the failure seems to have taken Sun Mountain by surprise as much as it did the US team. The sportswear company posted a photo on its Facebook page on 29 September, just two days before the tournament began, alongside the caption: "Check out this photo from a Ryder Cup practice round. That's a fine looking USA jacket. Weather will most likely be a factor at this year's event. May the team with the best outerwear win."

The statement suggests that, contrary to Mr Head's suggestion, Sun Mountain was aware of Wales's propensity for rain and had prepared for potential downpours during the match. Following the match, company owner Rick Reimers apologised in a statement, saying: "Sun Mountain Sports is very sorry for the way our rain suits performed at the Ryder Cup. We will apologise to Corey and Lisa Pavin [the US Ryder Cup captain and his wife] and the US team at our earliest opportunity, and hope they will accept our heartfelt apology for the stress this must have caused. We are evaluating what happened. We believed, as Corey must have, that our RainFlex, built with quiet, stretchable,

breathable fabric would be an advantage to the US team. That it was not is a great disappointment. It was just not enough for the torrential rains at Celtic Manor."

As the US team changed into their new clothes, it seems that an element of schadenfreude was at play. Members of Europe's team gleefully praised their clothing, with Ian Poulter saying: "Ours are keeping us nice and dry, that's all I'm going to say," and Rory McIlroy stating: "Just have to say our waterproofs are performing very well!"

ProQuip had provided the European team with a newly-designed suit for 2010, the TourFlex. Made with an exclusive ultra-lightweight, plain weave fabric that is stretchable all over, the suit is designed to be easy to play in. At the time, the company said the most significant recent development in this area has



The TourFlex is made out of ultra-lightweight plain weave waterproof fabric, featuring all-over two-way stretch.

 ProQuip



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TourFlex: Technical detail

- All-over stretchable fabric for freedom of movement
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- Concealed waterproof zips
- Concealed pockets
- Shaped back hem to keep back dry and warm. 🌐

been stretchable waterproof fabrics, although many are relatively heavy and used only as panels within jackets. However, it said fabrics such as TourFlex are part of “a new generation of all-over, stretchable, lightweight waterproofs”.

Mr Head said of the range: “I wanted to create a fabric that was more like a second skin, so that the golfers would hardly know they were wearing a rain suit. I can honestly say this is the best performing suit we’ve ever made. The 2008 European Ryder Cup Team used a prototype version of this suit and the players loved it, although the weather at Valhalla meant that rain suits were not required. However, we had some excellent feedback from the players, which encouraged us to develop the technology further, making it even lighter and more stretchable.”

Amid the bad weather that plagued the Ryder Cup at Celtic Manor, ProQuip sold out of rain suits. The publicity and brand awareness generated by the match is enabling the company to build on its success – and Mr Head is seizing the moment. “I think the awareness of the brand overseas is just beyond what we could’ve expected, we’ve had contact from nearly every country in Europe and from further afield,” he said a few days after the Ryder Cup. “I think the mark of the brand has been re-established, and I think people who have never heard of ProQuip before will always consider it to be a high value brand.” 🌐