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SEPTEMBER, 2006 • COMPLIMENTARY

Ellen Port

- Course Review: The Ridge
- 9/11/01 at Bellerive • Golf's Jerks • Notable Seniors
- Playing vs. Watching

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A Note from the Editor

It is said that two things in life are inevitable—death and taxes. Looks like we'll have to add a third: Tiger's domination of the PGA Tour. The A.P.'s **Doug Ferguson** observes in a column this month that due to his revamped swing and improved putting, Wood's is apt to become even better—a scary thought.

There's little argument that Tiger is the greatest, but there are other great golfers deserving of our attention too. **Ed Schafer's** favorite pro no longer is Phil Mickelson, and no, it isn't Tiger either. Read *View from the Gold Tees* and you'll probably be surprised to learn who Ed's new hero is.

Jennifer Hojnacki profiles a local amateur, **Ellen Port**, who has built an astounding record of accomplishment for herself in golf, even though golf is not her first priority in life. You'll want to read about this remarkable woman and learn what makes her tick. **Sandi Hazard** interviewed four of our area's most senior golfers. Their stories and their advice are well worth noting.

Jim "Mulligan Stew" Carroll seems to have become bored watching golf on TV and figures it's time to put more priority on playing the game himself. **Greg Beabout** agrees that it's better to play golf than watch it, but he compares watching it on TV to being on-site. Greg extends these thoughts to football, baseball and hockey as well.

In past issue we've reviewed Annbriar and The Acorns golf courses in Waterloo. **Greg Beabout** went back to that town to another public course there, The Ridge. In the face of intense competition brought on by the development of several fine public golf courses in its immediate area, The Ridge has carved out its own unique niche.

Late August and early September of this year mark the first and fifth anniversaries, respectively, of two of our nation's most somber and tragic events—Hurricane Katrina and the 9/11/01 attacks. I had just assumed editorship of this magazine five years ago and wrote a personal account of what I observed at Bellerive Country Club on September 11, the day events at the World Golf Championships were scheduled to get underway. You can read excerpts from that story in this issue.

Finally, in digging out that 2001 issue of SIG, I came across a lighter piece we ran on certain creepy character types **Jim Carroll** and I have encountered on the golf course. I hope it's worth re-reading or reading for the first time if you missed it then.

I hope everybody's voted (just once) in our "Best Of" survey printed in last month's issue. We'll be tabulating the results and let you know who won in October, our final issue of the season.

-Gene Vanek

E-mail: gvanek@theintelligencer.com

Correction

In the August issue in the article on handicapping, it was indicated that in the handicapping system used at Fox Creek, a score of 45 minus 32 would yield a league handicap of 9. It should have read 45 minus 36 (par for 9 holes) yields a 9 handicap.

Southern Illinois Golf

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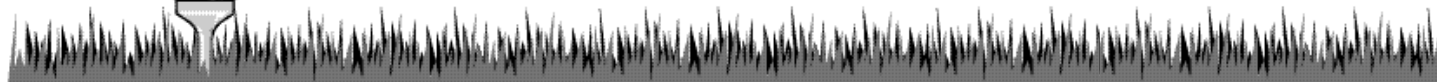
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Bruce E. Coury, Publisher Gene Vanek, Editor Lynette Berigan, Adv. Sales Edmund Branch, Designer

Contributing Writers:

Greg Beabout Jim Carroll Doug Ferguson Sandi Hazard Jennifer Hojnacki Ed Schafer





Mulligan Stew

BY JIM CARROLL

Business As Usual on the Tour

Pardon my yawning. I'm sitting here staring at the computer screen the day after the PGA Championship wrapped up and I don't have a thing to write about. Nothing exciting that is. But Editor Gene expects a column.

The PGA was as boring as tournament golf gets. The Expected One intimidated the field just as he had at the British Open. But this time there were no tears to liven things up. Now the only excitement left is figuring out when the Expected One will surpass Jack's record for major victories and whether in fact he is the best ever to play the game.

I was sitting with a group of guys yesterday after we finished a round and I found myself nodding off as the television announcers droned on in the background, and my friends debated whether the Expected One is the greatest, the luckiest or the beneficiary of advances in equipment technology. The discussion ended when one of the guys announced he was also bored by this continued hashing and rehashing and suggested we not address these issues again and simply sit back and enjoy watching the Expected One do his thing until his time runs out. Made sense to me. I went back to sleep.

The pro golf viewing season is over except for such boring events as the Reno-Tahoe and the Texas Open. Well, there's the Tour Championship, but that's nothing more than a big money tournament with a phony title. The champion of the year has already been crowned in the eyes of everyone. The

rest of the season means nothing more than cash to the players and yawns for the rest of us. And there certainly is nothing exciting happening with either the ladies or the seniors.

Whoa, wait a minute! I forgot something. There's the Yawn Cup, that bi-annual (or is it biennial; I never could figure that out) event where the USA pits its best against all of Europe, with national pride and dignity at stake. This year's captain is the deadly-serious Tom Lehman. He has four rookies already on the team via a new qualifying points system, and everyone says "we" are in trouble. Other than the Expected One and of course Phil the Unpredictable, we may have nothing to put up against those fun loving Europeans.

Actually, I have to leave now, because Captain Tom is about to announce his selections for the two captain's picks on live television. I read a prediction just a few minutes ago that the team will be augmented by veterans Corey Pavin and Stewart Cink. Yawn! I'll be back shortly.

The prediction was half right. It is indeed Stewart Cink. The other, perhaps a bit of a surprise but certainly no shock, is Scott Verplank. I was hoping for something more on the wild side in order to make the Yawn Cup less of a yawn. Following the ten qualifiers at number eleven was John Rollins. Also high on the list, according to Captain Tom, was Lucas Glover. I believe having six rookies on the team would make the event a whole lot more fun to watch. And maybe, just maybe, the team would be a bit loose and have some fun playing golf against a bunch of guys who always seem to be enjoying themselves, not to mention kicking butt four of the last

five times. But Tom explained he did what was "best for the team." And of course we all know national pride is at stake.

Everyone believes the USA is the underdog this year, and one nationally known writer claims, no matter who Captain Tom picked, we're going with the weakest team ever. I say, good. I want to see how the Vaughn Taylors, J.J. Henrys, Zach Johnsons and Brett Wetteriches of the golfing world handle the pressure. Maybe I'll stay awake.

Every year, whether the Yawn Cup or in alternate years the President's Cup, it's the same core of players: Woods, Michelson, DiMarco, Love and once in a while for sentimental value, Couples. These guys put on a happy face, but do you think they might get a bit tired of it year after year? The Europeans only have to show up every two years, and they seem pretty fresh. When you look at the second tier of players on the PGA Tour, they have more talent than the European team in any year. Why not put them out there for a change? Let some of the regulars bow out even if they qualify. Give them a break. But imagine the uproar if Tiger decides he wants to take a year off. He'll be charged with treason.

Wait Until Next Year

We're in for some real excitement next season. It's the Fed-Ex Cup, a season-long competition culminating in some sort of playoff, designed to identify the real champion of the year. Yawn!

Supposedly, it's a copy of what they do at NASCAR. I don't follow NASCAR nor do I see why the Tour feels the need to model itself after a race car circuit. The players will earn points all year in an attempt to qualify for the end-of-year competition.

I'm probably oversimplifying, but you get the picture I hope. The purpose is to first of all generate more fan interest late in the year when golf has to compete with college and pro football. Also, players will be encouraged to play in more events in order to keep those qualifying points rolling in.

Will it achieve those two objectives? We won't know of course until a year from now. But the guess here at Mulligan Stew is that the Expected One should not be expected at Reno-Tahoe or Texas. And but for those of us who pay real close attention to the pro game, the average fan is going to do what he or she has always done after the fourth major—watch football.

Let's Play Golf

So how do we remove the yawns from our golfing lives? My plan this year is to turn off the TV set and get out on the links. We have reached the best time of the year to play the game. The casual players hang the clubs up after Labor Day and fire up the TV sets for months of football. That leaves the courses less crowded. And here in the Middle-Atlantic area as well as there in the Gateway region the weather is perfect well into November.

I just finished my last tournament of the year—our senior club championship, and as usual I made a fool of myself. But now is the time of year to figure out why things have once again gone south. Is it all in my head as the majority of my buddies seem to believe? Or am I devoting too much time to watching and not enough to practice? Time to find out. There's no yawning on the practice range.

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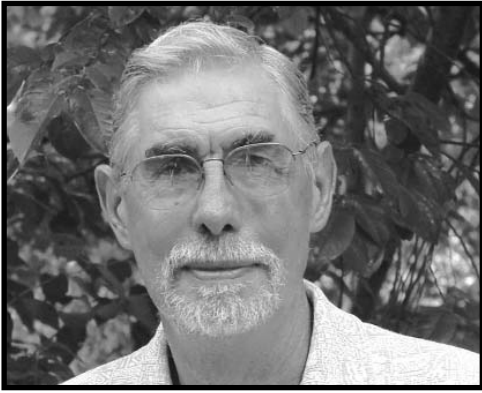
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View from the Gold Tees

BY ED SCHAFER

Corey Pavin is my idol.

Yeah, yeah, I know. A couple of months ago I said on these pages that Phil Mickleson was my idol. But that was after The Masters, where the Mickleson I had always hoped was down inside him came out to play.

He had obviously matured. There was no wild craziness. He didn't try impossible shots and fail just as it seemed he had things going his way. He played a controlled game and was bogey-free for 17 holes on the last round to win his second Masters and put him up there with the greats of golf.

But choosing idols is a dangerous thing. How many times have the St. Louis Cardinals gotten our hopes up only to disappoint us in the end? So I should have known better than to pin my hopes on Phil, who had been pretty unreliable in the past.

As a fellow lefty (which, after looking at his earnings and his other assets, I realize is the only thing we have in common) I had often pleaded with him on the television screen to take the safe shot and the sure win. He never did, and I remember him putting successive balls into the water to give the tournament away.

But he fooled me at The Masters. I thought I had found what seemed to have been a lost cause that finally proved himself and I loved him for it. I never was a big fan of Tiger's. He is just too good and seldom lets his emotions control his swing. No, my idol had to be a guy who could, despite having feet of clay, overcome his obvious faults and be a winner. I loved an underdog. Like Phil Mickleson, for years

“the best golfer who never won a major.”

But then came the U.S. Open and one of the ugliest meltdowns we've seen since Greg Norman left the scene. After he put one of his shots into a trash can, I knew it was over. The end wasn't going to be pretty. And it wasn't. He went down in flames.

Afterward, Phil told the TV guy that he had been “an idiot.” An admirable admission of stupidity, maybe, but not enough. I wasn't listening any more.

So, there I was, floundering around and looking for someone more deserving of my admiration and support. I recovered from my Mickleson-induced nausea just in time to catch a part of the Saturday play at the U.S. Bank Championship. And there was Corey Pavin.

I didn't even know he was still playing PGA golf well enough to get on television and there he was in the lead. What little hair he has is now gray and he hasn't gained a pound or grown an inch, but he was two strokes ahead going into the final round.

I had always enjoyed watching him play in yesteryear; his craftsman-like approach to the game and the way his putts just died into the hole.

Of course, I knew he stood little chance of winning on Sunday. Despite the fact that he shot an unreal 26 on the front nine on the first day, and despite the fact that he had held his own since, I truly didn't believe he could stave off a long hitter like Jerry Kelly and carry it off.

Kelly outdrove Pavin by an average of 35 yards for the tournament, with Pavin using his three wood off some of the tees and wisely laying up in a good spot on the par fives. But Pavin played the course like a violin, making few mistakes and extending his lead over Kelly to four strokes at one time.

Kelly managed a couple of birdies to cut Pavin's lead to two, but it didn't shake Corey and he played his control game to the end, winning for the first time since 1996.

That's a great story and one that creates idols.

Sure, a lot of the big names weren't playing the tournament, but that doesn't diminish Pavin's accomplishment or change the way he played. And when the television commentator stuck a microphone in his face as he walked off the 18th green, he didn't have to say, "I'm an idiot."

And now I don't have to worry about my idol blowing up down the stretch of a major. I doubt seriously that Pavin will ever be in that situation. That's OK by me.

Summer Reading

That really hot spell in July and August cut into my playing time, but it did allow me to catch up on some reading. One of my former regular golf partners is sidelined with a shoulder ailment and has even more time to read than I do. And he has a knack for finding the oddball things that you won't find on The New York Times' best seller list.

The most recent book he passed along had a title I couldn't pass up: "Golf's Strangest Rounds."

Author Andrew Ward apparently did a lot of research and came up with some of the weirdest, little known, but true, happenings in golf from the time it first made recorded history.

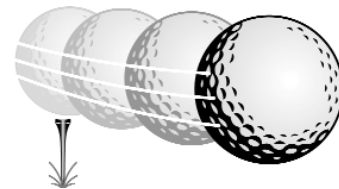
For instance, I learned that golf was once an Olympic sport with St. Louis ties. George Lowe of Toronto, Canada, beat Chandler Egan in the final match of the 1904 Olympics at Glen Echo Country Club in St. Louis.

Golf was dropped from the games due to lack of interest in 1908 when only one golfer signed up to play. *The Times of London* summed it up this way: "It is difficult to think otherwise than that Olympic golf is a mistake."

One other brief story caught my eye. The longest single hole played in golf, according to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, was by Floyd Rood in the mid-1960s. He completed the 3,398-mile hole from the Pacific coast to the Atlantic in 114,737 strokes, losing 3,511 balls along the way. It took him a year and 19 days.

The longest hole I knew about before reading this book came from a flyer I saw on a bulletin board in Kodiak, Alaska. It was promoting a 27-mile cross country tournament from one end of the island to the other.

Players carried just on club and were allowed to carry as many balls and as much bear spray as they needed. And I thought the 18th hole at Emerald Greens was tough.



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Meet Ellen Port

This champion approaches golf with an “attitude of gratitude” and takes it “one tournament at a time.”

BY JENNIFER HOJNACKI

When I am asked (often) why I am not a champion golfer, I typically blame it on the fact that I work (and with the chronic and severe shortage of Marketing Consultants, I don't feel it would be in the best interests of the global economy to quit) and have a husband and children to take care of. How could I possibly find the practice time, playing time, and travel time I would need to be a top competitor?

Well, it would appear I am going to have to find some new reasons (I am leaning toward a combination of lack of ability and shoes that don't fit properly), because one of the most successful lady golfers in our area, Ellen Port, also happens to be a wife, mother of two young children, PE teacher, field hockey coach, golf coach, and is active in her church and local charities.

I haven't spent a lot of time in the company of highly accomplished competitive golfers, so I didn't know what to expect when I sat down with Ellen to talk to her about her game, her family, and what makes her tick. Port recently won her 7th consecutive Metropolitan Amateur Golf Association Women's Championship, has 3 US Mid-Amateur titles under her belt (one of only two women who can make that claim), and has been a member of victorious U.S. Curtis Cup and Missouri Fore State teams.

What surprised me most was how much Ellen was like....well, my girlfriends. That is, if you set aside the fact that a golf goal for most of my girlfriends



Ellen Port accepts the 2005 Women's Player of the Year Award from Metropolitan Amateur Golf Association President Stan Grossman

would be breaking 100, not trying to win a record-setting 4th US Mid-Am title. She puts God and family first, and has a passion for everything she does. She helps her friends through their personal crises, large and small. She juggles the myriad responsibilities of today's working mom: career, kids,



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grocery shopping, and laundry. Like me, she doesn't have time to watch TV. Although, in what I can only view as a freakish coincidence, both of our husbands do (have time to watch TV, that is, specifically whatever is on The Golf Channel).

There were other surprises. That Ellen, although exposed to golf as a kid, didn't start playing golf until she was 23, when she met her husband. That she doesn't play an insane number of rounds per week (she estimates 10 rounds this entire season). That she doesn't follow professional golf (again, who has time?). In the end, Ellen is like most of us suburban moms, only one with an exceptional gift for the game.



The Ports, Andy and Ellen, share a love of golf

Ellen on Her Game

This summer, Ellen made a conscious decision to take a step back from golf so that she could spend more time with her two children (Drew, 9 and Katie, 7). She has surprised even herself by "playing some of my best golf because I have just let it go. I was mentally fatigued, and know now that I can still play well without practicing around the clock." Taking a sabbatical fits into Port's philosophy that you have to step away from things sometimes in order to "re-fuel."

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Ellen and son Drew Port

Ellen has mastered what she calls “compartmentalizing”—carving out the time she needs to keep her game competitive. “I know my swing so well, and I know where I need help. A few weeks before (the Mid-Amateur in October), I will really kick it up and get out to practice a lot more.” Other than that, she gets in a half-hour here, an hour there, 3 holes here, 6 holes there.

“This summer, I’ve realized that I don’t have to do it (practice and play) like everyone else out there. I can’t devote the time the college players do to playing, so I have to do it my way.”

Ellen is committed to her game, but not to the exclusion of the other things that are important in her life. “I have never wanted golf to be the center of my life,” she answered when asked why she didn’t pursue a professional career. She is enriched by her job as a high school teacher and coach, by her friendships, her church and prayer group, and can’t imagine a life without all of these things.

Why Golf is Great for Women

So many women I know don’t play golf simply because they can’t make the time, so I was anxious to ask Ellen what her thoughts were on how the Average Jane could take on what can be a very demanding sport. “Golf is such a great game for women. There aren’t many other sports you can enjoy with your husband and kids, and it fills so many needs, like the need to be competitive and the need to be social.”

Women with multiple priorities have to take a realis-

tic and longer-term approach to the game. Set goals and then work smart with the time you have. She also emphasizes the benefits of good instruction.

When giving advice to women who are working to improve their games and get competitive, she quotes her own coach and friend, Hank Haney, who told her from the beginning, “Play the event you can win.” In other words, start small so that you can have success and keep building your confidence.

What the Future Holds

Ellen is anxious to see how her more laid-back approach to the game this summer plays out when she competes in the US Women’s Mid-Amateur Championship in Mississippi this October. Winning a 4th Mid-Am is definitely a goal (no one has ever done it), as is captaining a Curtis Cup team. In the meantime, Port is focusing on “letting it go,” not trying to control what she knows to be a “gift from God.”

We’ll all be watching.

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Watching Golf

BY GREG BEABOUT

Which is better: watching golf on television or watching a PGA tournament live in person?

OK, right away I can hear someone snickering under his breath that, if given the choice, it's more fun to play golf. And I'll agree with that. That's not the dispute.

In fact, according to a TV Guide survey, 94% of golfers said they would prefer to play golf than watch it on TV or watch it in person. I'll grant that golf is a game to be played, not watched.

And I'm not trying to convince anyone who doesn't like watching professional golf that they are missing out on something important. I'm thinking of this as a debate among those of us

who casually enjoy watching the PGA. This is a topic for a conversation with a beverage after the 18th hole.

Now I can hear my wife snickering with her eyebrows raised: "You think your interest in the PGA is only casual?"

I'm no addict, but I enjoy watching the big tournaments. By the end of the golf season, I'd usually rather watch football, but if I'm in the mood, I'll tune into golf almost any weekend. And I'll admit that I make watching the majors and the Ryder Cup a priority, particularly over chores.

The PGA hasn't made many stops in St. Louis in recent years, but there is talk that the Western Open might begin rotating between Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Indianapolis.

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of chances to attend PGA tournaments, and I haven't been to that many professional golf tournaments – perhaps a dozen – but I still find the question intriguing. Which is better: golf on TV or watching the pros live?

According to the same TV Guide survey, viewers are evenly split on this question. If given the choice, half prefer TV while the other half prefers watching it live.

Compared to Other Sports

Of course, the same question could be asked of other sports. I think most people would agree with me that attending a Cardinals game, whether at the old Busch or the new Busch, is better than watching baseball on TV.

Hockey is even more obvious. In person, hockey is often exhilarating. The action is so intense that a TV screen can't capture it. When the Blues played in the old arena, I really enjoyed watching them in person, especially if the Blackhawks were in town and the whole place seemed like it was shaking. After the NHL strike, I've lost a lot of interest in hockey, but I think most would grant that hockey is not a great TV sport.

It's a more difficult question with football. Watching a football game live is wonderful. You can take in the whole field, and focus on anything you want: the ball, the blockers, the defense, the coaches, the crowd, the cheerleaders, the drunk guys in the next row, etc.

College football games, with all of the pre-game activities and frequent bizarre behavior in the stands, are especially engaging in person. I find watching live high school football games very exciting, especially when I have an interest in one of the teams.

The spectacle of watching a football game in person is great, but sometimes at Rams games, I'm left wanting to see a replay or wishing I had a little commentary explaining a strange call. A standard topic of conversation on a ride home from a Rams game is our desire to watch replays of highlights from the game on the sports shows.

Football on TV has its advantages: better views, more close ups, more replays, etc. To my taste, football is the best television sport, even though I very much enjoy watching it in person. I wouldn't think

someone is crazy if they thought football on TV is, in some ways, better than watching the game live.

Watching Golf

With golf, there is an even more extreme difference between watching TV versus being at the tournament.

In person, there are countless ways to watch a golf tournament. You can pick out a good spot and watch each group as they pass by. Or you can follow one group around from start to finish. Or you might mix those two strategies. You can hang around the practice range or the putting green for a while.

A few years ago, I was at Castle Rock in Colorado with my brother, and we were following Phil Mickelson around at The International. The crowds were pretty big, as you'd expect, and we were having a hard time keeping up with Phil's group. But then my brother spotted Mickelson's wife, who was extremely pregnant at the time. My brother said, "Let's follow her. She's got to know how to weave through the crowd." Sure enough, she was an expert. Following Phil's wife, we got to see every one of Lefty's shots for about nine holes.

The problem with that approach is that, inevitably, you'll end up missing some of the other action. While you're following one group, you'll hear a loud cheer from another hole, and be left to guess or rely on rumors about what you missed. At a golf tournament, the action is so spread out that it's almost impossible to follow the story of the tournament when you are at the course.

In contrast, on TV, the cameras and commentators are very careful to make sure you get the whole story.

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Watching tournament golf in person is more dramatic, but watching on TV provides a better narrative.

What's the difference? A drama is a story set on a stage. In golf, the stage is the course, and the drama is ready made by virtue of the competition. The central action centers on the plot question: "Who will win?"

Tournament courses are grand stages, larger than any Broadway venue, and the plot, spread out over almost a week, contains countless little dramas. There is a story with each player and each hole that is played. Many of the chapters are pretty routine, but a lot that never appears on camera is quite engaging in person.

Once while I was watching a PGA event, Briny Baird pulled his approach into the crowd and it settled at my feet. (I had never heard of him, but he was paired with Ernie Els.) I just stood still and waited for him to arrive. Eventually he got a rules official to come over. I was standing right next to them during the conversation. After each of his two drops rolled out of bounds, he placed his golf ball on the cart path and then used a wedge to knock it onto the green and within four feet of the pin. As his wedge contacted the concrete cart path, sparks flickered. It was dramatic, but it wasn't on TV.

A narrative differs from a drama in that a narrative is a story with a story-teller. Golf on TV is always a narrative, since there is always a director choosing which camera shots to use on the broadcast. Someone in a booth, or a whole group, is making decisions about how to tell us the story of the tournament. And there are the announcers.

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Finding the Story

The key to being a good story-teller is the ability to find the story. That's easiest at the end of the tournament, especially when the outcome is being decided.

When three or four players are in contention on the back nine of a big tournament, it's pretty easy for the networks to tell the story by simply focusing on the leaders. If Tiger is in contention, we watch.

But sometimes, the natural story of the tournament is not very compelling. At those times, both the director of the cameras and the announcers frequently try to force a story on us: Tiger's personal life, Michelle Wie's stomachache, etc.

Each month, I look forward to reading Jim Carroll's "Mulligan Stew" column in SIG and his good-natured tirades against the golf announcers. ("That's an unforced error, huh Roger." "Sure is, Johnny.")

Jim's comments are right-on because he recognizes the gap between the story of the tournament and the way that the announcers try to push comments on us.

"Watching Golf" Continued on Page 28

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It's the Short Game, Stupid

BY DOUG FERGUSON, THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Tiger Woods has hit some amazing shots in his career.

He drove the green on a 347-yard hole at Doral. He hit 6-iron from 218 yards out of a bunker and over the water in Canada. His most famous shot might be the chip-in at the Masters that made a hair-pin turn at the top of the ridge on the 16th green.

But he was equally proud of the most boring shot in golf, a special gift for swing coach Hank Haney.

"He told me Saturday afternoon, 'Hank, you've never seen me putt good,'" Haney said Monday night from his home in Dallas. "And I told him after he got done, 'I've seen you putt good now.'"

The one club Woods singled out in his five-shot victory at Medinah was his putter.

He started his final round with a 10-foot birdie to seize the lead, then pulled away with a pair of 40-foot birdie putts, both of them tumbling into the cup with perfect speed.

"I just felt like if I got the ball anywhere on the green, I could make it," Woods said. "It's not too often you get days like that, and I happened to have it on the final round of a major championship."

Oh, he's had that feeling before.

It lasted an entire summer in 2000, when Woods won three straight majors among his nine PGA Tour victories and shattered the tour record for lowest scoring average with a mark of 68.17.

That once-in-a-lifetime season has become conversation at water coolers again, especially after Woods won the PGA Championship. It was his third straight victory, two of them majors, by a combined score of 60 under par and margin of 10 strokes.

Is an encore around the corner?

Conventional wisdom holds that 2000 was a special year that will never be matched. And as well as Woods has played, three victories over five weeks is hardly enough to draw any conclusions.

But if he is to repeat his mastery, it starts with the flat stick.

"Truthfully, he hasn't putted well," Haney said.

Woods hit the ball so well in 2000 that his favorite shot was a 3-wood that had 2 inches of draw on No. 14 at St. Andrews. What often gets forgotten is that he made just about every putt inside 10 feet.

Haney has been revamping Woods' swing the last two years, so it might seem self-serving for him to talk on the short game when everyone else is focusing 300 yards away, usually in the trees. Then again, Haney gets criticized during hard times and ignored when Woods is winning majors.

Woods went through the 2004 season with only one PGA Tour victory, and Haney was the guy who messed up his swing. He has won 11 times the last two years, including four of the last eight majors, and now Woods is good enough to win with any swing.

Remember everyone saying that Woods couldn't win on courses that took the driver out of his hand?

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Hank Haney studies Tiger's putting stroke

Now they're saying he can only win on courses where he can leave the driver in his bag.

"Any time he doesn't have to hit driver, he'll hit it right down the middle," Chris DiMarco said.

That was either a backhanded compliment or a bad perception, because Woods is capable of missing fairways with anything, as he showed in the third round at Medinah by hitting 3-wood that was headed for trouble until a fan swatted it back into play. Haney attributes some of perception to equipment, especially as it relates to driving accuracy.

Woods used a 43 1/2-inch driver with a small head and a steel shaft in 2000, and he could hit it about 290 yards in the air. Now his driver is nearly twice as large, with a 45-inch graphite shaft.

"You could make the argument that his driver is now just a specialty club," Haney said. "It's a club he uses when he can go ahead and bomb it, and there's no reason not to. Let's compare the club he hits 290 yards, which is how far he was hitting his driver in 2000. That's his 3-wood now."

For all the talk about distance and accuracy, Haney believes the key lies elsewhere.

It's the short game, stupid.

And he isn't the only one in Woods' camp who feels that way.

"I told Tiger at the start of the week, if you don't make a double bogey and you don't three-putt, you'll win this tournament," caddie Steve Williams said Sunday evening.

He had a three-putt bogey on No. 16 in the third round, and no double bogeys.

Woods had five three-putts at Pinehurst No. 2 when he finished two shots behind Michael Campbell in the U.S. Open last year, and Haney said he had five more three-putts at Baltusrol when he wound up two shots behind Phil Mickelson in the PGA Championship.

Haney is a nut with statistics, but two obscure stats he uses to state his case are eye-openers.

Woods is tied for first in proximity to the hole on the PGA Tour. But he ranks No. 171 in avoiding three-putts, averaging slightly less than three per tournament. Woods is No. 1 in greens hit in regulation, but 159th in average putts per round.

"If you look at his statistics, it's incredible what he's done this year," Haney said.

Someone in New Zealand asked Williams earlier this year if he ever thought Woods could repeat a season like 2000, and the answer was somewhere between doubtful and questionable.

"But with what Hank has taught Tiger, and the way Tiger has taken it in, I don't think we've seen the best of this guy," Williams said. "The best is yet to come, and we're starting to see signs of it. I think Tiger can improve, and you'll see some great results."

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The Ridge

BY GREG BEABOUT

The Ridge Golf and Country Club in Waterloo has carved out a solid niche by offering golfers a fun round with a variety of holes, a relaxed atmosphere, bargain prices (especially for seniors), and an enjoyable clubhouse.

This is a great time to be a golfer in our area. The metro-east has such a wide variety of golf courses that local golfers are frequently spoiled. Sometimes, it seems we don't know how good we've got it.

To keep us coming back, area courses have kept rates comparatively low, and they've been forced to be creative. Many courses have ingeniously found their own place in the local golf market. At The Ridge, their niche centers on affordable, relaxed fun.

The Story of "The Ridge"

Ken Osterhage, the President, manager, and co-owner of The Ridge, has been with the golf course from the time they opened in the early 1990s.

Osterhage, whose background is in the construction business, began playing golf as an adult. "In the 1980s, we used to play all the time at North County in Red Bud. It was one of the few courses in Monroe County then. They were always busy. Golfers needed reservations, and the course was usually packed."

Osterhage's experience as a golfer inspired him to build a golf course and residential community in Waterloo. At that time, the only golf course in Waterloo was the private country club. So, Osterhage and some fellow investors opened "The Ridge" as a nine-hole course in the early 1990s.

The golf course takes its name from the ridge of land that extends northeast from downtown Waterloo. The land contains gently rolling hills with a few sharp changes in elevation. The design of the course takes good advantage of the natural terrain.

"We didn't move a lot of earth to build this course," said Osterhage.



The green at No. 3 of The Ridge is nestled in a wooded valley

Osterhage Construction Company was involved in developing the residential neighborhood near the golf course. Construction proceeded in several phases.

In the early 1990s, the course was unveiled – along with some of the early phases of the neighborhood.

When The Ridge opened, golfers were enthusiastic; the course was an immediate success. "You could hardly get a tee time on the weekends. We were always busy," recalled Osterhage.

Of course, the golf course made the neighborhood more desirable to homebuyers. With road improvements connecting Route 3 to I-255 and the Jefferson Barracks Bridge, residents in Waterloo had an easy commute into South County. Waterloo became a high-growth area. So Osterhage and his colleagues decided to add an additional nine holes.

By the mid-1990s, "The Ridge" was an 18-hole championship course with a steady clientele. Life was great.

New Courses, New Challenges

As the 1990s unfolded, it turned out that Ken Osterhage wasn't the only person in Waterloo with the dream to build a golf course.

Just across town, the Nobbe family transformed their remarkable piece of property into Annbriar, one of the premier golf courses in the entire state. And a few miles south, a scenic design opened at The Acorns.

In Columbia, two nine-hole courses opened in the bottomland near the J.B. Bridge. Each was well suited for those learning the game or for a casual round; those two nines eventually merged into the 18-hole River Lakes.

Columbia Golf Course added an outstanding nine-holer, The Bridges, designed by Gary Kern. And then around the corner, Fairfield opened, first as a nine, and within the last year, as a full 18.

With Triple Lakes just up the street always making improvements and The Prairies opening in Cahokia, the Illinois side of the river south of downtown St. Louis has become rich in golf courses. A golfer from Waterloo who wanted to sample every hole in a 15-mile radius could play a different course each day for almost two weeks.

The Ridge, which is the home course for the Waterloo high school golf squad, sets itself apart by providing a relaxed atmosphere on the course with a family-friendly feel that welcomes both seniors and junior golfers, a variety of active fun in the clubhouse, and very attractive greens fees.



The Ridge has a family-friendly feel that welcomes the next generation of golfers

Course Condition

On a recent visit, I found the putting surfaces to be in really fine condition. Despite weeks of dry weather, they were soft and receptive. Stick an approach shot near the hole and you'll have a birdie putt. The greens rolled true, and we sank our share of long putts.

The greens have gentle undulations; I was impressed with several breaks, some of which I read perfectly – and a few that I didn't expect. (It's curious how after you miss a putt, it suddenly becomes obvious where the break is!)

The bluegrass fairways were in good shape. Bluegrass doesn't stand up quite as well as zoysia or Bermuda during a hot summer like this year, but I was happy to find the fairways in decent shape. With the dry weather, there are some dry spots if you venture off the fairway.

The same kind of grass is found both in the fairways and in the rough, so you don't get a very sharp visual differentiation as with some contoured fairways.

It's been quite dry this summer in Waterloo, so I wondered how Shaun Johnston and his grounds crew could keep the putting surfaces so green. After all, many area lawns are burnt brown.

The grounds crew at The Ridge uses a million gallons of water a day from their five lakes. The surrounding neighborhood was designed so that rainwater drains from the residential areas into the golf courses lakes. That water supply is the explanation for the healthy greens.

On the Course

At 6,500 yards from the blue tees, The Ridge is a medium length course. The best overall feature of this par 72 course is the diversity of holes – with a wonderful stretch on the front that locals call "Amen Corner".

Don Sminchak, a regular who lives just off the back nine and plays at The Ridge almost every day that the weather permits, said, "What I like most about this course is that you have to use every club in your bag. There's a wide variety of holes, and there's always something different."



Don and Dorris Sminchak, regulars at The Ridge, sport a golf cart replica of a red Cadillac

I handled the par fours with a conservative strategy: put the ball in play, then find the green. But I was most impressed with the par threes and par fives, even though several of those holes gobbled us up.

Each of the par threes is distinctive. Two of them require long carries across water.

The par fives also are quite memorable. I was seduced into going for the green in two at No. 13 – over a lake to a well-protected pin: it was a bad decision.

Two of the par fives are found on "Amen Corner."

"Amen Corner" at The Ridge

Regulars at The Ridge have dubbed Nos. 4, 5, and 6 their own "Amen Corner." I'd agree that those three holes are the best on the course.

No. 4, a par five, moves through a beautiful wooded valley; you'll need two good shots just to see the green!

From the tee box, No. 5 is an innocent looking par three, but a sunken lake wraps its arms around the entire putting surface except for 15 yards across the front. If you're not on or short with your tee shot, you'll probably be wet.

The single best hole on the course is No. 6: the ravine. It's a par five with a landing area about 400 yards from the tee box. (Don't even dream of driving it into position.) After two controlled shots to the landing area, you'll need an accurate iron on your approach through a chute of tall oaks and across a

very deep ravine to a turtle-back green sitting atop a steep grass wall. No. 6 really is a wonderful golf hole.



The best hole at The Ridge is No. 6, the ravine hole

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The finishing hole on the course is another fine par five. A long, pretty lake borders the fairway left all the way up to the green. But by the time we were putting on the last, my focus had turned to the clubhouse that sits invitingly across the water.



The beautiful No. 18 at The Ridge in Waterloo

After our round, the clubhouse was buzzing with business. Quite a few regulars were taking in the Cardinals game on TV – and discussing the ravine hole.

The Ridge does not have a pro shop. The heart of the clubhouse is a nicely appointed bar with a spacious dining area and a striking view across the lake to the No. 18 green. Upstairs there is a banquet room.



Beth Williams draws a cold beverage in the clubhouse at The Ridge

The management at The Ridge has learned that their niche includes a busy clubhouse and friendly servers with big smiles, along with plenty of food and drink specials.

Call for details, but at various times, The Ridge offers a variety of clubhouse specials: Friday Fish Fry, Saturday Prime Rib, Sunday Chicken and Roast Beef Buffet, weekend breakfasts, Karaoke nights, chicken wings during the Rams games, and so forth.

One person told me that The Ridge is really a clubhouse with a golf course around it. In a saturated golf market, The Ridge has found that their solution to attracting and maintaining customers is emphasizing relaxed fun – on and off the course.

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Stories from the Past

Dealing with Cheaters, Mopes and Other Jerks Who Try to Ruin the Game

Editor's Note:

I was a bit surprised (pleasantly, I must say) to recently have a couple of acquaintances ask me if we could re-run some of the stories we ran a few years ago where we profiled "Cheaters, Mopes and Other Jerks Who Try to Ruin the Game." I say "pleasantly," surprised because they were excerpts from a little book Jim Carroll of Mulligan Stew Fame and I put together in the late 90's. In it, we described certain characters most of us avid golfers have encountered on the golf course at least once in our playing careers, and we offered some strategies—largely tongue-in-cheek—for dealing with these guys. The following excerpts appeared in our October/November 2001 issue.

Ego Man

This fool has an inflated view of his golfing ability. He believes he's so good that it's impossible for him to accept a compliment about a good golf shot. Ego Man is a fair golfer, but he's not a single digit handicap by any means. Here's what happens when you play with Ego Man.

On the first three holes, he has made two pars and a bogey. He's hit the ball respectably, but nothing to write home about. Finally, on the fourth hole he nails one off the tee. It's about 240 yards, down the middle, with a slight fade. You normally compliment a fellow player when he hits a good shot. But, unlike the boob at the pro tournaments who bellows "You Da Man!," or the idiot who screams "Get in the hole!" the second the club makes contact with the ball, you know the game well enough not to praise every shot that gets airborne. With all sincerity, as Ego Man's ball lands in the fairway, you exclaim, "Great Shot!" However, instead of hearing the customary "Thank You," or "Yea, I finally caught one," what you get from Ego Man is a grunt and look of disgust.



Illustration by Garry Wehmeyer

With that look, Ego Man is telling you that you are too stupid to recognize his true golfing abilities. He is insulted by your compliment, apparently believing that he should be hitting that kind of shot every time he swings the club. That shot might have been good for a player of your skill level, but it was just an average drive for Ego Man. At least that's what he believes.

You're reluctant to open your mouth for a while. You might even begin to doubt your own knowledge of the game. Then, Ego Man hits what for most of us would be a superb shot. From 150 yards out, he sticks one to within 15 feet of the pin. Forgetting how ignorant you really are (rather, how ignorant Ego Man *thinks* you are), you blurt out, "Niiice Shot!" He glares at you, looks toward the sky and

raises his arms in disgust. You've done it again. For a guy with his talent, it was just a routine shot. An idiot like you might be thrilled with it, but that shot is not deserving of your misplaced praise.

Deflating that Ego

We've put Ego Man in the Harmless Fools chapter of our book because he does nothing that should disrupt your game. The guy is just a jerk. All you have to do is ignore him, say little, and play your own game. But golf isn't quite that simple, is it? Through his disdain for your compliments, Ego Man questions your credibility as a golfer. He is telling you that you don't have enough knowledge of the game to know a good shot from an average one. You must get even with this guy. You must get inside his head and destroy that monstrous ego, or at least dent it.

Here is how to accomplish that objective. Say nothing for a while. Even if he hits one or two absolutely brilliant shots, hold your tongue. Then, when he hits an average shot, pounce on him. Let's say he hits one a bit fat, coming up just short of the green. Say to him, "That was quite a good shot considering the lie you had. The ball was a little above your feet. The pros can play that shot, but guys like you and me have real trouble with it. Considering our level, that was a great shot." (You have just subtly put him on your level, which will really gall him.)

Be careful not to overdo it, or he'll catch on. When he hits a really bad shot, keep your mouth shut. But when he tries to hit a 3-iron 210 yards, and only manages 180, kindly remind him how hard it is for golfers at "our" skill level to hit long irons. Then compliment him on his ability to hit it as well as he did.

Later, when he hits another really good shot, compliment him, but severely understate it. Let's say he puts another one fifteen feet past the pin from 150 yards out. Tell him he hit a fine shot, but remind him how great it would have been if he had some spin on the ball. Talk to him about how the pros can spin the ball back to the pin, but guys at "our" level aren't able to.

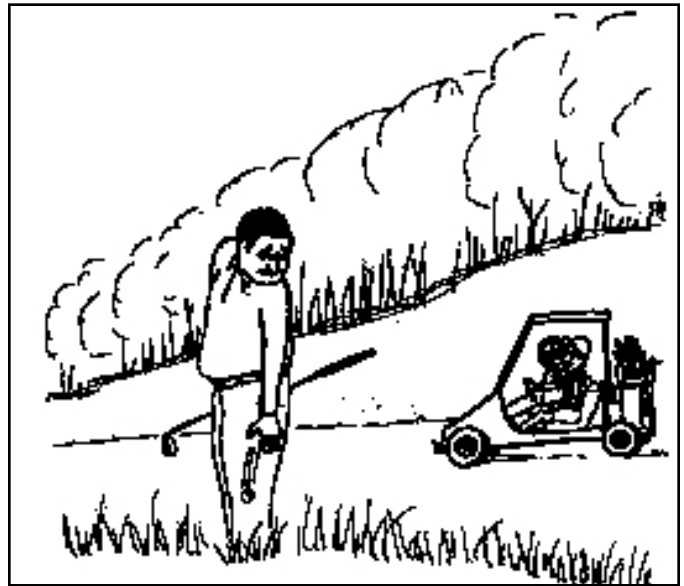


Illustration by Garry Wehmeyer

You're not trying to change Ego Man. It took him years to become a fool; a round or two with you isn't going to change him. Your goal is to have fun with this guy. Get into his head and screw up his game. Before you know it, he'll be trying to hit that three iron 240 yards, because you've implied that he's not good enough to do it. He'll be trying to nip those iron shots out of the fairway to prove to you that he can, in fact, spin the ball. He might even come up with one of those old balata balls. You'll have him so messed up, he'll probably double bogey his way to the clubhouse.

Ego Man will go home doubting his skill, at least for a while. Count on seeing him at the driving range, trying desperately to hit that 3-iron. He may avoid playing with you, because you're one of the few players out there who knows how average he really is. What a loss, huh?

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The Hawk

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If you believe he's got some innate sense that no other golfer possesses, think again. Watch him closely the next time you play. Here's what you'll see. First, he always seems to have an assortment of spare balls at the ready. If he's riding a cart, he places three or four balls in the rack at the start of the round. Whether walking or riding, he always has a ball in his pocket. Pay careful attention to these extra balls. Their number decreases during the round, despite the fact that The Hawk rarely reports a lost ball. Look quickly, however, because The Hawk replenishes his ball supply often. Notice how many times he's rooting around in the ball pocket of his bag.

If The Hawk is sharing a cart with another player, observe that he usually drops the other guy off at his ball before going in search of his own errant shot. If this approach is impossible in a given situation, The Hawk has his cart partner begin a search for The Hawk's ball at a specified point. But The Hawk quickly finds the ball, perhaps some fifteen yards away.

About the only time The Hawk loses a ball is when he obviously hits it into the middle of a lake. If it's

anywhere near the edge, he's guaranteed to find it. And you can bet he'll be able to play it.

Caging the Hawk

If you want to catch and expose The Hawk, you must pay very careful attention to detail. First, make a mental note of the brand and number of the ball he starts the round with. The Hawk won't reveal this voluntarily, so ask him. Make him tell you that he's playing a Titleist DT #4, for example. Then walk over and take a look in his cart to see whether his spare balls are the same. Like most cheaters, The Hawk thinks you're stupid, so he's likely to have a variety of different brands or numbers in his arsenal of spare balls. When he hits his Titleist DT #4 into the woods, and magically finds it and hits it onto the fairway, you've got to swoop in on that ball to determine whether it is the same one he launched off the tee. Chances are it won't be. You have now exposed him for the jerk he really is. Sure, he'll have an excuse. You can expect to hear, "I took the DT #4 out of play on the last hole; this is the ball I hit off the tee." You can't prove it's not, unless, of course, you ask him to show you the DT #4 and he can't produce it. But you probably won't even want to resort to this. You know you've caught him, and more importantly, The Hawk knows you know he's a cheater.

After you've caught him once, The Hawk is going to be a lot more careful. His spare balls all will be the same brand and number as the one he uses on the first tee. Don't despair; you still can catch the jerk. To do so, however, you're going to have to watch him (pardon the wording) like a hawk. When

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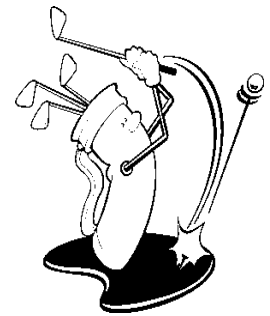
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he hits that drive into the woods and goes in search of it, shadow him. Don't leave his side. Don't give him the chance to take a spare ball out of the cart or out of his pocket. Pretend to be helping him search for his ball, but don't take your eyes off of him. If he thinks you're not watching and drops the spare ball, call him on it immediately. You can do it without starting a fight. Merely say, sympathetically, "Too bad you couldn't find your ball. Are you sure you want to give up on it so quickly?" Of course, he will argue that the ball he just dripped is his original ball, to which you should respond, "Oh. I'm sorry, I thought I saw you drop that one. My mistake." You've caught him again, and you both know it.

If you want to have some real fun with The Hawk, try to carry a couple of balls identical to those he normally plays. If he's playing the DT #4, put one in your pocket. When he hits a shot into the woods, get in there ahead of him, pretending to help him in his search. Then drop your DT #4 in an impossible position, and announce that you've found his ball. Make him take the stroke for an unplayable lie, and

commiserate with him for having to do so. If you saw the movie Goldfinger, you may recall that James Bond pulled a similar trick on Goldfinger, which allowed him to beat his rival and win a ton of money. This stunt probably is best left to the movie makers, because it tends to lower you to The Hawk's level. Donating a good Titleist to The Hawk can get expensive also. But if you're playing with a Hawk who is really out of control, what the heck. You might be able to pull it off once or twice a year.

Like most cheaters, The Hawk probably will not change. But, knowing you're onto him, he is likely to be a lot more careful when he plays with you. If he knows you're watching, he will have to adopt more sophisticated cheating techniques. He'll have to go to the extra expense of hitting exactly the same ball all the time. While this won't stop him from cheating, it will affect his game. You've achieved something.



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80's, 90's or 100: Does it Really Matter?

BY SANDI HAZARD

Last Sunday I was enjoying a round of golf out at Arlington Golf Course in Granite City. As I played, I was thinking how wonderful life is that I can enjoy a pleasant day of golf and how I'll be able to play golf forever. Then I snapped back into reality and began thinking about how old I am and wondering how long I will really be able to play the game.

Does it really matter how young or old you are when you play golf? I think not. For years I sky-dived and thought it was the perfect sport to grow old with. After all, all you have to do is jump out of the plane, open your parachute and land. But then I got hooked on golf. Now I realize that golf is the perfect sport to grow old with. In my golden years, I'll be able to ride around in a cart, hobble out, pick a club and hit the ball. Seems physically easy enough. Most folks I see on the golf course range in ages from 30 to around 70, so I figure I'll be able to play golf for a long, long time.

This month I decided to interview some of the older golfers in the metro east area and get their ideas about the game. Frankly, I half expected to encounter a lot of limping, stuttering, crabbing, and memory loss.....Boy, was I wrong! The fellows I interviewed are extraordinary! They are smart, in shape physically, sweet and respectful. They give dignity to the game of golf.



*Meet
Floyd Ellsperman -
age 87*

Floyd Ellsperman is a very sweet and caring golfer. His golf attire is always matching and very stylish. He started playing golf when he was 15 years old. His mother bought his first set of golf clubs. She paid \$58 for the entire set. Floyd plays most of his golf at Cloverleaf in

Fosterberg, but and he also plays at the American Legion in Edwardsville every Tuesday and Thursday. When asked who his favorite professional golfer is he said "Nickalus, of course". Floyd enjoys watching golf on TV and discussing golfing techniques with his friends.

Floyd's best advice for golfers: "Keep your head down."

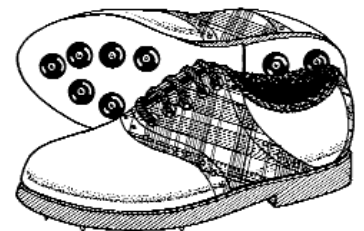


*Meet
Joseph Jaros - age 87*

Joseph (Joe) Jaros is one determined golfer. Even though life has thrown him a couple of curve balls health-wise, he continues to get out there and play. He is amazing! He started playing golf when he was 42 years of age. Joe served our country for 30 years in the United States Air Force. During this time he played in several Air force golf tournaments.

Joe plays 3 times a week at Oak Brook Golf Club in Edwardsville. At 66, Joe tied the course record with a score of 63...incredible! Joe says you can play golf all of your life. He says it is a very enjoyable game and he enjoys the social aspects. Joe uses Wilson Staff golf clubs. He has played with this set for 44 years. He did, however, buy a new Titleist Driver to add distance off the tee. He absolutely believes that club technology has changed the game of golf. He said golf balls are made better now too, which also helps golfers hit the ball farther these days. Joe's favorite professional golfer is Phil Mickelson because Phil does what he wants and plays his own game.

Joe's best advice for golfers: "Turn your brain off when you play"





*Meet
Noah Everett - age 88*

I met Noah at the American Legion's On the Hill Golf Course in Edwardsville. Noah was playing a round of golf with his friends Carl Orman, Chuck Chane, and Jim Maher. He is a very laid back individual who just "takes it easy" when he plays. He answered all of my questions while he was playing. He is a consistent golfer. Noah Everett started playing golf when he was 55 years old. He plays three times a week at the Legion. He has played with his golf clubs for 16 years. He definitely believes that club technology has changed golf. His new driver has added 30 to 40 yards to his game. Noah has attended State Farm LPGA tournament in Springfield but enjoys watching the tournaments on television the most.

Noah's best golf advice: "Keep at it!"



*Meet
Charlie Barnett -
age 91*

I could not believe it! I never ever would imagine playing golf at age 91. Charlie Barnett is incredible. He does not look 91. He looks like he's in his 60's. Charlie is a very charming man. He was so sweet and sincere when I interviewed him.

Charlie plays golf 6 times a week with his buddies, Jim Kawainui and Tom Ahrling at Alton Municipal Robert Wadlow Course. He started playing golf 63 years ago. His first set of clubs were Bobby Jones. In his earlier years he was a scratch golfer. Mr. Barnett was a Colonel in the Air force and he has played all of the Air Force golf courses. He says that the older you get, the lighter you clubs should be. He now plays with a set of Pings. He enjoys the them. His favorite professional golfer is Arnold Palmer, and he enjoys watching Phil Michelson play.

"Does It Really Matter?" Continued on Page 29

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Recalling Terrible Memories

BY GENE VANEK

Anniversaries...a time for remembering good times: marriages, graduations, births. But some anniversaries recall tragedies, e.g., Pearl Harbor, the Kennedy assassinations, the murders of Martin Luther King, Jr. and John Lennon. This is the fifth anniversary of one of our nation's worst memories, the cowardly attacks on New York City's World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

September 11, 2001 coincided with the first day of what promised to be a glorious weekend of golf in St. Louis—the World Golf Championships at Bellerive Country Club. We retrieved a story from our archives that appeared in the October, 2001 issue of SIG about our experiences at Bellerive on that fateful day. It was titled, "Golf in the Midst of Tragedy." Excerpts from it follow.

September 11, 2001 was an awful day. A day none of us will ever forget. It is one of those times, like the day President Kennedy was assassinated, that make you recall where you were and what you were doing when you heard the news.

It was on that day that a good friend, Daryl Walker, and I planned to attend the first practice round of the World Golf Championships at Bellerive Country Club. Daryl was to meet me at my house at 8:30 a.m., and we were to leave for Bellerive from there. By the time he pulled up in my driveway, the second tower of the World Trade Center had already been hit.

We stayed transfixed for a time by the TV, no longer thinking about the day of golf we had both been looking so forward to. But finally, we decided that we could learn as much about what was going on by listening to the radio as by watching television, so we set out for Bellerive.

On the ride over, we heard more horrifying news—that a high jacked passenger plane had crashed in Pennsylvania. A false report that the State Department had been car bombed was also broadcast, as was the terrible but accurate report that



Tiger Woods and Mark Calcavecchia react in horror to the news of the attacks

another plane had crashed into the Pentagon. At that time, it seemed possible that no part of the country might be spared the same kind of demonic attacks.

I had a sick feeling in the pit of my stomach thinking about loved ones working in two downtown federal buildings in St. Louis, including the high-rise Eagleton building. Then too, there is the daughter and son-in-law in Chicago, both of whom work right downtown, one in and the other near a high rise. Daryl's son is an engineer for Boeing in St. Louis, certainly a potential terrorist target.

We drove west on I-270, feeling apprehensive and, in a way, somewhat guilty—as though it was somehow sacrilegious to want to watch men practicing a sporting game while thousands of Americans were suffering and dying not too far away. And not seeing a single airplane in the sky in the vicinity of Lambert Airport added to the eerie, surrealistic atmosphere.

Arriving at the parking lot, Daryl and I were reluctant to leave the car radio; I hadn't thought of bringing along my Sony Walkman with me when I left the house. It was quite apparent, however, that

there were many people with cell phones and some with radios. Besides, we know that at least one radio station would be doing a live remote from Bellerive, so we know we would be able to stay abreast of what was happening.

As we walked toward the golf course, it was obvious from the looks on the faces in the crowd that something was drastically wrong. There was little smiling or laughing. All conversations were quiet and serious. Strangers asked strangers if they had any new information to pass on.

When we reached the course itself, we noticed people behaving differently than at other professional golf tournaments we had attended in the past, including the 1994 PGA at Bellerive. There was little of the normal jockeying for position among spectators that normally goes on. Everybody seemed unusually polite and considerate of one another. In the backdrop of the terrible tragedy that was unfolding, it seemed that securing a good spot to watch men swing golf clubs wasn't nearly as important as it seemed to be those other times.

We looked for signs of how the tragic events earlier that morning might have been affecting the golfers on the course and practice tee, but it was hard to gauge. There was very little laughing and joking, but I'm not sure there ever is when these pros are preparing for an important tournament. We did observe many of them talking on cell phones, but I was only within earshot of one player. Unfortunately, that player was Sergio Garcia, and he was speaking Spanish. On the practice tee, there seemed to be a lot of conversation among players, and I could be wrong, but it didn't look like they were talking about golf.

There was one group that seemed unaffected by what was going on in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania that day. That was the autograph vultures. It may not be fair to say these autograph seekers were unaffected by the events of the day, but gathering signatures was clearly foremost on their minds, as evidenced by the squeals of glee when they bagged a big name (e.g., overheard: "I got Weir! I got Weir!")

That's not to say that everyone who asked for an autograph was pushy or impolite. I saw some dads, moms and grandparents with kids who were quite

reserved and considerate. Personally, if I were a well-known professional golfer, or celebrity of any sort for that matter, those are the only ones I would sign for. Fortunately, I don't have to worry about that.



The autograph hounds accost Jim Furyk as he makes his way to the practice tee

Rumors floating around the course about terrorist events were rampant. Somebody said the Capitol had been hit. One gentleman who appeared to be firmly in control of the facts was telling people that the U.S. Air Force had shot down two passenger jets coming into the country from England because the planes wouldn't identify themselves. I must say that he had me convinced. In fact, I repeated the rumor myself, as if it were fact, which I thought it was.

On the way home, we couldn't understand why there was no coverage coming over the radio of the Capitol bombing and the two planes shot down over the Atlantic Ocean. It is very easy to see how rumors like those spread like wildfire, but how in the world do they get started?

Cancellation

Early on, there was every indication that some major changes, at the least, would have to be made in the tournament schedule. There were nearly 30 players who had not yet arrived in St. Louis, including Phil Mickelson and Vijay Singh. The first announcement, which we heard at the KFNS booth on-site at Bellerive, was that play would begin on Friday instead of Thursday.

GOLF

striker, Johnny."

"He sure is, Roger."

Now, the irony is inverted. We know the player is a good ball-striker; after all, he's a professional. And the player knows he's a good ball striker. But the announcer doesn't know we know it, and so Roger and Johnny appear as silly story-tellers. Our entertainment value has shifted. We now get the delight of realizing Roger is lousy at narrating.

When attending a golf tournament live, there are really just two points of view: that of each spectator and that of each contestant. The delight in watching a tournament live comes in part from the freedom to be your own director and to focus on most any story that you find engaging.

While watching golf on TV, there are four points of view: 1) the contestants, 2) the viewers, 3) the director, and 4) the commentators. The advantage of golf on TV is the viewer's ability to rapidly change one's point of view, allowing multiple parts of the tournament's story unfold in succession. The TV viewer's almost godlike capacity to take up multiple points of view at once also includes the ability to be critical of the director and the commentators.

Live or on TV?

So which is better: watching golf on television or watching a PGA tournament live in person? I'll let you discuss it with your friends over a beverage. As for me, I've got to hurry for my tee time.

Belk Recovers Nicely

Last month we wrote about massive damage at Belk Part Golf Course in Wood River from a probable tornado that ripped through the area on July 19. Mike Brasher, Director of Golf at Belk, reports that the course has made an amazing recovery from that storm which destroyed over 200 trees. Many of the 110 golfers who played in the St. Louis Metro Seniors tournament on August 24 raved about the condition of the course and the 2006 Metro East Amateur Championship on August 19-20 went off without a hitch as well.

Continued from "Does it Really Matter?" Page 25

Charlie thinks that the First Tee program is an excellent opportunity to promote golf. He believes that beginners need to first be taught golf etiquette and rules.

Charlie's best golf advice: Take lessons when you start playing golf—practice with one club; once you master it, you'll be able to hit every club.

For years I thought that in order to live longer I should take my vitamins, exercise and eat right. Of course, these are good ideas, but after talking with these gentlemen, I believe it might be more important to just get out there and play golf on a regular basis. I truly believe that golf defers the aging process. I hope this article might help inspire everyone who reads it to keep playing golf and enjoying life.





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2006 Metro East Amateur Championship

August 19-20, 2006 Results

Championship

68-76

Vic Capron	71-71=142
John Hunt	73-71=144
Ryan Hansen	70-74=144
Kevin Kuddes	71-74=145
Dean Wolfe	70-75=145
Richard Kuess	69-76=145
John Wooden	73-73=146
Justin Beaston	71-75=146
David Speicher	72-74=146
Roger Phillips	70-76=146
Bruce Brantley	68-79=147
Ray Jankowski	76-72=148
Kevin Mehlan	72-78=150
Steve Wilson	76-75=151
Dick DeQuasie	73-78=151
Richard Pickering	72-79=151

A-Flight

77-81

Jason Walker	78-70=148
Dan Donohoo	79-72=151
Brad Read	77-78=155
Mike Olliges	77-78=155
Ted Sanders	79-76=155
Dillion Brasher	77-79=156
Larry Boerschig	77-80=157
Brandon Crump	80-77=157
Lee Davis	80-83=158
Eric Esty	79-79=158
Vic Baldinger	78-80=158
Richard Gragg	81-80=161

B-Flight

82-86

Steve Booher	83-74=157 *sudden death playoff winner
Mike Speicher	82-75=157
John Stimac	83-76=159
B. J. Kenyon	82-78=160
Mark Reader	82-79=161
Ty Laux	84-78=162
Gordy Hill	84-79=163
Tom Pellegrino	83-80=163
Jerry Holbert	86-78=164
Wes Chism	86-79=165
Roger Thiemann	86-79=165
Brett Hinnen	85-80=165

C-Flight

87 and UP

Tom Buckley	89-81=170 *sudden death playoff winner
Angel Gutierrez	87-83=170
Jason Cass	88-84=172
Noel Wright	87-85=172
Brad Estes	90-83=173
Gary O'Bryan	88-86=174
Jerry Jerden	90-84=174
Jim Micheimer	91-83=174
Kim Herr	88-86=174
Sam Harrison	90-85=175
Kevin Dailey	92-84=176
Bob Hoffman	90-87=177
Ray Muniz	87-90=177

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<small>Includes Cart</small>					
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RETAIN FOR RE-USE

Chip Shots

Editor's Note: Know any good golf jokes? If so, send them to us and we'll print them if we can. E-mail preferred (gvanek@theintelligencer.com), but mail is welcome too. Send to The Intelligencer (address on Table of Contents page), attn: SIG.

Golf Jokes

A True Story



A gushing reporter once said to Jack Nicklaus, "You are spectacular. Your name is synonymous with the game of golf. You really know your way around the course. How do you do it? What is your secret?"

Nicklaus replied, "The holes are numbered."

The Mulligan

An American went to Scotland and played golf with a Scottish golfer. After a bad tee shot, the American played a "Mulligan," which was an extremely good one. He then asked the Scotsman, "What do you call a 'Mulligan' in Scotland?"

The Scotsman answered, "We call it hitting 3."

Golf Trivia

Each issue in 2006 SIG will have three golf trivia questions to be answered and returned to us for a drawing for a chance to win a free round of golf at an area golf course! The golf courses will change on a monthly basis. You can either enter your answers, along with your name and telephone number, online at:

www.southernillinoisgolf.com, click on the link that says Golf Trivia and follow the instructions. You can also call Lynette Berigan at (618) 656-4700 ext. 38 or you can mail your answers, your name, and telephone number to:

Southern Illinois Golf Magazine
 Attn: Lynette Berigan
 117 North Second St., Edwardsville, IL 62025

The featured golf course for September is The Woodlands Golf Club in Alton, IL. Answer the following questions correctly and turn them in to be entered in the drawing for a chance to win **18 HOLE PASS W/CART FOR UP TO 4 PLAYERS to The Woodlands!** The deadline to have your entries in for September is September 24th.

1. Who is the famous PGA Tour golfer who played on the University of Arizona's golf team at the same time Annika Sorenstam played on the women's team?
2. Who was the 2001 Ryder Cup Captain?
3. Who is the golf commentator that roomed with Fred Couples in college?

Congratulations to Dan Reiff of Shiloh, IL. He is the winner of the August trivia, and wins two 18-hole passes w/cart to The Fairfield Golf Club.

- Answers to August: 1) Jack Nicklaus 2) Tiger Woods
 3) Byron Nelson or Raymond Floyd 4) The Claret Jug

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Wed. 5:30pm - 9 Hole Ladies League

Sun. 5pm - 9 Holes Couples League



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