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# GOLF

MONTHLY

APRIL ISSUE (27 FEB-25 MAR)

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**Don't Miss This Month!**  
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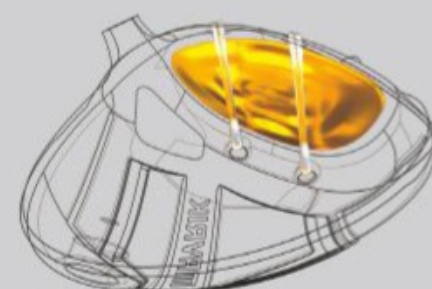
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# FROM THE EDITOR

Michael Harris michael.harris@ti-media.com

## It's a long story...



The April issue of *Golf Monthly* has always been our traditional Masters preview edition and in my 14 years as editor I've always used my welcome note to wax lyrical about the season's first Major. Azaleas, Amen Corner, back-nine roars, Tiger, elevation changes, watching the drama unfold from the sofa, Georgia on my mind... you know the drill.

Well, that was the plan, until the latest *Distance Insights Report* from The R&A and USGA landed in our inboxes.

After two years of diligent research and gauging opinion from golfers at every level of the game, the governing bodies have unequivocally said they believe increasing length has become "detrimental to the game".

If you feel like you've heard this before, you're not wrong. The view has really been in effect since the statement of joint principles was issued by The R&A and USGA back in 2002, stating that "further significant increases in hitting distances at the highest level are undesirable."

However, for me, the real game changer this time was a line that said the governing bodies would "assess the potential use of a Local Rule option that would specify use of clubs and/or balls intended to result in shorter hitting distances."

Reading between the lines, that means that The Open, US Open and possibly The Masters – i.e. events run by the governing bodies and not the main tours, who have previously suggested they would not embrace any roll-back – would be where any step change is likely to happen.

Make no mistake, this is a significant move in the offing. It may not happen for a while yet – more research and consultation is due to take place – and until a definitive rule change occurs, the debate around whether or not hitting distances need to be reduced for the good of the game will continue to rumble on.

The 'distance debate' is a complex one with many facets, ranging from retention of golfing skill to environmental concerns and participation numbers. There is, of course, no 'right' answer, but rest assured it's a topic we'll cover in more depth in future issues.

Oh, and by the way, this issue features a special 31-page Augusta preview. Read it and get excited about The Masters. Who knows, it might well be one of the last ones that is played by pros using the same equipment as we ordinary golfers do.

*Michael Harris*



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## Contacts

### EDITORIAL

**Editor:** Michael Harris  
**Digital editor:** Neil Tappin  
**Senior content editor:** Tom Clarke  
**Technical editor:** Joel Tadman  
**Content editors:** Nick Bonfield, David Taylor  
**Editor-at-large:** Bill Elliott  
**Design director:** Kevin Eason  
**Design editor:** Jamie Latchford  
**Deputy design editor:** Dan Franklin  
**Picture researcher:** Duncan Bond  
**Digital writer:** Elliott Heath  
**Contributing editors:** Fergus Bisset, Jeremy Ellwood, Rob Smith, Michael Weston  
**Contributing writers:** Roderick Easdale, Sam Tremlett  
**Playing editor:** Matthew Southgate  
**Staff photographers:** Tom Miles, Kevin Murray  
**Contributors:** Getty Images, Wayne Riley, Paul Severn, Kenny Smith, Robin Barwick, James Mason

**Golf Monthly, TI Media Limited, Pinehurst 2, Pinehurst Road, Farnborough Business Park, Farnborough, Hampshire, GU14 7BF**  
**Tel:** 01252 555213

**Email:** [golfmonthly@ti-media.com](mailto:golfmonthly@ti-media.com)

**Website:** [golf-monthly.co.uk](http://golf-monthly.co.uk)

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+1 888 313 5528

**Syndication:** Lucy Cox 020 314 85483,  
[lucy.cox@ti-media.com](mailto:lucy.cox@ti-media.com) / [ti-mediacontent.com](http://ti-mediacontent.com)

### ADVERTISING

**Head of sport:** Matthew Johnston

[matthew.johnston@ti-media.com](mailto:matthew.johnston@ti-media.com)

**Senior account manager:** Sarah Cusition

[sarah.cusition@ti-media.com](mailto:sarah.cusition@ti-media.com)

**Senior media advisor:** Freddie Smith

[freddie.smith@ti-media.com](mailto:freddie.smith@ti-media.com)

**Spain advertising:** Spectra Media S L

(tel: 0034 913199015; email: [mariamaisey@spectramedia.es](mailto:mariamaisey@spectramedia.es))

**Advertisement production:** Andrew Buckett

### MARKETING

**Marketing manager:** Victor Alway

**Production manager:** Nigel Davies

### PUBLISHING

**Group managing director:** Adrian Hughes

**Managing director:** Kirsty Setchell

### SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPT

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### TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Editorial:** 01252 555213

**Display advertising:** 01252 555366

**Classified advertising:** 01252 555364

**Innovator:** 020 314 83710

**Subscriptions:** 0330 333 1113

**Syndication:** 020 314 85478

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I R O N S





# YOUR VIEW

The pick of the letters and emails to hit the *Golf Monthly* offices this month

## Focus on course set-up

I'm not sure if all the talk about altering equipment to reduce the distance a player can hit the ball is the best way forward for the game as a whole. Given the way the courses are set up in the US, with the emphasis on hitting it long and less premium on accuracy, I can't help but think something is missing.

Surely a more welcome option would be to make courses more strategic, like many of the pre-1930 courses here in the UK. I've seen many shorter par 4s and par 5s that have fairways broken up by heather, gorse and deeper rough. This naturally causes the golfer to think about a lay up or a more risky shot. After all, and I may be wrong, I've not yet heard of a golfer hitting a second shot 250 yards out of five-inch-deep rough, heather or a gorse bush.

**Nick Clansey, via email**



Abraham Ancer is a promising talent

## The pride of Mexico

I want to congratulate Abraham Ancer on an amazing couple of months, first with the Presidents Cup and then the continuation of that form on the PGA and European Tours. He looks so composed and unflappable under pressure – quite a contrast with Lee Trevino, who was one of the superstars of the 60s, 70s and 80s.

With Augusta looming, he could just do what Super Mex could not and make an impression at The Masters. I'm sure the golfing world, Mexico and maybe even President Trump will watch his progress with interest.

**Alan Murray, Suffolk**

## A long time coming

I am not a big hitter on the golf course, but I love playing the game, more to counter the nuances and intricacies that golf throws at you. In the professional game, however, distance is king, for the big manufacturers and players alike. But I have to say, for me, it has become stale watching players hit a driver and a wedge into a hole well over 400 yards long. What's even sadder is the fact that iconic courses like the Old at St Andrews are having to create extra yardage from out of bounds to make the course a challenge for the pros.

So it was with real interest that I read the statement from The R&A and USGA about addressing the trend of longer hitting and longer courses – it has been a long time coming. I hope the rule makers, money men and players can agree on a strategy that will preserve the integrity of the game for years to come.

Seve always showed what you could do with a golf club and I don't recall anybody ever talking about a 350-yard drive he boomed. Golf is a game for artisans like Seve and Harry Vardon and it should be preserved.

**Simon Thorpe, Southampton**

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## Letter of the Month

As the days lengthen, the birds sing more in the morning, The Masters approaches and we dream of sunny golf on fast-running fairways, let us all spare a thought for greenkeeping staff who rise at the crack of dawn every day to prepare courses for our pleasure.

Having watched Tiger and Rory recently, it's been wonderful to see them pick up and replace their divots. It's very frustrating to find unrepaired pitch marks and divots when playing in winter. Members are very quick to complain about increasing membership subscriptions and the condition of the course, yet some do little to assist greenkeeping staff in their duties.

I started the game at a young age and good etiquette was instilled in all junior members. Repairing at least three pitch marks per green and replacing divots around the course became second nature.

**Len Meeke, Brecon**



It's been a busy time for greenkeepers of late



## OUR VIEW

### Would the Premier Golf League be good for the professional game?

Earlier this year, the World Golf Group announced its proposal to institute a Premier Golf League, which would launch in either 2022 or 2023. The plan is to create an 18-tournament circuit offering a total prize fund of \$240m. The tournaments would take place over 54 holes and the fields would comprise four 12-player teams. But does this new concept have the potential to be successful and would it be good for the professional game?

On paper, it looks an intriguing prospect. But a salient point is that both the European and PGA Tours are under no obligation to



The pro tee on the Old Course's 17th is the other side of the road

### Still going strong

Looking through your July 2019 issue, I was surprised that Fergus Bisset's article 'Age is just a number' stops at 70. My friend John and I, aged 86 and 84 respectively, enjoy a weekly game of golf at the Wolds Way nine-hole golf course – 2,325 yards, par 33 – in

Ryedale, North Yorkshire. We play nine holes, have a break, then play another nine holes.

John is a member at Kirkbymoorside Golf Club and plays there once a week and also plays table tennis in the Ryedale League. I enjoy a weekly game of bowls at the Ryedale Indoor Bowls

Club. Do not write us off just because of our age. As he says, it is 'just a number'.

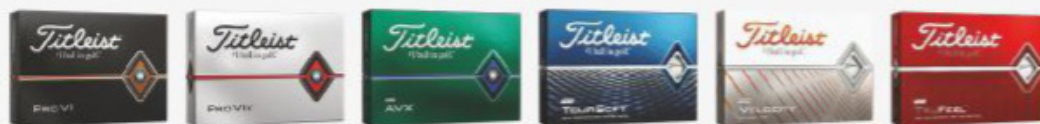
**Gerald Cosens,**  
via email



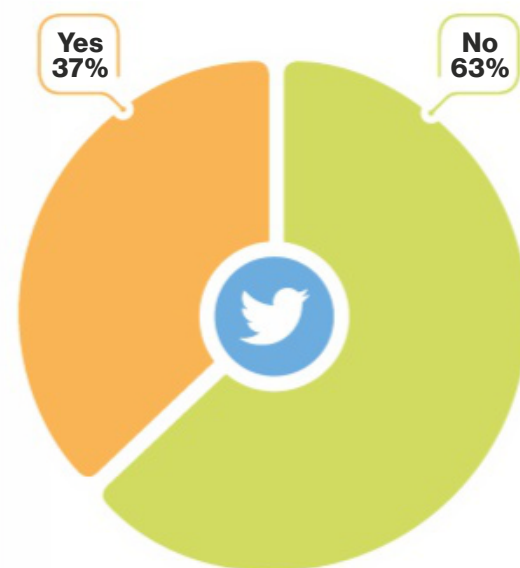
Golf can be enjoyed well into your retirement years

**Editor's reply:** In the article we did refer to the group as '70s... and beyond', which we felt covered everyone aged 70 and over still able to play our great game. Nuances aside, it's fantastic to hear that you and John are still playing so frequently. More power to your elbows!

**Win?**



The letter of the month winner receives a year's supply (six dozen) of the best Titleist golf ball for his or her game



be accommodating and could ban their members from playing in Premier Golf League events.

Golf is a game steeped in tradition and there's a reason why similar initiatives haven't taken off in the past. One of the joys of golf is seeing the World No.200 compete with the likes of McIlroy and Koepka in the same event. If this element were to be removed, a key part of golf's appeal would be destroyed. And do we want to see events with the same 48 players over and over again? Some would answer yes, but others would say you can have too much of a good thing.



FROM TEE TO GREEN

# The Game

Edited by **Nick Bonfield and David Taylor**





11

The Saudi International was McDowell's 11th European Tour title

2

He ranked second for the week in Scrambling

€20,924,507

McDowell's European Tour career earnings

2,037

Days between his last two European Tour wins

47

The Northern Irishman's world ranking

## BY THE NUMBERS



## Graeme McDowell

### Saudi success story

Graeme McDowell returned to the European Tour winners' circle for the first time since the 2014 French Open with a hard-fought victory in the Saudi International. The Northern Irishman, who displayed his customary accuracy and short-game prowess throughout, started the final round one clear of Victor Dubuisson and carded a 70 to win by two from Dustin Johnson. If he continues his strong recent form, he's likely to return to the European Ryder Cup team after a six-year hiatus.





6

Webb Simpson won his  
6th PGA Tour title at  
the Phoenix  
Open



25

Number of European Tour  
titles for **Lee Westwood**.  
He's also won in four  
decades





26

**Andrew Landry** won his second PGA Tour title at The American Express with a score of 26-under



T8

**Robert MacIntyre's** finish at the Dubai Desert Classic



14

**Madelene Sagstrom** hit all 14 fairways during the final round of the Gainbridge LPGA – her first LPGA Tour victory



1

**Lucas Herbert** registered his maiden European Tour title at the Dubai Desert Classic





65

Marc Leishman shot a final-round 65 to win the Farmers Insurance Open



1998

The last time an American won the Singapore Open before **Matt Kuchar**, this year's winner



# “I’m not sure I can take any more Ryder Cups!”

Lee Westwood’s historic victory at the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship has put qualification for Whistling Straits on the radar

**This was your 25th European Tour victory – 40-something worldwide – and you’ve won in four decades. How does that feel?**

Very good. I felt pretty comfortable all week, but I didn’t really want to divulge how well I felt I’d been swinging and I wanted to keep a lid on how well I felt I’d been putting. I don’t know why it is – I put in a lot of hard work with Phil Kenyon and I’ve been working with Ben Davis on the psychological part of it – but I really felt quite calm on the greens and rolled a lot of good putts.

That was the key to winning, really. You’ve got to putt well to win any tournament, but especially those in the desert because the greens are so immaculate, you know that everybody is going to hole their putts. It was great, and like you say, four different decades. You feel really old when somebody says that, don’t you!

**If you were asked, in a short sentence, what’s the key to winning over such a long period, what would you say?**

Hard work. You’ve got to be dedicated, you’ve got to love it and you’ve got to love practising, because there are no shortcuts. It’s just hard work. A few years back, Tiger, myself and Vijay were the last three on the range – it’s not a coincidence that the best players are the hardest workers.



**Winning score:** -19  
**New world ranking:** 29th  
**Prize money:** \$1,166,660  
**European Tour victories:** 25

## 1996

Westwood’s first European Tour win came at the 1996 Volvo Scandinavian Masters

# 1

He led the field in driving accuracy and was third in strokes gained: putting

**You’ve talked a lot in the last couple of years about going out there and enjoying yourself, but you must still have that competitive edge?**

Ben has instilled in me the fact that I’m playing the game I love for a living, and I should enjoy it, and sometimes it gets to the point where you don’t enjoy it enough. We’re lucky to be doing what we’re doing, and a lot of people are far less fortunate. If things are going wrong, I don’t really lose my temper anymore. I’ve never been a club breaker, but I don’t really get wound up too much. I’ve become much more analytical and less emotional on the golf course.

**You said that one of your ambitions now is to make the Ryder Cup team again. Is that something that’s now at the forefront of your mind?**

I’m not sure I can take any more Ryder Cups! I’ve played ten, and it was good watching the lads last time. But you know, obviously if there’s a chance, I might as well go for it. It’s nice just to come out and keep proving that you’ve still got it.

Now I’ve given myself a chance, I’m not going to increase my schedule or anything like that. I’m just going to play week in, week out and see where that takes me. But I’ll be playing in all the big tournaments again. The World Golf Championships are all on the calendar now and obviously every Major, so who knows what the future will bring.

## What’s in the bag?

### Driver

Ping G410 Plus, Aldila NV 2KXV Green 65 X shaft



### 3-wood

Ping G410, Aldila NV 2KXV Green shaft

### Hybrid

Ping G410, Aldila Tour Green Hybrid 85 X shaft

### Utility iron

Ping G Crossover

### Irons

Ping i210 (4-UW), Ping JZ Stiff shafts

### Lob wedge

Ping Glide Forged, 60°, Ping JZ Stiff shaft

### Putter

Ping Sigma 2 Fetch

**Ball** Titleist Pro V1x







Cameron Champ currently leads the PGA Tour in driving distance with a 319.9-yard average

## TOUR NEWS

# R&A chief believes we've reached pivotal moment in golf's history

The R&A and USGA's long-awaited *Distance Insights Report* made headlines earlier this month with its conclusion that increased hitting distances are bad for the game and its future.

The report found a 100-year trend of increased hitting distances as well as an

increase in the length of golf courses across the world.

Martin Slumbers, chief executive of The R&A, said: "We believe we have reached a pivotal moment in golf. The publication of this report is highly significant. The impact of long-term hitting distance increases on some of golf's essential elements are now clear

— including changing the strategic challenge of the sport, altering the balance of skills needed to be successful and risking courses being less challenging or obsolete."

The governing bodies will now undertake a broad review of both golf clubs and balls, with a view to potential changes in the equipment rules as they search for solutions.

This has brought the idea of bifurcation back into the spotlight, where professionals and top amateur players could play under one set of rules, with all other amateur golfers abiding by another.

Further research is to be published shortly, after input from manufacturers and other stakeholders in the golf industry. There will also be an inquiry into the effects of course design, conditions and set-up on hitting distances. The report also raised concerns over water and chemical use, as well as other resources, if golf courses continue to be lengthened.

We shall await The R&A and USGA's next move with interest.

## GOOD MONTH/BAD MONTH



**Australian golf** After a winless 2019, Australians have started the 2020 PGA Tour season more brightly with victories for Marc Leishman and Cameron Smith. Lucas Herbert (below) and Min Woo Lee also won on the European Tour.



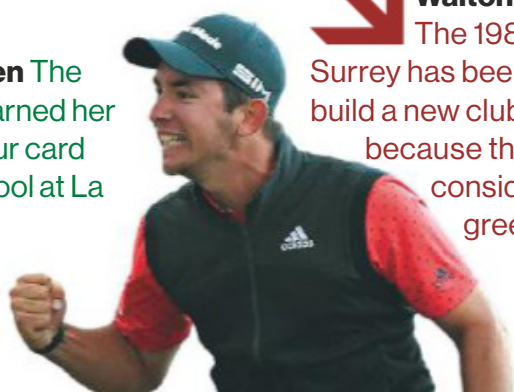
**Amy Boulden** The Welsh pro earned her Ladies European Tour card after winning Q-School at La Manga Golf Club.



**LPGA** The Tour was forced to cancel several Asian events due to health and safety concerns surrounding the coronavirus.



**Walton Heath Golf Club** The 1981 Ryder Cup venue in Surrey has been refused permission to build a new clubhouse by the council because the design was not considered appropriate for green belt land.





## 3 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT

## Jazz Janewattananond

**1** Born in Bangkok, Thailand, the 24-year-old's real name is Atiwit but he was given the nickname Jazz by his father, who was a huge music fan. His father also introduced him to golf at the age of eight and just two years later Jazz started winning junior events. He turned pro at the age of 15.

**2** At the end of the 2016 European Tour season, Jazz took a brief sabbatical from golf to join the monkhood. While there he shaved his head and prayed in silence most of the day. He claims this has made him happier and calmer and that it was a huge factor in him becoming a winner out on tour.

**3** At the final stage of Q-School in 2017, Jazz chipped in for eagle at the last hole to secure his European Tour card. In an interview afterwards, he said: "I held it together until the last hole and I just thought 'I can only try my best here'. To see the ball go into the hole was amazing and it is still going through my mind now. I can't believe I made an eagle to get in on the mark."

SHOT  
OF THE  
MONTH

**Webb Simpson** had a hole-in-one at the 12th during the third round on his way to victory at the Phoenix Open. It was his first ace on the PGA Tour.

QUOTE  
OF THE  
MONTH

"THERE WERE SOME DARK MOMENTS IN THERE"

**Jason Day** reflects on how injury nearly forced him to quit the game last year.

BET  
OF THE  
MONTH

**Graeme McDowell**  
The Northern Irishman could be found at odds of 219/1 to win the Saudi International.

## NEWS WRAP

● **Peter Odemwingie**

The former West Bromwich Albion and Stoke City striker is set to become a professional golfer. The Nigerian, aged 38, is currently going through his PGA training course.



## 96

● **Sebastian Soderberg**

The Swede played his final round at the Dubai Desert Classic in just 96 minutes – a record low for the European Tour.

## SOCIAL CORNER

**Justin Thomas** was one of many pros to pay tribute to basketball legend **Kobe Bryant** at the Phoenix Open.





# Is mental strength more important than physical strength at club level?



**No**

says **Fergus Bisset**

Golf is one of the most mentally demanding sports. To bounce back from the continuous blows the game throws takes great patience and self-control. But playing to any level of competence requires a degree of physical ability.

Producing a solid, repeatable swing involves a certain amount of flexibility and strength. And continuing to reproduce this action as pressure builds and time elapses over 18 holes takes fitness and stamina. It doesn't matter how much mental fortitude someone has if they are unable to make an effective, consistent pass at the ball.

Players with greater physical prowess can reduce most holes to two blows. They can attack pins with more loft, blast out of trouble, cut corners on doglegs. Quite simply, they have more options. You can't think your ball over a water hazard or on to a long par 4 in regulation. It's not possible to reason your way out of a heavy lie. Golf often demands physicality and those unable to deliver it are at a distinct disadvantage.

Think of your club. At the top of the pile are the physically talented players with a will to win. Below them come the young bucks with great physical ability but a lack of maturity and mental savvy holding them back. As they grow up and into the game, they'll move to join those on top of the pile.

Below them, you have the mature players who know their games and use their mental strength to get the most from them. They have achieved a level and won't move up owing to their physical limitations.

Mental strength is important in golf, but it can only really be a defining factor if a player has a certain level of physical aptitude.



**Yes**

says **Jeremy Ellwood**

"Competitive golf is played mainly on a five-and-a-half-inch course – the space between your ears." You've probably heard this Bobby Jones quote, plus countless other opinions as to what percentage of golf is mental and what physical. Often,

that is in reference to professional golf, where those blessed with picture-perfect swings and impressive physiques don't always seem to reach their potential.

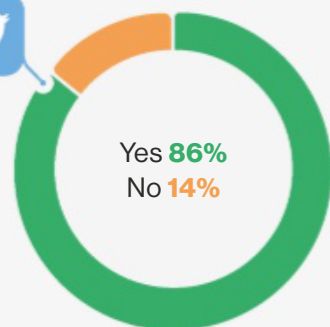
But what about club level, where the swings are more idiosyncratic and less repeatable? Is it better to be blessed with a never-say-die mindset that helps you counter everything a typical round throws at you, or a physique and level of fitness that allow you to propel the ball prodigious distances and bounce merrily along the 18th fairway as fresh as the 1st?

Both are important, but I'm not sure I've ever lost a match or faltered down the stretch because of physical fitness; I know I have because of mental weakness! Despite all the clamour for golfers to be regarded as athletes, I don't think athleticism and physical strength are essential to play good golf and believe that other attributes can be more than a match for power hitting.

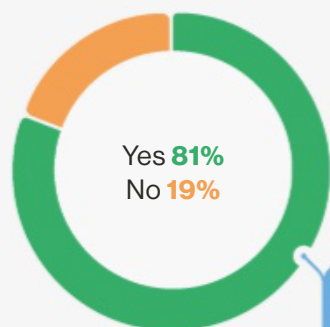
There's more than one way to play this game, as guys like Corey Pavin have proved – one of the shortest hitters on tour who was savvy enough to know that mental strength and grittiness can neutralise or overcome an apparent power disadvantage. I believe it's the same at club level – a player with excellent mental fortitude can often be a match for the power-hitter knocking it 70 yards past him, especially when you factor in handicaps and that 70 yards behind might become 150 yards ahead when shots are taken into account.

## AND OUR SURVEYS SAID...

Is mental strength more important than physical strength at club level?



Have you lost more shots through mental mistakes rather than physical ones?



What's your view? Email [golfmonthly@ti-media.com](mailto:golfmonthly@ti-media.com)



# Miss the stick for better strikes

Top 25 Coach Alistair Davies offers a very simple drill to improve your ball-striking, especially if you tend to hang back

## PUSH, TURN AND EXTEND

I'm using the alignment stick here as a backstop, if you like. If I were to flick at the ball or hang back through impact, I would hit the stick with my club. This drill encourages the correct move through impact in which you need to push, turn and then extend down the line.

## BETTER ANGLE OF ATTACK

Lie the stick down on the ground just inside your trail foot, then swing making sure you miss the stick as your club comes back into the ball. You could use a towel instead, or a tee peg, but the stick gives you good audible feedback as well. This simple drill will help get the club 'landing' in the right spot to make the right contact.

## GET A FEEL FOR IT

Try to get your trailing knee, hip and shoulder ahead of the alignment stick at impact. I believe you can start the move down with either the left side or the right side pushing the left side. I feel it more in my right side, but this drill will help you to get a feel for what initiates the move for you.



# NEW GEAR

## Galvin Green 2020 Part One Apparel from £55

**H**eadlining the latest apparel collection from Galvin Green, which features nearly 300 performance garments,

is the Apollo Gore-Tex Paclite waterproof jacket. It features front pockets for the first time, which are carefully designed so they don't create any unwanted distractions or swing interference while also adding just 25 grams to the 300g total weight.

Easy to pack into the golf bag, the Apollo jacket is breathable and feels extremely soft. Shaped sleeves provide easy movement and the elasticated cuffs and waist have Velcro adjusters. An elasticated drawstring at the hem delivers a comfortable fit.

Also new to the Gore-Tex waterproof range is a half-zip Ashby Shakedry (£290), with an extra side zip making it easier to take on and off while offering a better fit. There's also the flagship Archie with C-Knit backer along with matching Axel trousers in 15 sizing options.

Heading up the versatile Interface-1 range is the three-level warming effect Lyon jacket (£250), featuring Primaloft insulation padding on the chest and a

The Apollo jacket (£290) comes in six colour options

### GM says

The front pockets are a long-awaited addition to Galvin Green's new headline waterproof jacket, adding convenience without affecting performance. As always, these garments will be recognisable from the adjacent fairway, such is the unique styling and use of colours.



Gore-Tex Infinium membrane. The Lionel (£190) features two front pockets while the Lincoln (£190) has been extended to five colour options for 2020. New lightweight Insula options provide warmth without the bulk as well as a soft feel, like the full-zip Declan (£115) and half-zip Dixon pullover (below left, £100).

Striking Ventil8 polo shirts include the Markell (£70) with its shattering impact print. The Galvin Green Part One collection is on sale now.



Golf Monthly tests all equipment using the market-leading Foresight Sports GCQuad launch monitor to ensure accurate data is gathered. **Edited by Joel Tadman**





**FootJoy Flex XP shoe** £109.99

Features a new upper design made of a premium, lightweight performance mesh with a one-year waterproof warranty and a Versa-Trax outsole for grip and spikeless versatility.



**Ecco S-Three shoe** £180

A hybrid shoe with a midsole comprising three zones of differing softness. The central part has higher levels of rigidity for lateral stability, while the front section is much softer for walking comfort.



**Mizuno CLK hybrid** £219

A stronger, thinner face creates faster ball speeds, assisted by a wider dual Wave sole open at both ends to create more face flexing at impact. The loft can be adjusted up or down by two degrees.



**Odyssey Stroke Lab Black putters** from £239

Joining the Ten and Bird of Prey are five more head shapes, including the Seven, Rossie and Double Wide blade, which offer stability and a solid feel.



**Cleveland Smart Sole 4 wedge** £129

The three versions feature extra-wide soles with added leading-edge bounce designed to help golfers get a crisp, clean contact and better stability from chips, pitches and bunker shots.



**Arccos Rangefinder** Free update

This new feature provides users of the Arccos Caddie app with a yardage taking into account real-time slope, weather and altitude, as well as the club required based on previous shot history.



**TaylorMade Spider S putters** £299

A rear tungsten weight bar and tungsten weights at the front left and right total 150g to maximise stability. A thicker Pure Roll insert encourages optimal forward roll and better sound and feel.



**TaylorMade Response balls** from £24.99 a dozen

The Tour Response (£34.99) has a urethane cover for control, while the Soft Response has a low 35 compression core for a soft feel on all shots.



**Bettinardi Inovai 6.0 putters** £339

By using 303 stainless steel as the front contact area and 6061 military grade aluminum to increase MOI, the Inovai family offers great feel and stability. Comes in three neck options.

## BEST 2020 STAND BAGS



**Motocaddy HydroFlex** £209.99

Features five waterproof, spacious pockets and connects securely to Motocaddy trolleys via the Easilock base.



**Ping Hooper Cruz E Lite** £200

Weighs just 31lbs but has seven pockets and a deployable rain hood stored inside the hip pad for added comfort.



**Titleist Players 4Plus StaDry** £230

Boasts self-balancing, convertible straps and six waterproof pockets.



**TaylorMade FlexTech Waterproof** £229

Has a smooth release, collapsible base and five seam-sealed waterproof pockets.



GM

# LAUNCH OF THE MONTH



Two connection  
points into the head  
increase stability

There are four  
different models to  
choose from

## TaylorMade Truss Putter £269

**N**ever afraid to think outside the box, TaylorMade has created one of the more bizarre-looking putter families in the shape of its new Truss range – a line the company says offers added stability and improved feel. In fairness, the theory makes sense.

A triangle is one of the strongest known shapes because of its wide base structure and a truss, which forms a similar shape, has a whole host of applications in construction, most notably on bridges, to provide support. Closer to home in sporting products, two connection points from the handle

to the hitting surface has been found to often be better than one (think of the evolution of tennis racket design). Therefore, TaylorMade has incorporated this into its Truss putters.

With two points of the hosel entering each putter head, the Truss flat-sticks reduce the unsupported mass and cover 50 per cent more of the topline than a traditional heel-shafted putter. This provides added torsional stability – so less tendency to twist – which helps putts start and stay on line. The added stability means there's less vibration, so the putters should feel more solid and have a more pleasing sound, too.

On the face, a thicker cobalt blue Pure Roll insert combines 45° grooves with a softer polymer to improve forward roll across varying surfaces. Adjustable sole weights allow golfers to achieve a variety of swing weights and CG placements to match the characteristics of their putting stroke.

TaylorMade has done a good job of masking the technology from the address view to not distract you. You'll also notice the inclusion of the chrome stepless KBS CT Tour putter shaft, which adds even more stability.

The Truss putters come in a blade and mallet in heel and centre-shafted options, with an RRP of £269.



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Adjustable sole weights let you fine tune the feel



## Ben Coe

TaylorMade's putter product line manager tells us more about the thinking behind the unusual Truss design

### Why did you create Truss?

We wanted to give the more classic and conventional TP-style head more support and stability, like you find on our Spider models. It is radically different, we know that, but most of you are probably familiar with the truss triangle shape associated with strength and support in bridges, houses and other architectural uses.

We took it and applied it to putting.

### What are the performance benefits of the new design?

Having the Truss hosel design supports more of the face, which reduces deflection, so when you don't strike the ball out of the middle of the putter, you lose less distance and accuracy. It also increases torsional stability and improves the sound, so it will feel and perform better than traditional TP putters.

### Tell us about the options available...

The centre-shafted blade is actually face-balanced, so it is ideal for someone with a straighter stroke, while the more traditional blade with 16° of toe hang suits an arced stroke. Then there's the mallet, which also comes in a centre-shafted option and a more heel-biased hosel version for additional toe hang.

**“Once you get past the unorthodox looks, these putters perform. The blade feels as forgiving as a traditional mallet putter”**

Joel Tadman, GM technical editor





# Constance Lemuria

Words **Jeremy Ellwood**



Seychelles



GF: from approx. £103 including buggy  
(complimentary for hotel guests)



Stats: par 70, 5,656 yards



If you've ever pondered a spot of golf in the Indian Ocean, chances are Mauritius will have caught your eye, for the number of courses on this small island 700 miles east of Madagascar has risen into double figures in a relatively short space of time.

But for something a little different, and a flight time over two hours shorter from London, the archipelago country of the Seychelles boasts just one 18-hole course, but it's a truly memorable one.

The Lemuria layout, created by Rodney Wright and Marc Farry, opened for play in 2000. It is located in

the north-west corner of Praslin island, a 15-minute flight from the main island of Mahe, at a point where the mountains run down to the pure white sands of Anse Georgette beach.

The topography makes for a contrasting round as you play 12 holes on flat terrain before climbing into the hills from the 13th. From here, three holes serve up gloriously elevated tees, among them the 18th and the signature par-3 15th, which drops precipitously down to a green 150ft below.

These final six may be anything but straightforward, but it's a thrilling ride you'll never forget, and nobody ever said golf was supposed to be easy!

## Near the Seychelles? Four others to play...



- 1 **Ile aux Cerfs, Mauritius**  
GF: approx. £146
- 2 **Constance Belle Mare Plage, Mauritius**  
GF: from approx. £145 including buggy and balls
- 3 **Tamarina, Mauritius**  
GF: approx. £115
- 4 **Seychelles Golf Club, Mahe**  
GF: approx. £28



# WAYNE RILEY

A former member of the European Tour and two-time winner, Wayne is part of the Sky Sports golf team. He writes exclusively for *Golf Monthly*



**A** meander up Magnolia Lane is back in our thoughts and I for one am thrilled. I reckon we think more about Augusta National as a club and course than the Major it hosts, such is the beauty and magic of the place. It's such an amazing locale, with the whitest of bunkers, rhododendrons in full bloom, lightning fast greens, Amen Corner and a clubhouse that could be from *Hansel and Gretel*.

If the golf course could tell stories, they would blow your mind. I'm not sure there's another Major venue that parallels Augusta in terms of the drama it creates on a consistent basis. The two par 3s and the two reachable par 5s on the back nine come at completely the right time and often take centre stage, and something significant has happened between holes 12 and 16 at virtually every Masters tournament. Ask Greg, ask Jordan, ask Francesco. That back nine can make parts of your body twitch that you didn't know existed.

The great thing about the golf course is that it doesn't necessarily suit a certain type of player. Tiger Woods obliterated the course in 1997 en route to the first of his five Green Jackets, and Bubba Watson bombed his ball round in 2012 and 2014, but the likes of Mike Weir and Zach Johnson have also been successful.

Because The Masters is played at Augusta every year, players get more opportunities to study the layout and golfers of all abilities can figure out a path to victory. It's often said that faders can't win at Augusta, but that didn't

on Bubba, especially given how well his length off the tee and ball flight suit the course.

As for Rory, who knows? Will it be this year or another year down the line? I'm not sure, but it will happen for me. The only thing that seems to be holding him back is the weight of expectation. He's

proved he has the tools to succeed at Augusta and the stats back that up. Sooner or later he'll surge over the finishing line and write his name into the history books. I seem to pick him every year and he doesn't win, so perhaps he'll do it this time as I'm going with someone else!

## “Augusta's back nine can make parts of your body twitch you didn't know existed”

seem to be an issue for Jack Nicklaus. No, any type of player can win if they find their iron play, get hot on the greens and make a run at the right time.

And do you know who I think is going to do that this year? Tiger Woods. I think he's going to defend his title. He's trending in the right direction and the swing is looking really good at the moment. I watched him up close at Torrey Pines and I liked what I saw. He's got this little flick release at the top of the swing and it gives him a little bit of room, and his rhythm is sensational. He's playing better than he was last year and obviously he can contend at Augusta blindfolded.

Someone else who's been pretty quiet over the last few years but is showing some good form is Bubba. He seems to have turned things round recently and his early season form has been very encouraging. He loves the place and he's got so many memories to draw on from his two victories. I'm definitely going to be having a wager

I'm very intrigued to see how Brooks Koepka and Dustin Johnson go. They've both had injury concerns of late and Johnson, while he looks like he might be coming back into form, hasn't been himself for a while. One thing is for sure, though: if you're not right at it, you won't win The Masters. There are so many top players in good form, and so many with games perfectly suited to Augusta. We haven't even mentioned the likes of Cantlay, Schauffele, Rahm, Rose and Thomas yet. And would it shock you to see Jordan Spieth end his barren recent run by claiming his fourth Major at a venue he absolutely loves? Not me.

If you're looking for an outside bet, why not consider Matthew Fitzpatrick. He's ready to roar back into the winners' circle after four runner-up finishes last year and his game looks a good match for Augusta. It's crazy to think I'm calling the World No.25 an outsider, but that's just a reflection of how many top players exist today. Let the games begin!



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REACH BEYOND





# MATTHEW SOUTHGATE

Our playing editor has ten European Tour top-tens, including a 6th at the 2017 Open and a 2nd at last year's Dunhill Links



**I** unfortunately started off my 2020 with three missed cuts in the desert, but it's not something I'm concerned about. I put so much work into my short game in the off-season knowing it had to improve and I think I lost the balance in terms of keeping every part of my game ticking over. The positive for me is the fact my short game has improved massively and the confidence has come back. As we get into the meat of the season, I'm optimistic I'll start making more of those pressure up-and-downs and see the benefits of the work I've done over the past couple of months.

It was a bit of a shame to miss those three cuts, but there were some good spells in there and I drove the ball well. I can see the fitness work paying off with the distance I'm hitting it, so that's encouraging. Overall, there was plenty to take from those three weeks. I would have liked to have got some more tournament rounds under my belt, just in terms of match fitness and blowing all the cobwebs out, but with the way the schedule is, I've had the chance to come home and put in some work on my long game. A couple of sessions and it'll be back to where I want it to be.

One of the missed cuts was in Dubai, which I felt was a good showcase that you don't need golf courses to be 7,500+ yards to be challenging. If you grow the rough, narrow the fairways, make sure the greens aren't too soft and put some challenging pins in, players will find it difficult. I'm sure The R&A and USGA were looking on with

Something else that's been discussed a fair bit recently is the Premier Golf League. Personally, I see it as a bit of a pipe dream for the organisers and I don't think it'll come to fruition. I know there was a chance in the 90s for something similar to be set

up, but at the end of the day, with the amount of money on the PGA Tour – not just in terms of purses but things like the pension scheme too – the Rolex Series on the European Tour, the WGCs and the Majors, I'd be amazed to see it happen.

If the game's governing bodies

said no world ranking points would be offered at Premier Golf League events and that members couldn't play in the Majors, hypothetically speaking, who would join that tour? I don't see the European and PGA Tours embracing this proposed new circuit and trying to accommodate it – quite the opposite.

Part of golf's appeal is the fact fields are big and surprise packages can come from nowhere. Plus, the standard is so high that there isn't a clear-cut top 48 players. So many variables come into the mix. Also, golf is so established and change isn't easy to come by.

In my opinion, some of the new events that have been trialled recently haven't worked as the best players aren't participating. The golf audience is pretty well established and a lot of people like to sit down over four days and watch an event come to a conclusion on a Sunday. The more you mess around with that, the more likely it is that rival groups and tours like the Premier Golf League will spring up.

**“Now is the time to act. If we start hitting it any further, too many good courses will be spoiled”**

interest, with their recent joint announcement that the general trend of the ball going further and golf courses getting longer isn't good for the game as a whole.

I agree with that sentiment. There are so many good courses that can't be used nowadays to stage tour events, which is a real shame. I'm thinking of gems like West Hill, Worplesdon, Thorpe Hall, The Berkshire, Woodhall Spa's Hotchkin, Sunningdale's Old and so on. I've always thought that perhaps you could adapt to use certain equipment at certain events – for example, use a different ball or restricted driver at some tournaments to bring classic courses back into the mix. I think most players would embrace a bit of variation.

Now is the time to act. If we start hitting it any further, too many good courses will be spoiled, not to mention the increased difficulty for amateurs and the knock-on effects with regards pace of play and maintenance costs.



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# IT'S SHOWTIME

After Tiger's spectacular return to winning ways last year, Augusta's arrival is even more eagerly anticipated than usual

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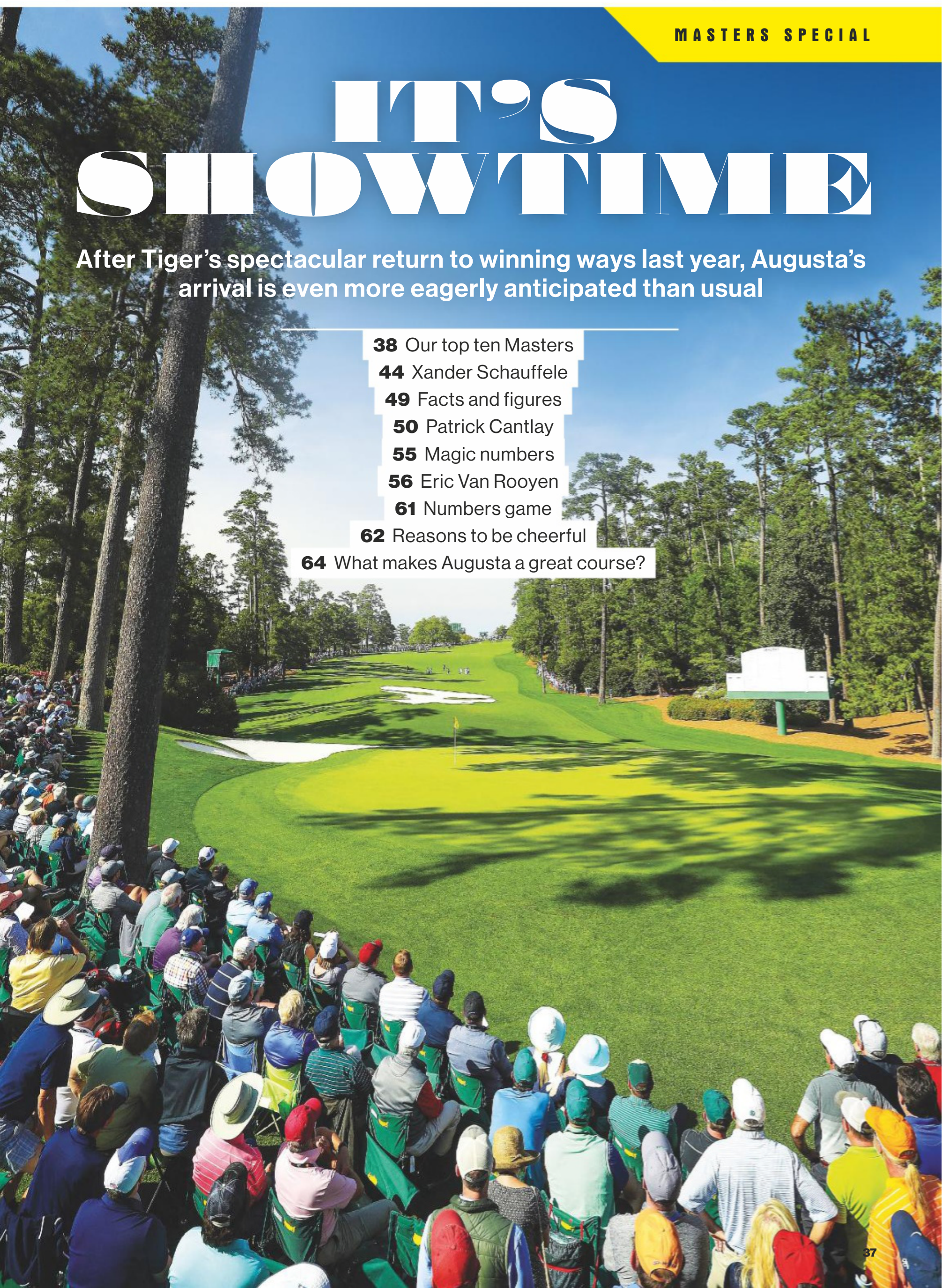
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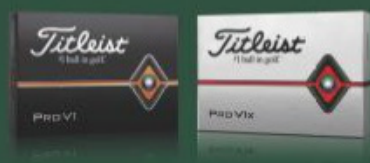
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# Perfect 10

Words **Fergus Bisset, David Taylor** • Photography **Getty Images**

The thrills and spills are pretty much guaranteed every year at Augusta, but here we pick out our ten favourite Masters...



## 2012 Bubba's 'wonder shot' sinks Louis

# 10

Following one of the most incredible shots in Masters history, Bubba Watson beat Louis Oosthuizen at the second play-off hole to claim the first of his two Masters titles.

It turned into quite a contest on Easter Sunday, with Watson, Oosthuizen and Matt Kuchar all joining battle. Oosthuizen hit the front with a remarkable albatross two on the 2nd and still held the lead with three to play, but Watson drew level with a two on 16, leading to a two-man play-off. On the second play-off hole – the 10th –

Oosthuizen's tee shot went right, but not as far right as Bubba's. Oosthuizen missed the green, but it looked like bogey would be enough to keep him involved, as Watson appeared to be facing a chip-out from the woods.

However, Bubba had other ideas, conjuring up an almost impossible right-angled hook with a wedge that found the green, then spun back up the slope to finish 15ft away. The South African couldn't save par, and Watson two-putted for the title as the tears began to flow. A fitting finish to a very fine tournament indeed.





Bubba conjures up  
the impossible

## 2017 Sergio sees off Rose to get over the line

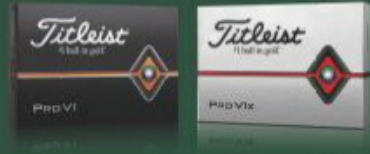
**9** This was the 74th Major Sergio Garcia had contested. He had notched 22 top-tens and four runner-up finishes, but many, Garcia included, questioned whether he would ever win one. These questions continued right through the final round, a two-horse race between Garcia and Justin Rose.

The Englishman moved ahead by two when Garcia dropped shots at 10 and 11, but the Spaniard bounced back with an eagle on the 15th. Rose edged in front again with a two on the 16th, but fell back with a dropped shot on 17. After both missed birdie efforts on the last, a play-off was required. Garcia hit a superb tee shot, while Rose put his into the trees and had to chip-out. This meant Garcia was left with two putts for the win. He needed just one to claim his first Major.



Major reality  
sinks in at the  
74th time of asking





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Jack receives his fifth Green Jacket



## 1975 Nicklaus, Miller & Weiskopf duke it out

**8** Three players at the peak of their powers did battle in 1975 and the greatest of all time came out on top. In early 1975, Johnny Miller had been playing golf on another level, Tom Weiskopf had won the week before in Greensboro and Jack was Jack.

On Masters Sunday, Weiskopf played with Miller in the final group, while Nicklaus was with Tom Watson in the penultimate pairing. Into the back nine, Nicklaus moved in front but dropped a stroke on 14, which Weiskopf then birdied to move one ahead.

Jack birdied the 15th and then found the green on the 16th, albeit some 40 feet from the flag. Weiskopf and Miller, who had both just birdied the 15th, watched on from the tee as Nicklaus proceeded to hole his putt up the hill for a two, leaping into the air in delight. It proved to be the decisive blow. Although both Weiskopf and Miller gave themselves a chance to tie on the 18th, both missed their birdie putts and Jack had a fifth Masters title.

The chip was infinitely better than the resulting high five



## 2005 Tiger, DiMarco and 'that' chip

**7** There were other members of the cast in 2005, but two principal characters stole the show – Tiger Woods and Chris DiMarco. Tiger started poorly with an opening 74, while DiMarco carded an error-free 67. He also went bogey-free in round two to post another 67, while Woods bounced back with a 66 to lie six shots behind. Woods then turned the screw in a rain-hit round three to end up three clear with 18 to play.

Sunday was a thrilling duel between the two. When Woods hit 'that' chip on the 16th, the resulting birdie saw him move two ahead, but bogeys on 17 and 18 allowed DiMarco back in. They tied on 12-under, seven clear of Luke Donald and Retief Goosen. The play-off saw Woods leave himself a 15-foot birdie putt on the 18th for the win. He studied the line closely, then rolled the ball home to claim a ninth Major title.





## 1960 Palmer's big finish

**6** This is remembered for Arnie's spirited finish. With birdies at the last two holes, he edged past Ken Venturi to win by one. But that wasn't the whole story. Palmer opened with an excellent 67 in round one and led by two. His lead was cut to one after 36 holes and it remained thus with 18 to play. He had quite a pack right on his tail through 54 holes, though, as the great Ben Hogan, together with Billy Casper, Julius Boros, Dow Finsterwald and Ken Venturi were all just a shot off the pace.

Venturi had come close to winning the 1956 Masters as an amateur and he got off to a fast start in round four, reaching the turn in 33. Playing ahead of Palmer, Venturi came home in 37 for a 70 and a one-shot lead. Reporters huddled around him, trying to get a quote from the champion in waiting. "I haven't won yet," he reminded them. Venturi's prudence was to be proved correct. Palmer, one back with two to play, was up against it, but he rolled in a long birdie putt on the 17th to climb back into a tie for the lead and then put himself in a good position up the last. He fired a superb 6-iron towards the green and his ball ended some six feet above the cup. He rolled the putt home to win by a single shot and send 'Arnie's Army' into raptures.

## "He rolled the putt home to win by a single shot and send 'Arnie's Army' into raptures"

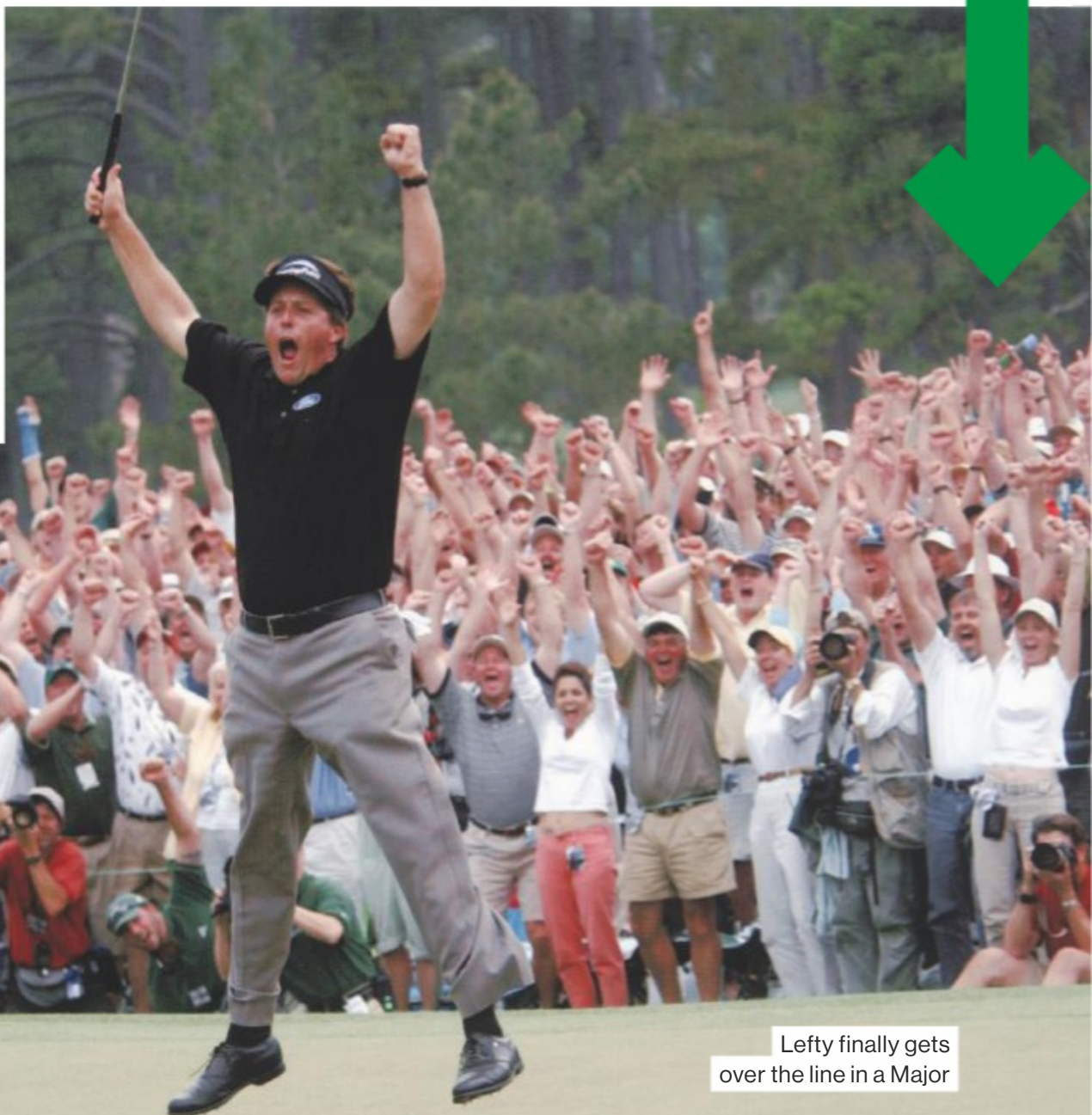
## 2004 Phil finally gets one

**5** Phil Mickelson broke his Major duck with a fighting final nine holes, pipping South Africa's Ernie Els in a classic tussle. Mickelson played in his first Masters in 1991, finishing as low amateur. From that point on he was touted as a likely future winner, his skills ideally suited to the Augusta layout. He finished third three years in a row from 2001 to 2003 and, by the time of the 2004 Masters, he had finished in the top five in nine Major Championships.

The 23-year-old Justin Rose led through two rounds, with Alex Cejka and Jose Maria Olazabal two back, but all three fell apart in round three – Rose carding 81, Olly 79 and Cejka 78. That collective collapse allowed the chasing pack back in and set up an epic final-day duel between Mickelson and Els. The South African started slowly with early dropped shots, but

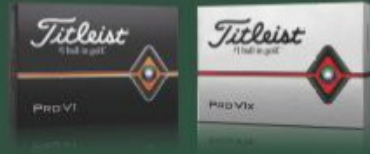
rebounded strongly with an eagle on the 8th. Mickelson also struggled early on and, turning in 38, it looked as though he could be letting another Major opportunity pass him by.

But the left-hander found his best form on the back nine. Els wasn't simply rolling over either. He carded another eagle on the 13th and a birdie on 15, but Mickelson kept pace with three birdies in a row from the 12th. On the par-3 16th, Mickelson holed a clutch 20-footer to tie Ernie at the top of the board and remained there coming to the final hole. Lefty then played a great second shot, leaving him a testing birdie try. Settling over the ball, Mickelson knew if he holed it, he would be a Major Champion at last. He kept his composure, sent it home and leapt into the air in celebration. He'd come back in 31 to win his first Green Jacket, birdieing five of his last seven holes.



Lefty finally gets over the line in a Major





## 1977 Duel among the azaleas

**4** Three months prior to their famous 'Duel in the Sun', Tom Watson and Jack Nicklaus fought another epic battle over the somewhat greener fairways of Augusta.

With one round to go, and within just three of the lead held by Watson, most of the press and the public viewed Nicklaus as favourite. He was five times a Masters winner after all. Watson wasn't intimidated by the great man, though, racing to the turn in 32 to extend his advantage to four midway through the round. But, as the saying goes, the Masters doesn't start until the back nine on Sunday, and Nicklaus moved up a gear to tie the lead on ten-under at the 13th.

**“Most viewed Jack as favourite. He was five times a Masters winner after all”**

With two to go, the pair remained level. Playing ahead of Watson, Nicklaus had first go at the 17th where he missed a makeable birdie putt. After Nicklaus had driven well on the 18th, Watson fired his approach on the 17th to within 20 feet and made his birdie to go one ahead. Nicklaus decided on a more aggressive second shot, but didn't commit and ended up in the greenside bunker.

Watson found the fairway from the tee and walked up to his ball to see Nicklaus settling over a putt. He asked the gallery and was told his rival was trying for par. When Nicklaus missed, Watson knew he had a two-shot cushion. He played safe, made a steady par and won his first Green Jacket.



Watson twice got the better of Nicklaus in 1977 Majors



Yet more Augusta anguish for Greg Norman in 1996

## 1996 Faldo's Norman conquest

**3** Greg Norman had come oh so close to winning The Masters three times in the late 1980s. He bogeyed the last to lose by one to Jack Nicklaus in 1986, lost a play-off to Larry Mize in 1987 and made bogey on the last in 1989 to miss the play-off by a stroke. For 54 holes in 1996, it looked as though the Great White Shark's Masters miseries would be put behind him.

Norman opened with a fabulous 63 to lead by three and followed up with rounds of 69 and 71 to take a six-shot advantage

over his great rival Nick Faldo into the final round. Most expected the closing 18 to be a procession for the Australian.

Norman got off to a shaky start with a bogey on the 1st, but responded well with a birdie on the 2nd. But Faldo steadily started to chip away at his playing partner's lead. With birdies at the 6th and 8th holes, he had pegged it back to three. Norman made the classic mistake of spinning his ball back off the 9th green and dropped a shot – at the turn there was just two in it.

With further shots going at the 10th and 11th for Norman, Faldo drew level. Then things really unravelled for the Aussie as he found the water on both 12 and 16. From six shots in front, Norman fell to five shots behind and Faldo had a third Masters title.

After one of the most compelling yet disquieting stretches of play in the history of the game, Faldo was not in the mood to celebrate fully as the final putt dropped. His first thought was to console his beaten and broken rival.





Tiger's magic moment last year

## 2019 Tiger's redemption

**2** Back at the champions dinner in 2017, Tiger Woods whispered to a fellow guest that he was done as a golf pro. He was struggling to walk, let alone swing a club. A month later, images of his sorry-looking mugshot were beamed around the globe after he was found by police slumped at the wheel of his car with a cocktail of painkillers in his system. It appeared he had hit rock-bottom. The years since his 14th Major title at Torrey Pines in 2008 were destined to be remembered for his injuries and personal failings, rather than his on-course prowess.

But 2019 changed that. His one-shot victory for his fifth Green Jacket was a lesson in precision and control. The Tiger of old was back and one by one his rivals succumbed to the pressure and intimidation only he can exert. As he tapped in for victory, Augusta rose to salute a man who had come back from the brink to reign supreme once more.

A lot of claims have been made about this being the greatest sporting comeback of all, with many making counter claims for the likes of Ben Hogan, Muhammad Ali and Niki Lauda, among others. But as fairytale endings go, the footage of him embracing his family at the side of the 18th green, mirroring the scenes back in 1997 when he celebrated with his father Earl, will be hard to eclipse in any sporting arena.

## 1986 The Golden Bear Roars Again

**1** This was the Masters that had it all – a superb cast list, the most thrilling of Sunday back nines and a legendary champion.

At the outset of the tournament, it was 27 years since Jack Nicklaus had played in his first Masters, 23 years since he had won his first and 11 years since he had won his fifth. His best finish on the PGA Tour in 1986 to that point had been a tie for 39th in the Hawaiian Open. At 46, he was undoubtedly past his prime, but the greatest player of all time had one final mammoth effort left in him.

Nicklaus started slowly with a 74. He was six shots off the pace after round one and, given his recent form, simply making the cut was the immediate objective. With a second-round 71, he managed that, but he was still flying under the radar.

A third round of 69 followed, but the focus was on a younger generation of stars as Greg Norman led by one from a group containing Seve, Bernhard Langer and Nick Price. Also ahead of Nicklaus were Tom Watson and Tom Kite. Few were predicting Jack would prevail.

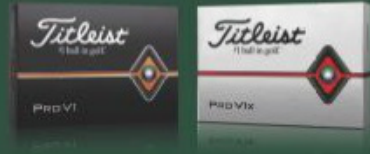
It still looked unlikely after eight holes of round four with Nicklaus at level par for



Just before his famous putt dropped on 17

the day. But with birdies at 9, 10 and 11, he moved into contention. His charge looked to have stalled with a bogey on the 12th, but he bounced back with a birdie on 13, eagle on 15 and birdie on 16. He then holed a tremendous putt on 17, lofting his putter in celebration as he reached seven-under for the day. None of those chasing were able to match the veteran. He had secured a sixth Masters title with an incredible back nine of 30.





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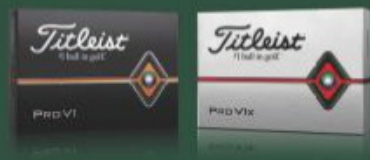


Words **Evin Priest** • Photography **Getty Images**

# The X Factor

Why the meteoric rise of young Californian  
**Xander Schauffele** shows no signs of slowing down





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f only his junior football coach had played him as a striker, golf may never have been gifted with the excitement machine that is Xander Schauffele. The 5-foot-10, 79-kilogram American was perhaps better built for the world game than the game he ended up choosing.

Schauffele – the son of a German-French father and a Chinese-Japanese mother – was a prodigious football talent. Aged six, he could juggle with both feet. He was a tremendous competitor. And the sport was in his blood, with both his great grandfathers playing professional football in their home countries of Austria and Germany.

But in Scripps Ranch – a city suburb of San Diego, California – Schauffele was toiling as a sweeper for his local junior team. He made his desires to play attacking football clear to his coach, who promised as

much to Schauffele for the next season. But when the manager didn't deliver, a 12-year-old Schauffele packed up and walked away. Schauffele, now 26, never played organised football again.

"I'm not kidding you," his father, Stefan, told a San Diego newspaper last year. "The next day, this is exactly what I said: 'Let's get you on the PGA Tour. Let's go'."

## Raising a champion

There was one problem with Schauffele's aspirations to make it to the PGA Tour – golf wasn't considered 'cool' in southern California. Not even after Tiger Woods – a native to that part of California – had overhauled the sport's image globally. Schauffele did not even tell friends and peers that he played golf.

"I think, as an individual growing up, golf wasn't always the coolest thing to play," said Schauffele at the recent Tournament of Champions in Hawaii. "In high school, in college, as a semi-pro or young man, I didn't tell anyone I really played golf when I was younger.

"I just didn't think it was cool. Now, it's really cool, obviously, since we're out here walking in the sun, making money and doing what we love to do.

"But it was interesting for me, as a young man, to realise I wanted to play professional golf; to realise what you have to sacrifice and how you have to behave to become a disciplined human being, to think



straight every day and make the right decisions."

The discipline Schauffele speaks of was instilled by his father, Stefan – a tough man in his own right. Aged 20, in his native Stuttgart, Stefan was involved in a horrific car accident caused by a drunken driver. Stefan's windscreen was shattered and glass pierced his left eye, causing him to lose vision in it completely following two years' worth of frequent hospital visits. Stefan – a promising football and squash player, ski instructor and track and field athlete – had his world turned upside down.

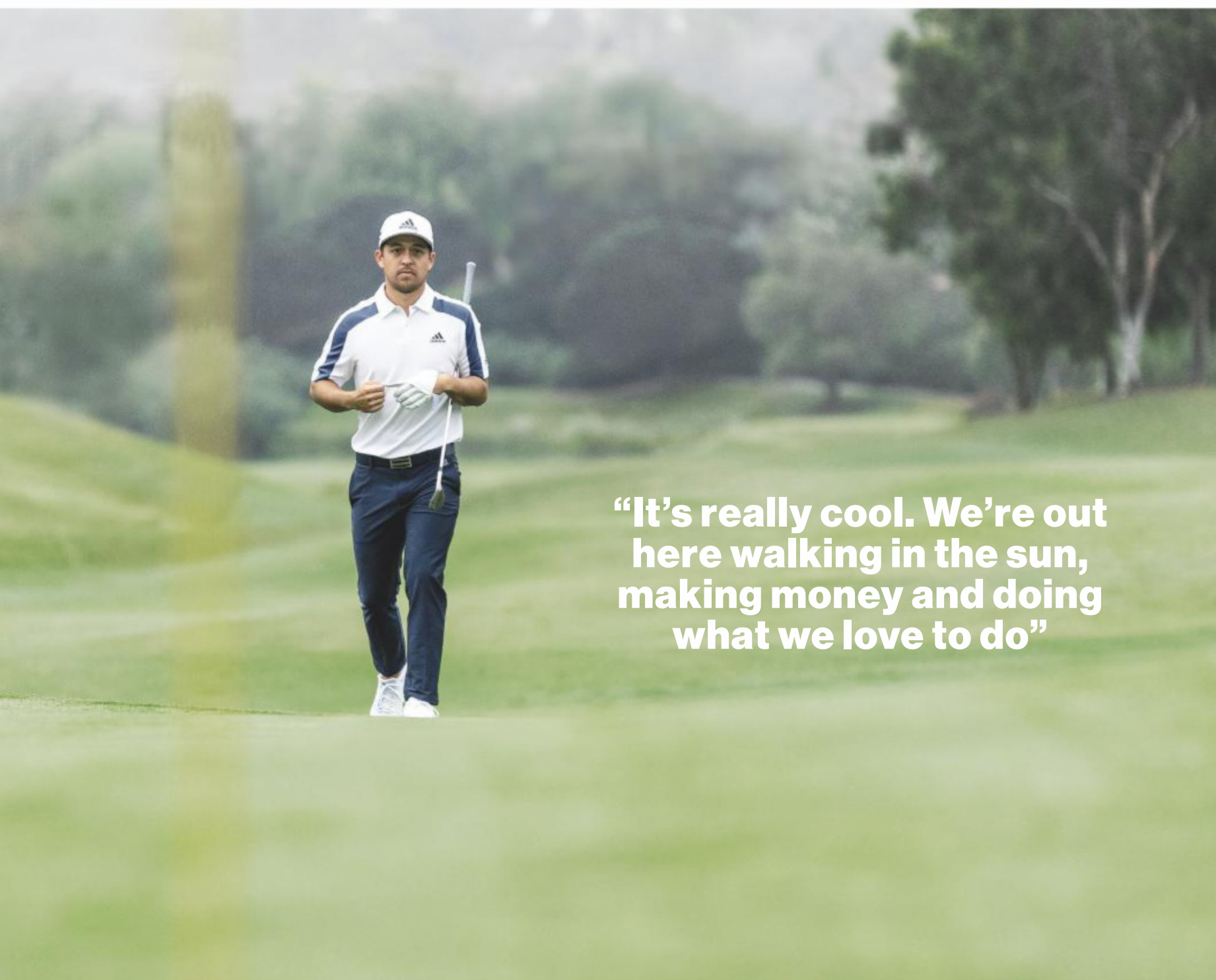
"It was a rough time," Stefan told a San Diego newspaper. "There was some depression and alcoholism."

But the period equipped Stefan with the means to raise a ferocious competitor in Schauffele, who never takes a backward step. However, the intense dynamic of



With Tiger at the 2019 Farmers Insurance Open





**“It’s really cool. We’re out here walking in the sun, making money and doing what we love to do”**

father-son sports relationships meant Stefan and son would often clash. Particularly when Schauffele reached his teens. “We once destroyed a whole bathroom,” Stefan recalled.

“I thought it was a really important thing that my dad and I went through,” added Schauffele at Kapalua’s Plantation course on the island of Maui. “It obviously sucked then when we had those arguments, but now, like everything else, I can kind of laugh about it.”

Schauffele’s fearlessness was on full display at the first PGA Tour event of 2020, the Tournament of Champions. Schauffele was the defending champion and put up a stoic fight. He battled ferocious winds and valiant charges from Patrick Reed and Justin Thomas to make it into a sudden-death play-off, but he had a great chance to close things out on the 72nd hole.

When he became only the fourth player during the final round to reach the 18th green in two – with a 3-wood that left him a 35-foot eagle attempt – he three-putted for par, missing a seven-foot putt for the victory. He bowed out on the first play-off hole and Reed followed suit on the third, with Thomas reigning supreme.

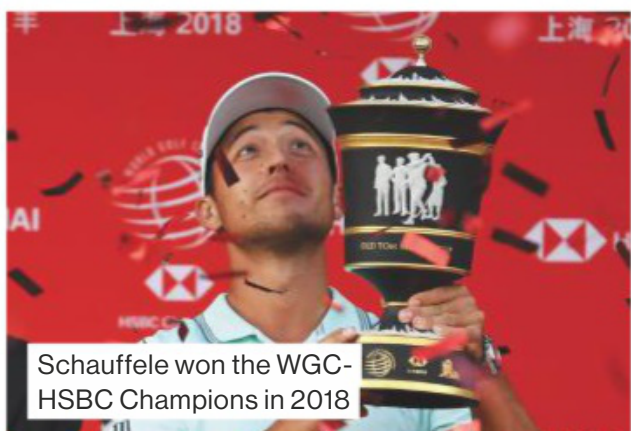
“I should have won the tournament,” a candid Schauffele said. “I know it;

everyone knows it. Under the circumstances, I should have closed it off, and I didn’t.”

But as Stefan taught him, Schauffele vowed to learn from his mistake and come back stronger with a full PGA Tour – and Major – season ahead. “I can win,” Schauffele said. “I think that’s pretty plain and simple. I’m good enough to hang with the best, and I just need to be a little bit smarter when the time is right and able to close it out.”

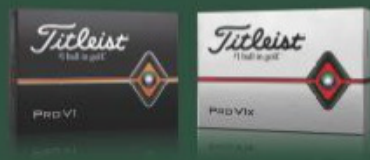
### **Master of his craft**

Schauffele has already proven his credentials as a winner on the PGA Tour. In 2017, he lifted trophies at the Greenbrier Classic and Tour Championship en route to winning the PGA Tour’s Rookie of the Year award. He has since added two more victories, including a maiden WGC title in China.



Schauffele won the WGC-HSBC Champions in 2018

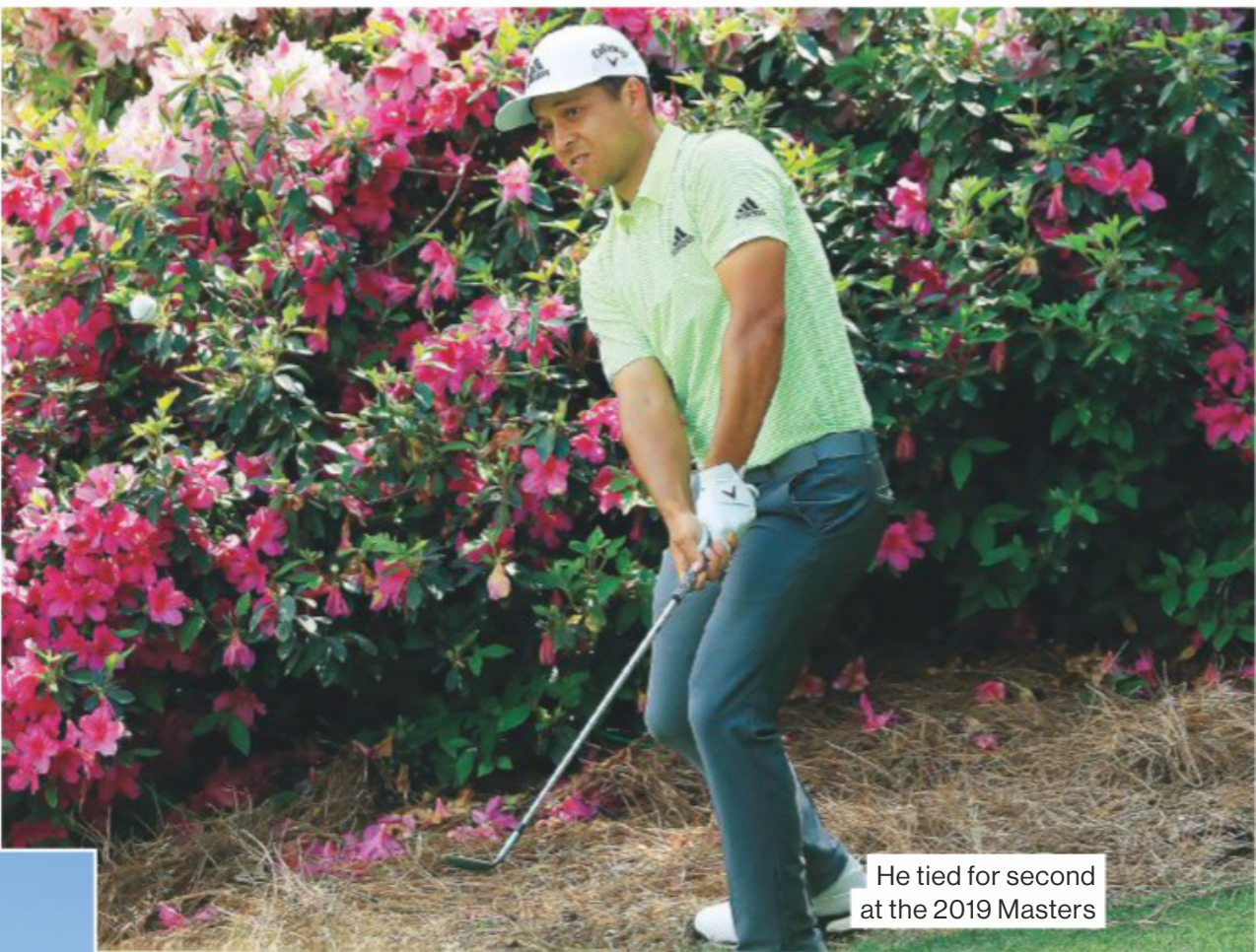




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But Schauffele’s versatile game sets up for Major Championships and the American has established plenty of form on the big stage during the past two years. It began with a tie for fifth on his Major debut at the 2017 US Open. Then, he shared sixth at the next US Open before a joint runner-up at the 2018 Open Championship.

At the Masters last year, Schauffele was among those tied for the lead with Woods while playing the 15th hole on Sunday, only for Woods to make birdie and never look back. Schauffele finished tied second and tied for third at the US Open two months later.



Schauffele has four PGA Tour victories

He tied for second at the 2019 Masters

All signs point to Schauffele contending at Augusta National in April. At the time of writing, he ranks fourth on the PGA Tour for driving, 13th for approach play and fourth around the greens – a deadly trio when it comes to Augusta. Schauffele’s immense power from the tee, accuracy with

his irons and towering ball flight are necessities at a course which can only be attacked with lofted iron shots.

Should he win the Masters this year, or in future, it will no doubt go a long way towards

changing the perception of golf as ‘uncool’ among today’s youth. In fact, Schauffele hopes his entire career helps to push golf into mainstream sport status.

“Golf doesn’t get a whole lot of attention, but with the PGA Tour and young players out here, we are working on trying to change that,”

said Schauffele, who advises children who enjoy playing golf to ignore what others may think.

“It’s all about being honest,” he continued. “You’ve got to know what you want to do. There are a lot of societal pressures on an individual, especially when you’re younger, especially these days with social media. So just block out the haters and do your own thing.”

However, Schauffele admits he does not want to shoulder the ‘golf is uncool’ burden on his own. “Shoot, if we could have another Tiger Woods come by in a few years, I think that would be awesome,” he says with a grin.

## MAJOR CONTENDER

### 2017 US Open

A first-round 67 put the American at the top end of the leaderboard at Erin Hills, but two rounds in the 70s damaged his chances of victory. A final-round 69 earned him a tied-5th finish.

### 2018 US Open

A year later at Shinnecock Hills, Schauffele had no real chance of victory but shot a sublime 68 on a tough Sunday to tie for 6th.

### 2018 Open Championship

Tied for the lead with Jordan Spieth and Kevin Kisner heading into the final round at



Carnoustie (left), a 74 dropped him into a tie for 2nd behind Francesco Molinari.

### 2019 Masters

He registered another tie for 2nd at Augusta in 2019. Five birdies in seven holes got him to the top of the leaderboard before Tiger surged ahead.

### 2019 US Open

At Pebble Beach, Schauffele had six birdies in his opening ten holes to storm up the leaderboard. He would eventually finish in a tie for 3rd, his third consecutive top-six at the US Open.



T H E C O U R S E

# FACTS & FIGURES

From record scoring to hole difficulty and even the number of floral species at Augusta, we've got it all covered

Augusta National's yardage

7,475

63

Course record (Nick Price, third round, 1986 and Greg Norman, first round, 1996)

29

Low back nine (Mark Calcavecchia, fourth round, 1992 and David Toms, fourth round, 1998)

13

Highest score on any hole in Masters history: Sergio Garcia, 15th hole, 2018; Tom Weiskopf, 12th hole, 1980; Tommy Nakajima, 13th hole, 1978

95

The highest round in Masters history, recorded by Charles Kunkle in 1956's final round

2019

The last time the course's length was extended

270

72-hole record (Tiger Woods, 1997 and Jordan Spieth, 2015)

The par-4 10th has statistically been the toughest hole at Augusta National (4.31 average)

74.1

All-time Masters scoring average

34/48

Front nine/back nine scores for Jacky Cupit in 1963, the most contrasting round in Masters history

71.9

Lowest-ever scoring average – 1992

77.2

Highest-ever scoring average – 1956

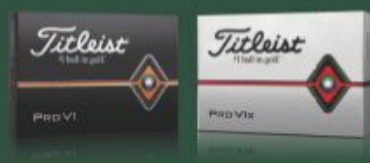
80,000

More than 80,000 plants of over 350 varieties have been added since Augusta opened

15

The par-5 15th has statistically been the easiest hole at Augusta National (4.78 average)





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# ALL SYSTEMS GO

Words: **Evin Priest** • Photography: **Getty Images**

Former amateur World No.1 **Patrick Cantlay**'s career has taken longer than expected to blossom, but experts say it will be worth the wait

F

Former Ryder Cup captain Paul Azinger began this year with a bold prediction. Standing behind the first tee at Kapalua's Plantation course, the analyst declared that 2020 would be the year of Patrick Cantlay. "By the end of the year, Patrick Cantlay will be World No.1," Azinger told me. "That's a statement, right?!"

In the past three years, former amateur World No.1 Cantlay has started to blossom with two wins on the PGA Tour. Last year, he finished in the top ten at The Masters and the USPGA at Bethpage. Physically, he's a prodigiously talented golfer. But Azinger feels it is Cantlay's demeanour that stands out. "He hits it great, but he has that stoic personality," Azinger said. "I told [Cantlay] he's my favourite player

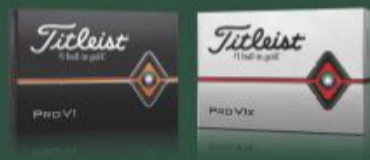


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to watch. I loved watching [Retief] Goosen because he was so mellow; non-reactive. What everyone else sees as kind of incredibly boring, I see as ‘I wouldn’t want him breathing down my neck’.”

But by the end of the first round at the Tournament of Champions on Maui in January, Cantlay seemed anything but boring. The 27-year-old was caught in a spectacular hot-microphone fail on host broadcaster *Golf Channel*.

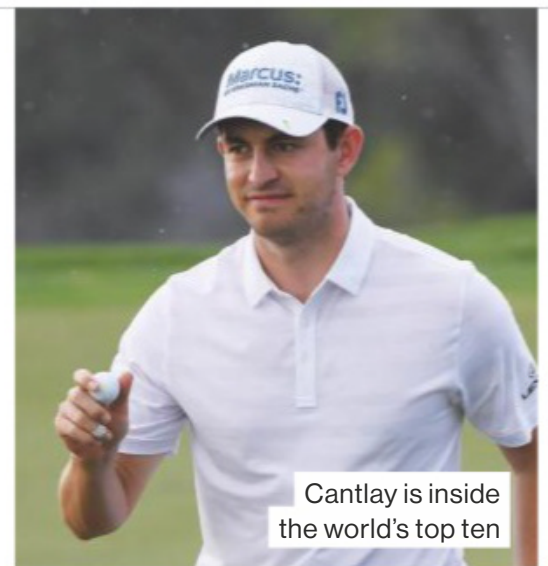
It’s unclear exactly what Cantlay was talking about, given *Golf Channel* was coming out of an ad break. But he was telling a story to playing partner Jon Rahm and his caddie Adam Hayes on the 17th tee at Kapalua. It may have related to slow play, or the wildly erratic weather conditions that made the Plantation course play difficult that day: “I’ve been waiting for this weather for 40 years. These pampered f---s need to play,” Cantlay was heard saying.

Cantlay then said to his caddie, Matt Minister, “Two more holes and we can get a Mai Tai”. “I’ll get my Mai Tai; you can get your water,” Minister replied. “Don’t

spoil it for me,” Cantlay responded. When the telecast cut back to the booth, Azinger said, “Gosh, he’s not really staying in the moment. He’s already in the 19th hole!”

## Like Duval

The Hawaiian mic blunder made headlines in the golf world as Cantlay showed a rare flash of colour. Cantlay is usually a mellow, even-keeled player, as the golf



Cantlay is inside the world's top ten

**“At the Memorial, someone said ‘It can’t be that bad, can it?’ I didn’t realise that’s the look on my face”**

world saw vividly at last year’s Memorial Tournament in Ohio – an event hosted by Jack Nicklaus.

Cantlay started the final round four strokes behind the lead, but fired an eight-under-par 64 to steal victory from Australia’s Adam Scott, recording the lowest ever final round by a winner in the tournament’s 43-year history. It eclipsed the 65 Tiger Woods closed with when he triumphed in 2009. Reporters half joked with Cantlay

that he didn’t flash a smile the entire day. “He did at No.15,” Nicklaus joked.

The win was particularly impressive given Scott’s usually world-class ball-striking was on full display and was only going to be foiled by a career round from an opponent. Cantlay showed no fear of going deep as he rattled off five front nine birdies, before adding two more on the back nine. He also didn’t let the occasion overwhelm



Cantlay came close at last year’s Masters



## At the double

These five players are Major Champions and former amateur World No.1s

### ▼ **Rory McIlroy**

McIlroy held the honour for one week back in 2007 and has gone on to win four Majors, with The Masters the only one missing from his resume.



### **Jordan Spieth**

Spieth took over from Cantlay as amateur World No.1 in 2012. Since then, the Texan has claimed three Major titles and needs a USPGA Championship win to complete the Career Grand Slam.

### **Lydia Ko**

Ko was the best female amateur in the world for an astounding 130 weeks and went on to win the 2015 Evian Championship and

2016 ANA Inspiration. She has 11 Major top-tens.

### **Danny Willett**

The Englishman had a stellar amateur career and has won some huge events as a pro, most notably the 2016 Masters, where he came through the field with a sublime closing 67.

### ▼ **Brooke Henderson**

Like Ko, Henderson was an amateur World No.1 and just so happened to beat the Kiwi in a play-off to win her sole Major Championship to date. This came at the 2016 KPMG Women's PGA Championship.



him despite an 18-time Major winner standing beside the 18th green for the customary handshake. Azinger admitted Cantlay's demeanour was similar to former World No.1 and 2001 Open Championship winner, David Duval. Duval was known for putting on his trademark sunglasses and never speaking a word to opponents in the heat of battle.

"A little bit; Duval didn't say squat," Azinger said of the comparison. "[Duval] just hid behind those glasses. I thought those glasses were a bad idea for him, but I didn't realise it branded him. It made him into 'David Duval'. I always felt it was important to see a player's eyes, and it was

important for the viewer to see a player's eyes. And Duval just blew that straight out of the water."

Cantlay admits his resting face can appear disappointed, but he isn't about to change anything for the cameras. "I understand that's my look. I try to be natural," says Cantlay. "So I try to be how I am all the time. I was walking [during the final round at the Memorial] and somebody said, 'It can't be that bad, can it?' I didn't even realise that's the look on my face. I was in a great mood. But I feel like if I tried to be any other way, it wouldn't be me. I'd be trying to force it."

Cantlay did, however, acknowledge that winning at what is known as 'Jack's Place' was a

highlight of his career to date. "Growing up watching golf as a kid, you definitely mark it off as something you want to check off your list throughout your career."

### **A life-changing accident**

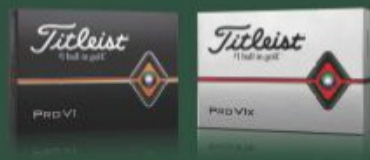
Cantlay attended Servite high School in Anaheim, a ten-minute drive from the school that 15-time Major winner Woods attended (Western HS). Like Woods, Cantlay was a star amateur golfer. He still holds the record for most consecutive weeks as amateur World No.1, with 54. He recorded low-amateur honours at the US



Open (2011) and Masters (2012) and won the prestigious Mark H McCormack Medal as the top-ranked amateur in the world at the end of the 2011 season. He racked up plenty of other awards while on the golf team at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA).

But as a professional, the Long Beach native has taken far longer than expected to show his potential, having gone through several traumatic years early in his career. To put it in perspective, Cantlay turned professional in 2012 – only months before compatriot Jordan Spieth. But with setbacks, his career initially





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Cantlay represented the USA in the 2019 Presidents Cup

took the opposite path to the three-time Major Champion.

Cantlay suffered a back injury in 2013 and played just nine tournaments while trying to recover from a stress fracture in his L5 vertebrae. In 2016, his best friend, high school teammate and caddie, Chris Roth, was killed in a hit-and-run accident while the two were crossing a street in Newport

**“I’m definitely a different person than I was before. That stuff changed me. It was so much bigger than golf”**

Beach, California. He concedes it changed him forever.

“After the difficulties with my friend Chris dying and being out so long with my back, I’m definitely a different person than I was before I went through any of those troubles,” Cantlay says. “But I don’t necessarily connect the struggles to golf. That stuff changed me as a person. It was so much bigger than golf. [Before Roth’s death] I can remember feeling happy-go-lucky; like everything is going to go good. Everything was just up and up and up; good things just kept happening. You keep doing good work and good things are going to happen. But during that time I realised that you can put in a lot of work, and good things still might not necessarily happen.”

## Making a statement

Cantlay does not appear to be slowing down after a whirlwind

2019 season. Last year, his Memorial win was among a whopping nine top-tens from the 17 events he contested. Combined with two runner-ups and two third-place showings, he amassed \$6.1m in prize money.

Cantlay has hit the ground running this year, finishing fourth at the Tournament of Champions despite the distraction of the hot-

mic fail. Many found the exchange humorous and harmless, but Cantlay’s management declined all media requests on his behalf for the rest of the tournament.

But the on-air gaffe does not change the fact Cantlay appears built for pressure-cooker situations – particularly Major Championships. Three of his best results at the

Majors came last year. There was a tie for ninth at Augusta, a share of third at the USPGA Championship and a tied-21st at the US Open.

Nicklaus says Cantlay’s tunnel vision is not unlike his own. “Patrick reminds me a lot of me; being serious and [getting] so wrapped up in what I’m doing that I forget about everything else that’s going on around me,” Nicklaus said last year. “And I learned years ago that when I got close to finishing a tournament, maybe two or three or four holes left, I would stop, look around me... and take a nice big breath.

“It would relax me. I’d look around and think these people are here, they’re having fun and I need to have fun as well. I need to enjoy winning this golf tournament, not torment myself when I’m trying to finish it off.”

Nicklaus passed on that advice to Cantlay days before he won last year at the Muirfield Village course he designed to look and feel just like Augusta National. “All I was trying to pass on to Patrick was to try to get a little more of a relaxed attitude in his head, so that when he got himself in that position, it wasn’t like all this pressure was on top of him,” added Nicklaus.

“And it was just a comment. It may have resonated with him; it may not have.”

Whether or not the message from six-time Masters Champion Nicklaus resonated with Cantlay, it certainly can’t hurt at Augusta National in April.



Cantlay has won twice on the PGA Tour



M A S T E R S M O M E N T S

M A G I C  
N U M B E R S

Masters competitors have treated us to some eye-catching scoring feats and streaks over the decades at Augusta

Highest  
72-hole winning  
score: Zach Johnson  
(2007), Jack Burke  
(1956), Sam Snead  
(1954)

289 15

Masters  
decided by  
play-off, most  
recently Sergio  
Garcia and  
Justin Rose

57

Rounds of  
80 or higher in  
1965, out of a  
total of 320

50

Consecutive holes  
completed in par or  
better by Stuart  
Appleby in 2001

31

Number of  
holes-in-one in  
Masters history

25

Most countries  
represented  
at a single Masters,  
in 2015

4

Albatrosses in  
Masters history: Gene  
Sarazen, 15th hole,  
1935; Bruce Devlin,  
8th hole, 1967; Jeff  
Maggert, 13th hole,  
1994; Louis  
Oosthuizen, 2nd  
hole, 2012

6

Players to birdie the  
72nd hole to win The  
Masters when they  
had to: Art Wall (1959),  
Arnold Palmer (1960),  
Gary Player (1978),  
Sandy Lyle (1988),  
Mark O'Meara (1998),  
Phil Mickelson (2004)

5

The  
biggest  
final-round  
comeback in  
Masters history,  
by Jack Burke  
in 1956

2

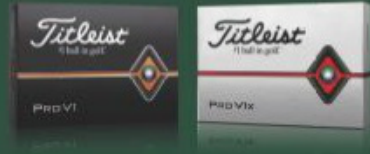
Number of rounds at  
par or better during  
the second round of  
the 1954 Masters

11

Most birdies in a  
single Masters round,  
recorded by Anthony  
Kim in the second  
round in 2009

Players have  
won The Masters  
on their debuts:  
Horton Smith (1934),  
Gene Sarazen (1935),  
Fuzzy Zoeller  
(1979)





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Photography **Kevin Murray, Getty Images** • Words **Michael Weston**

# LIVING THE DREAM

Growing up, **Eric Van Rooyen** used to wait until the early hours to watch his South African heroes tee off at Augusta. Now it's his turn...

or what seemed like an eternity, Erik Van Rooyen could only watch and wait to see whether he'd end the year in the world's top 50 to qualify automatically for his Masters debut. He had downed tools after the season ended in Dubai, which left his position in some jeopardy. Monday mornings were spent checking the updated rankings to see if his points had "depreciated like a car".

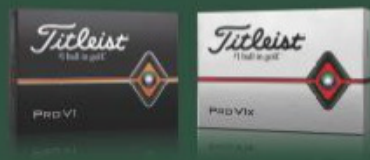
Fortunately for the South African, they held their value, and a few weeks later he got one of those fancy invites in the post from Augusta's Board of Governors. Place secured.

Qualification came on the back of his most successful season on the European Tour to date. In August,

he won his maiden title at the Scandinavian Invitation in Sweden, and he finished tenth in the Race to Dubai. There were three runner-up spots, too, and a top-ten finish at the USPGA Championship. It was a hectic season, one that left him "knackered". However, after years of watching The Masters, the 30-year-old finally gets to fulfil a lifelong dream.

"It's always been a tough one to watch as a kid, with the time difference," says Van Rooyen. "I was supposed to go to school the next day and I'd have to stay up until two o'clock to watch the leaders teeing off. I remember watching Trevor win [Immelman, 2008] and Ernie [Els, 2004] crushingly getting heartbroken. ▶





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The one that sticks out for me was Charl Schwartzel's win in 2011. I was in college in the US. I was at my girlfriend's house. We were watching Charl win and I'm breaking down in tears because I'm so stoked for him. It's a pretty emotional thing to see a fellow countryman do so well."

When Van Rooyen was in his last year of high school, he decided to move to America, where he could play a competitive golf schedule while he studied. His junior achievements attracted a number of offers, but he opted for the University of Minnesota, where he enjoyed six top-ten finishes in his senior season. However, one of his most memorable experiences during his college years, aside from meeting his wife, was seeing Augusta for the first time.

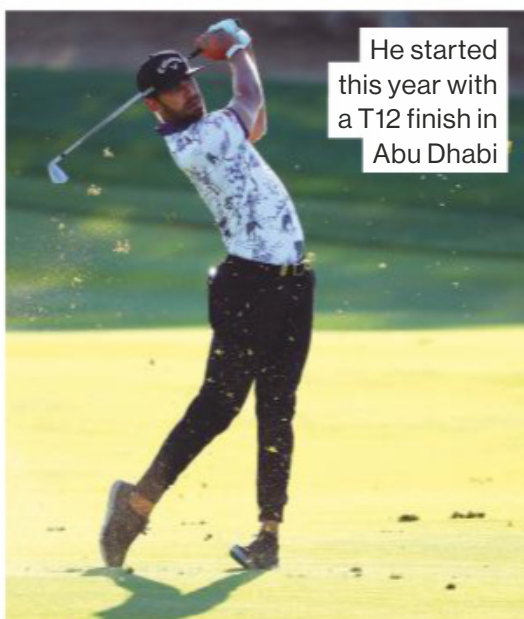
"We played right next door, but I never got to play it," he recalls with frustration. "All the teams got tickets to the Monday practice round in 2009. It's the only time I've been there. It's a pretty cool place. What I would say from what

**"There's a fascination with Augusta. It's just another golf course, but there's something special about it"**

I can remember is that the television really doesn't do justice to the amount of slope that's there and how big some of the doglegs are. I remember walking from 12 to 13 and seeing how much that hole really bends. You don't really get that perspective on television.

"Now, having played pretty much all around the world, I think I've seen pretty much all there is to be seen. There's a fascination with it [Augusta], which you get in every sport, like tennis and Wimbledon. It's just another golf course, but there's something special about it. I'll obviously be pretty excited, but I'll tackle it the same way as I try and tackle every event I play."

Van Rooyen is a pretty cool customer. You don't imagine he'll fret too much about his first taste of Amen Corner. With a thick beard and six foot three inch frame, he



He started this year with a T12 finish in Abu Dhabi

has an intimidating look that would have its advantages in contact sports. However, he's more your gentle giant than angry WWE type. He's very relaxed, too, especially since getting the "monkey off his back" with his win in Sweden, where he holed a birdie putt from 15 feet on the last to pip Matt Fitzpatrick to the title.

"Winning definitely brings a lot of confidence, knowing that you know how to get it done, especially the way I got it done. I had to go out and win it, no one handed it to me, so it was huge," he reflects.

"I was buzzing all night. I didn't need too many beers to help me along, but I did have a few, and a big bottle of champagne. We were out having dinner with a few of the South Africans, my caddie, Alex, and a few of the others. We had a good laugh. I was knackered to be honest, so there was nothing too over the top. I had a plane to catch the next morning."

## In good company

It was one of many highlights last season. A lofty finish in his first ever USPGA Championship three months earlier was made all the more special in the company of Masters Champion Jordan Spieth. "He's accomplished incredible things in his relatively short career. I'm always trying to learn, trying to watch and see what someone else is doing," he explains.

"I'd never met Jordan up until that point. It's funny, because I'm focusing on what I'm trying to do and at the same time there's a sense of looking a little bit. I've only got compliments for him. He was a very cool guy to play with and we got along really nicely."

Last season did have its disappointments as well, however. He's not the type to sulk, but his





omission from the Presidents Cup team at the end of the year was a tough one to swallow. He couldn't have played much better to earn an automatic spot, and he even put his case to captain Els.

"I sent Ernie a message during the HSBC in China telling him that I'm super keen to play and I think I'd make a positive difference in the team. So I was hoping to get picked. At the same time it wasn't as if I expected to be. It was such a hard call for Ernie because a lot of guys were playing well. Was I disappointed? Yes, but at the same time, not really. I was relying on someone else's opinion to pick me. Hopefully I'll get another chance in two years."

Which is why he's focused on producing another big season. He would love to follow in the footsteps of the great South Africans who have succeeded on the Major stage; players like Els

## SOUTH AFRICA'S MASTERS CHAMPIONS

### GARY PLAYER

1961, 1974, 1978

Player became the first non-American winner of the Masters in 1961, when he got up and down from the bunker on the 18th to claim a one-shot victory. He finished runner-up in '62 and '65, before finally slipping the Green Jacket on again in '74. Four years later, he completed the hat-trick, coming from seven strokes back with a scintillating final-round 64.

### TREVOR IMMELMAN

2008

Immelman became the first South African to win The Masters since Player. Much of the good work was done after opening with three rounds in the 60s, and despite a few wobbles on the back nine on Sunday, including a double-bogey on the par-3 16th, he held on to win by three strokes over Tiger Woods.

### CHARL SCHWARTZEL

2011

Schwartzel marked the 50th anniversary of Player's first Masters win with South Africa's fifth Green Jacket. Like Player in '78, he surged through the field on the final day, recording four birdies in the final four holes to win by two shots from the Australian duo of Jason Day and Adam Scott.

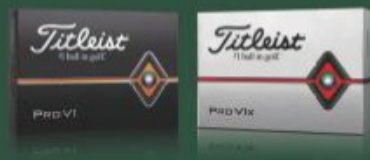
### THE NEARLY MEN

**Ernie Els** [2000 and '04], **Retief Goosen** ['02 and '07], **Rory Sabbatini** ['07], **Tim Clark** ['06] and **Louis Oosthuizen** [2012] have all finished runner-up. Els shot a final-round 67 in '04, only to be denied by Phil Mickelson, who holed an 18-footer for victory on the 72nd hole. In 2012, Bubba Watson defeated Oosthuizen in a play-off, after the American produced that wonder shot through the trees.

Van Rooyen finished tenth on last year's Race to Dubai







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Van Rooyen's choice of trousers has raised a few eyebrows

“You don’t want to stay where you are. In any sport or industry, the hunger is always there, the goal to be the best. I’m top 50 now, yes, but there are 49 guys ahead of me. I’m incredibly competitive. I don’t feel any different being 49 in the world than I did when I was 200. There are still things eating at me that I’m not yet where I want to be and I’ve still got goals to reach.

“I need to chase them, the things I want to achieve. The key is to keep polishing the diamond. There are always certain elements to the game that can be improved. To get to 40 and then to get to 30, the levels of improvement just get smaller and smaller. The jump gets smaller and smaller, but to make that jump gets harder and harder.”

**Standing out from the crowd**  
Van Rooyen is going to enjoy the ride whatever happens. He may have obsessed over his 48th position in the world ranking over the festive

and Retief Goosen, who were a constant inspiration throughout his childhood playing around Pretoria.

“Growing up it seemed like every other week I’d read about Ernie or Retief winning a tournament somewhere, and they were always competing in the Majors. They’ve been massively influential. I remember watching them play together in the World Cup of Golf and beating Tiger and Duval on the 18th. They inspired a lot of guys my age. We’ve just got a really good thing going on in South Africa. There are kids coming through every single year. I don’t know why. I think we just excel at sport. We love it and I think you’ll just keep seeing it,” he says.

**Who’s next?**  
Els was the last South African to win a Major, when he lifted the Claret Jug in 2012. At the start of the year, there were only two South Africans in the world’s top 50 – 2010 Open Champion Louis Oosthuizen and Van

## “Growing up it seemed like every week I’d read about Ernie or Retief winning a tournament”

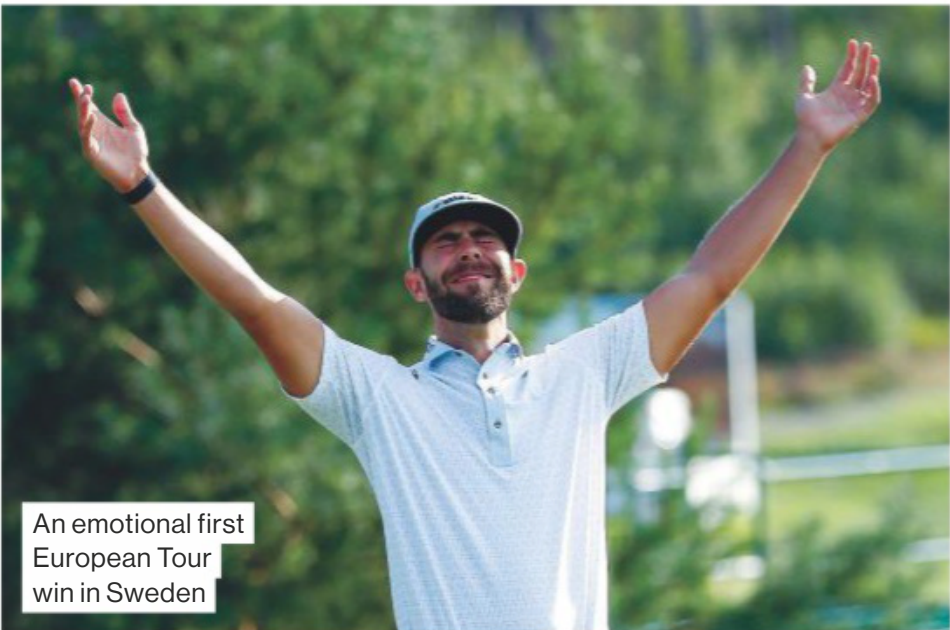
Rooyen, who senses an opportunity to step up for several of his fellow countrymen.

“I’d love to be that guy. I always thought Branden Grace might get it done. He’s played phenomenal golf and gone close a couple of times. That said, there are more golfers on the European Tour from South Africa than there’s ever been. We’d love to see someone step up, it would be special,” he continues.

period, but that didn’t stop him enjoying Christmas in Johannesburg with his family, especially when he had his beloved guitar. “I’m not exactly Freddie Mercury, but a couple of whiskies or gin and tonics and I’m a decent singer,” he jokes.

He laughs too when questioned about his trousers, the type that show a bit of ankle – more Love Island than your traditional golf slacks. What can we expect to see at

The Masters? “I’m sure Greyson will send a few funky things to showcase what they’ve got. I definitely wouldn’t describe myself as a fashion icon but I just really like the stuff that they have. It still needs to be neat and tidy but it’s a little bit different, not outrageous. I enjoy that. I don’t mind standing out a little bit.”



An emotional first European Tour win in Sweden



THE PLAYERS

# NUMBERS GAME

When it comes to record achievements at Augusta, it will come as no surprise that the names Nicklaus, Player and Woods feature prominently

The average age of all Masters Champions

**506**

Number of birdies recorded by Jack Nicklaus in his Masters career. He had a record 39 rounds under 70

**52.60**

Only three men have successfully defended The Masters: Jack Nicklaus (1965-66), Nick Faldo (1989-90) and Tiger Woods (2001-02)

**1961**

The year Gary Player became the first non-American winner of The Masters

**17**

Players have won multiple Masters, most recently Bubba Watson in 2014

**71**

Sub-par rounds by Jack Nicklaus at The Masters

Strokes played by Gary Player in 164 career Masters rounds. Remarkably, he's taken part in 52 Masters

**12.061**

Number of players to have played over 100 Masters rounds with sub-par scoring averages: Nicklaus and Mickelson

**23**

Most consecutive cuts made: Couples and Player

**16**

Tiger Woods played the back nine in 16-under-par en route to victory in 1997

**26**

Consecutive pars recorded by Johnny Revolta in 1952

**5**

Wire-to-wire winners of The Masters: Jordan Spieth (2015), Ray Floyd (1976), Jack Nicklaus (1972), Arnold Palmer (1960) and Craig Wood (1941)

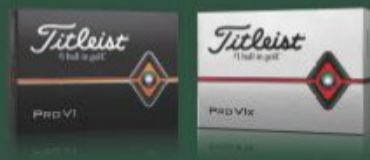
**20**

Number of records set by Tiger Woods in his 1997 Masters victory, including playing Amen Corner in seven-under-par and bouncing back from a 40 on Thursday's front nine

**79**

Age of Fred McLeod in 1962, the oldest ever competitor. He made ten starts aged 70 or over. The youngest player was Guan Tianlang, who was just 14 in 2013





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Photography: **Getty Images**

# REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL

Nick Bonfield analyses the UK challenge ahead of the 2020 Masters and explains why a home winner is a distinct possibility

**W**hen The Masters field is finalised a week before the event, golf fans across these isles assess the chances of another home victory at a course that's been a relatively fertile hunting ground for our players over the last few decades. Given the strength of UK

golf at the moment – there are 11 players in the world's top 50 – and the fact The Masters boasts the smallest field of any of golf's big four events, it seems reasonable to suggest the year's first Major offers the best opportunity for a UK victory. But who is most likely to follow Messrs Lyle, Faldo, Woosnam and Willett and land a Green Jacket?

Naturally, Rory McIlroy is the first player who comes to mind. His Masters record is superb – he's registered five top-ten finishes in the last six years – and his game is ideally suited to Augusta National. His length gives him short clubs into the longest par 4s and means all the par 5s are comfortably in reach, while his high ball flight is the





perfect antidote to Augusta's slick and undulating putting surfaces.

In 2019 on the PGA Tour, McIlroy ranked second in driving distance and first in strokes gained: off-the-tee, strokes gained: tee-to-green and strokes gained: total. What's perhaps more encouraging, however, is the fact he ranked 24th in strokes gained: putting – his highest ever position. McIlroy is notorious for being a streaky putter, but this figure points to improved consistency on the greens.

A key consideration, though, is how much a potential place in the history books plays on McIlroy's mind. It's impossible to quantify the additional pressure exerted by the allure of the Career Grand Slam, but it seems to be the only

thing currently holding him back. If he can adopt a relaxed approach and use his near-misses in 2011 and 2018 as motivation, he'll be hard to beat. At this point, you'd be shocked if he finished outside the top five.

Another player with a tremendous record at Augusta National is Justin Rose. In truth, the Englishman has been a touch disappointing since his impressive victory at Torrey Pines in January 2019, failing to register a win, recording a rare missed cut at The Masters and producing inauspicious final-round displays at the US Open and Open Championship. Another cause for concern is the fact he ranked 170th in final-round scoring average on the PGA Tour in 2019, which perhaps suggests he's putting too much pressure on himself.

However, when he drives down Magnolia Lane this April, he'll be buoyed by all the good memories he's accrued at Augusta over the years and determined to bounce



Tommy Fleetwood is well fancied

to strength in recent years and looks destined to win a Major at some stage. While many feel his best opportunity comes at The Open, he has all the tools to be successful at Augusta. His Masters record is uninspiring – cut, 17th and 36th – but he's only played three times and it takes a while to familiarise yourself with Augusta's nuances.

On paper, he looks well placed to challenge. Statistically, he's very solid across the board, which will stand him in good stead on a course that examines every area of the game. Augusta is a second-shot golf course, and his driving prowess should see him playing approaches from the optimal positions more often than most. He

## **“A key consideration, though, is how much a potential place in the history books plays on McIlroy's mind”**

back from a disappointing showing last year. That performance aside, his record at Augusta is outstanding. Between 2009 and 2018, Rose didn't finish outside the top 25. In 2015, only inspired play from Jordan Spieth kept the Green Jacket off his shoulders, and in 2018, it seemed as if Sergio Garcia was propelled by fate as he finally secured his first Major in a play-off against Rose.

The 39-year-old is a great mid-iron player, he was one of the best putters on the PGA Tour last season and he's plenty long enough. I'll certainly continue to back Rose at Augusta for the foreseeable future.

His compatriot, Tommy Fleetwood, has gone from strength

also has the short game to deal with Augusta's treacherous run-offs and green complexes.

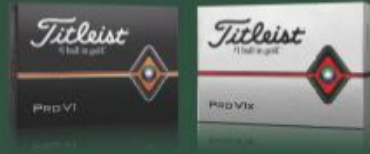
Such is the strength in depth of UK golf that you wouldn't be shocked to see a victory from elsewhere. Matt Fitzpatrick hasn't won since the 2018 European Masters, but he was four times a runner-up in 2019. He's a fabulous putter and he hasn't finished worse than 38th in his four Masters appearances. Elsewhere, the likes of Hatton, Willett and Westwood all have the skills to contend.

At The Masters, drama is all but guaranteed. Expect at least one player from these shores to contribute to that come Sunday afternoon at Augusta National.



Is this the year Rory completes the Career Grand Slam?





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# What makes Augusta a great course?

Words & interviews **Jeremy Ellwood** • Photography **Getty Images**

We ask four highly regarded course architects to pinpoint what makes Alister MacKenzie's masterpiece stand out from the crowd

The irony, if that's the right word, about Augusta National is that for most golf fans, although it's one of the courses they are least likely to visit, let alone play, it is also one with which they are most familiar. The reason, of course, is that it is the venue for the only Major that never moves, so we have all become hugely familiar with it, especially since finally being granted live televisual access to the front nine early this century.

We know the final nine holes in particular like the back of our hands – where to go, where not to go; what is a good approach, what is almost certain three-putt country; when to go for it, when not to on 13 and 15; and perhaps most of all, that the tournament is never over until the water holes have been successfully negotiated.

The back nine, which originally played as the front nine, has become a theatre of dreams for those watching, and occasionally





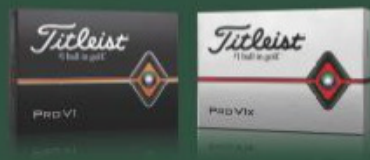
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The sheer beauty  
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of nightmares for those trying to get their hands on a Green Jacket. The fact that so much can change on any of those holes is what makes Augusta National such a great viewing spectacle. But what else about Dr Alister MacKenzie's most acclaimed design makes it great?

To find out, we chatted with four highly regarded golf course architects: Martin Ebert, who has worked on many Open rota courses and created the new holes for Royal Portrush's return last year; Australian Tim Lobb, who worked alongside five-time Open Champion, Peter Thomson, for many years; Jonathan Gaunt, who is currently overseeing the changes at Whittington Heath in Staffordshire as a result of HS2; and Ken Moodie, who has worked on MacKenzie's creations at Alwoodley and Moortown in recent years.

## From a design perspective, what makes Augusta National a great course?

**Ken Moodie:** The greens are very important to the strategy and there are certain angles you don't want to approach some of the greens from, because the ball will feed off them if you're coming in from the wrong angle, even if only playing a short shot.

**Jonathan Gaunt:** The width of the fairways – I like that. Generally, you've got a lot of options. When

so much danger. And then it's those incredible green designs. A little bit like at St Andrews, it's not good enough just hitting the greens – you've got to hit the right parts.

## What are the best holes or standout features?

**JG:** The greens are the standout feature, although never designed to be that fast. My favourite is the 14th – I love that green. The 16th is a really dramatic hole in the right place on the course, but the green is so tough.

**Tim Lobb:** It's the sheer beauty of it. When I went there, we walked in an entrance and just came to the 16th hole. It was quite amazing. Some of the best holes are maybe not the famous ones – the 5th is a

think that's always good when it splits the field in terms of strategy. The 8th is interesting with those big mounds around the green. We were lucky enough to visit the Jockey Club in Buenos Aires, and as I understand it, one of the holes there was regarded as Alister MacKenzie's prototype for the 8th at Augusta, with some incredibly high mounds around the green.

## Has the course moved forward well and retained the essence of MacKenzie's original design?

**TL:** I guess it has. That's a discussion about technology and the role the golf ball has played. I guess they've reacted to that – a situation out of their control – and



## “It really does inspire people to play the game. We've got a lot to thank Jones and MacKenzie for”

you've got a lot of options you've got to choose a route as a player as it's not obvious. It's almost like you're playing a hole backwards because you need to approach the green from the right direction – you've got to work your way back to where you place your tee-shot.

**Martin Ebert:** I guess it's the number of heroic shots it calls for and the excitement of seeing players take those on, whether it's on 11, 12, 13 or 15. It's just a tremendous spectacle to watch players take on shots which involve

beautiful hole and a really tough one that doesn't sit in the limelight. It's got a unique green with a big hump in front of it, which is what you see at St Andrews quite a lot.

**KM:** I love the 13th because it's obviously not finished when you reach the green. You've got that very awkward slope from back to front, and if you end up in that hollow at the back, you've got a very awkward chip down.

**ME:** I suppose a hole like the 3rd, a short par 4. Some of them have a go at it and some of them don't. I

I think they've done a pretty good job of it.

**JG:** I'm not saying it's not been done well, because whenever they build something at Augusta it's extremely high quality. But I'd question whether or not it has retained the original character because there are no rough edges.

**ME:** The bunkering is probably the most remarkable transformation. You look at the old pictures and they were so much more rough-edged. I often wonder what Bobby Jones and Alister MacKenzie would make of it today if they came back and saw the perfection of those bunkers. As for added length, that's had to happen to retain the test of the shots into the greens. But we're



Crowds gathered  
at Amen Corner

still seeing people having a go at the 15th, and when you go there and see the shallowness of that green, that must be the bravest shot anyone hits all year.

**How good was MacKenzie as a course designer and what do you most admire about his philosophy?**

**ME:** One of his quotes was, “The chief object of every golf course architect worth his salt is to imitate the beauties of nature so closely as to make his work indistinguishable from nature itself.” I’ve seen a few features where I’ve wondered whether he’s put that into practice, like those surrounds on the 8th, but I guess it’s really those green complexes – he just didn’t have any worries about making them as wild as can be. If you do wild stuff these days you generally get criticised as much as you get lauded, so I think his boldness was wonderful.

**KM:** The thing that MacKenzie was generally best at was creating visual drama with the variety of bunkering and his naturalistic styling. I think he probably had something to teach Colt in those

aspects. Colt was better in terms of respecting safety margins, whereas MacKenzie was more willing to break the rules and have crossing holes at times, as he did at Alwoodley.

**JG:** I think he had a really good eye for using the terrain and that was probably to do with his training and the military camouflage ideas he worked on. I think things that trick the eye work really well. At Augusta, that applies to some of the elevated greens where you can’t quite get an idea of how deep they are – maybe the 7th, 9th and 14th.

**TL:** I played quite a lot at MacKenzie’s Royal Melbourne as a teenager. It’s beautifully natural and quite hilly – not as much as Augusta, but another tricky yet wonderful site. When you get quite a steep and hilly site, it can be a real challenge but also such an opportunity. On those two projects I think MacKenzie did something pretty remarkable.

**Have any Augusta features or holes inspired anything in your designs?**

**KM:** Yes, absolutely. Having worked on MacKenzie courses I’m more willing now to use bunkers for their framing capabilities sometimes.

**ME:** One that I did try to suggest to Royal Portrush is that there might be a stream that is

now culverted that runs in front of what is now the 12th green, and I felt that should be opened up to force a similar decision to the 13th at Augusta in terms of whether to go for the green in two or not. But I had no luck with the club or The R&A on that one!

**TL:** He used the steepness of the land so well in the routings at Augusta and Melbourne, and I’d like to think that I’ve seen the steepness of

the terrain as an opportunity and not so much as a risk. I also like the philosophy of quite wide off the tee and then really focusing in on the approach, and that’s particularly apparent at Augusta National and Royal Melbourne.

**Is there anything about Augusta that your design eye is not so keen on?**

**KM:** Some of the uphill holes, I suppose. Even the 18th, you don’t see much from the drive zone. On TV we enjoy the 18th because we can see everything, but the players don’t get to appreciate seeing their ball land on the putting surface.

**JG:** I can’t say that every hole works for me. The 15th, for example, is a strange kind of drive position to my eye. And the course is not natural enough for me. It’s all very striking and all very dramatic, but not rough enough around the edges.

**ME:** I just think it’s a great course and a great event that encourages people to take up the game. Some people criticise it for giving the wrong message about ‘green is great’ and it coming at the wrong time of year for British clubs, and there’s an element of truth in that. But it really does inspire people to play the game and we’ve got a lot to thank Bobby Jones and Alister MacKenzie for.

**TL:** I guess Augusta is just one of those courses we’ve grown up watching and it’s hard to dislike anything. Having been there as a patron, it is one of the most amazing experiences.

The 16th  
adds drama at  
the right time



# HOME COMFORTS

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**W**hile it's undoubtedly exciting to travel to sunny Europe and beyond for golf, in the UK & Ireland we are blessed with many of the finest courses in the world. Not only that, but we have pretty much the greatest quantity, quality and variety that you will find anywhere. Time is precious and budgets are finite, so why not save on both of these by exploring the treasure chest of golf we are lucky to have on offer close to home?

In England alone there are plenty of golfing hotspots packed with top-quality courses, as well as many one-off gems dotted about all over the country. The Bournemouth area, for example, is home to a handful of excellent and remarkably varied courses. At the heart of these is a trio of superb heathland courses, all of them in the *Golf Monthly* Top 100.

Broadstone is a beautiful, gently undulating course on an expansive site

with far-reaching views, Ferndown is a superb and very classy pine-clad championship test to the north of the town, and Parkstone is an extremely interesting and engaging James Braid design incongruously tucked away in suburbia just a mile from the coast. All are an absolute pleasure, as indeed is the relative youngster that is Remedy Oak – which runs through glorious, mature woodland – and the exquisitely situated Isle of Purbeck with its wonderful, elevated views out over the sea and the Isle of Wight.

One of the most compelling reasons for a home-based golfing tour is the fact that we can fill the car with all that we need. This means unlimited equipment and clothing, and no worry at all about excess charges or delayed flights. Simply get in the car and go, and you can let Golfbreaks take care of all the organisation. It will know which courses make for good and practical options on a trip, as well as which



Royal Birkdale has staged ten Opens

hotels are convenient and offer the range of facilities you and your companions are looking for.

## England's Golf Coast

If links golf is more your thing, the area around Southport in the north-west is chock-a-block with fabulous examples. The region is now renowned as England's Golf Coast, and there are so many premier league and second tier courses you would never run out of new places to play. The most famous is also the highest-ranked course in the country, Royal Birkdale – the host of ten Open Championships dating back to 1954. There are two more Open venues, Royal Lytham & St Anne's and Royal Liverpool, not to mention Formby, Hillside, Southport & Ainsdale and West Lincs.

The supporting cast is also exceptional and a good number, such as Fairhaven, Hesketh and Wallasey, would be the names in light elsewhere. There are also terrific courses that fly



Royal St George's hosts this year's Open Championship





under the radar such as Caldy and Ormskirk, which offer very good value for money. Indeed, links golf is playable at any time of the year, and by going off-season there are superb bargains to be had.

There is such incredible variety on offer that knowing where to start can be a little bewildering. Co-ordinating an itinerary can also be a logistical nightmare. Happily, Golfbreaks has established relationships both with the clubs and the many and varied accommodation options. It can therefore work with you to put together the perfect, custom-made timetable. Better still, it gets to hear about all

manner of special offers and deals that even include free places depending on group size. Simply tell its experienced and knowledgeable staff what you are after and you can be sure there is a package that suits.

#### **Southern charm**

This summer, The Open Championship returns to Royal St George's in Kent, a county gaining an ever-growing reputation for the strength in depth of its golf. Its immediate neighbours in the Sandwich area include the 27 constantly improving holes and excellent accommodation at Prince's,

and the supreme test that is Royal Cinque Ports. Littlestone is another fine links, while Walmer & Kingsdown offers bracing clifftop golf and the London Club and Chart Hills provide inland, modern golf that makes for a perfect alternative. In all three of these golfing destinations, there are plenty of other courses in the area that offer great value and very appealing courses playable by golfers of all standards.

There are equally varied, first-rate and extremely appealing pockets of golf throughout Scotland, Wales and Ireland, though you will clearly need to take a ferry or use a hire car if crossing the Irish Channel. All these destinations have an enormous amount of appeal both on and off the course, and by going with the experts you can be sure you will have the golf, the accommodation and all the back-up that best suits your needs and budget.

## Golfbreaks.com

For information on trips to any of the great golfing destinations featured here, as well as many more, contact Golfbreaks, the golf travel experts.

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# NICKLAUS

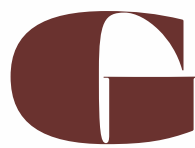




Photography: **Howard Boylan**

# FOR A DAY

Joel Tadman played a round using Jack Nicklaus' clubs from the 1960s, but how did they perform?



rowing up in the era of Tiger Woods, a man who transformed the sport into a collection of distance-craving gym-goers, I'd never experienced any feelings of nostalgia towards how golf was

back in the day. I was, of course, aware of the achievements of Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and others from the 1950s, 60s and 70s, but never truly appreciated or understood how different the game was back then. Nor did I have a burning desire to find out. But having seen the advances in golf club technology over the last ten years, my curiosity to learn has grown, and so when Christian MacMillan from the Persimmon Golf Society reached out to me with an offer to play a round using a replica set of vintage clubs identical to what Nicklaus used during his glory days, I jumped at the opportunity.

We met at my home club, Burghley Park Golf Club in Stamford, and after five minutes of chatting I was





blown away by the depth of knowledge and passion Christian had for clubs from yesteryear. He is not alone – a quick scroll through his Facebook page revealed this passion is shared by thousands of golfers across the globe. It is also more than mere nostalgia for Christian. Even to this day, he has resisted the temptation of modern equipment and plays to a single-figure handicap using vintage blades and persimmon woods, although he admits to playing a modern-day ball.

The world of vintage clubs, like the ones he has brought for me, is huge. Depending on the make, model and quality, they can resell



for ten times their original value. It is no wonder, because the craftsmanship that went into applying the various finishes and design elements by hand simply doesn't exist any more. It is this personal touch that makes them so special, and by the time we headed to the range, I was gagging to hit my first shot.

My clubs for the day were all made by MacGregor, the established premium equipment company at the time used by Miller,



Stinger shots became second nature

**“It felt fantastic when you hit one out of the screws. Literally, as six screws held the plastic insert in place”**

Nicklaus and Crenshaw (among others) in the 1960s, 70s and 80s. I was even going to try two sizes of Dunlop 65 balls from the 70s.

Before we headed to the course, I hit some of the clubs on the Foresight Sports GCQuad launch monitor in an attempt to quantify some of the differences between them and what I currently play. The irony of measuring classic clubs on arguably the most cutting-edge piece of golf technology wasn't lost on me, but at least I now knew what to expect.

**OFF THE TEE**

I actually really enjoyed using my old-school driver. The persimmon head was barely wider than the ball itself, meaning it does lack forgiveness. But the shorter steel shaft provided some control over the strike and the smaller head certainly increased my focus. It felt fantastic when you hit one out of the screws (literally, as six screws hold a plastic insert in place to protect the Japanese wood) and the rich cherry finish is beautiful. With a modern ball, it was only around 15-20 yards short of my current driver in terms of total





# JOEL'S CLASSIC WHAT'S IN THE BAG

WATCH A  
VIDEO FROM  
THE DAY  
ONLINE

## Driver

MacGregor  
Tommy Armour  
Signature Tourney  
945W, 9° (1954)

## Irons

MacGregor MT  
1-iron (1965)

MacGregor VIP,  
2-SW (1967)

## Fairway

MacGregor  
Tommy Armour  
Signature Tourney  
693T, 15° (1950)

## Ball

Dunlop 65  
1.68 and 1.62  
(approx. 1970)

## Putter

MacGregor  
George Lowe  
600 (1960)

## Bag

MacGregor Staff  
bag (1985)





distance on the course. The lower launch and higher spin creates a ball flight that starts low and climbs, reaching its apex late in its journey.

The revelation was the MacGregor MT 1-iron. I could hit Tiger Woods-style stingers with ease to get the ball chasing down the fairway and the feel was buttery soft. Miss the sweetspot and you certainly know about it, and off the deck it was a struggle to get the ball airborne. That said, it came in handy when needing to punch the ball out of the trees!

### INTO GREENS

My MacGregor VIP irons felt very head-heavy and the leading edges were incredibly sharp because of the complete absence of any bounce, which is why I took huge chunky divots and had to be very precise with the strike. These pure blades have rows of copper crowns



Lightweight carry bags had not yet been invented

## “The MacGregor MT 1-iron came in handy when needing to punch the ball out of the trees!”

either side of the hitting area on the face, which Nicklaus said helped with his alignment and concentration, and I would agree with him to a degree.

The muscleback design and higher lofts mean they also spin the ball significantly more than my modern irons, over 8,000rpm – I’m normally at about 6,000rpm. That meant I lost distance, especially into the wind. The flight was also surprisingly low given the high lofts, most likely down to less

technology assisting with launch compared with what we see today, and the ball speed with the 7-iron was closer to my modern-day pitching wedge. But again, the feel was very pleasing – soft and smooth – and after a few swings I felt able to control the direction and distances.

### SHORT GAME

The pitching and sand wedges were part of the MacGregor VIP set and so weren’t designed for greenside versatility. The sand wedge did

offer some spin on chip shots, but not to the level I was used to. Similar to the irons, the lack of bounce made chipping from tight wet lies and bunker shots extremely difficult – again you had to be very precise with the strike.

I managed to putt surprisingly well with my MacGregor George Lowe 600 putter, despite the absence of any alignment aids or face technology. It still had the original leather grip and a flat front edge, so clearly some thought had gone into putting-specific grips at the time it was made. I holed my fair share from short range, although longer putts suffered from the lack of forgiveness.

### GOLF BALL

When using a modern-day ball, any shortfalls in the equipment, especially around distance, were less noticeable. But switching to the Dunlop 65 from the 1970s was a completely different experience. Even straight out of the packet, it didn’t look to be perfectly spherical – I don’t think quality control or manufacturing standards were quite what they are now at the Waltham Abbey plant in which they were likely made. The materials may well have deteriorated inside the packet depending on how they had been stored, so perhaps they weren’t given a totally fair crack at the whip.

They were very soft, to the point they seemed to feel dead off the



Hitting the smaller Dunlop ball was a strange experience





Similar clubs, very different swings!

face, and fell out of the sky earlier than I'd hoped. Softer balls back then were important to maintain the integrity of the less-durable clubs. The smaller 1.62 version made the clubs look bigger but was more difficult to hit, and the whole experience was just bizarre. When you've looked down at the same size of ball from the same height for nearly 15 years, seeing something smaller is too much for your brain to handle!

VERDICT

I have to say, I thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Admittedly I was hitting longer and less-forgiving clubs into greens and short-game shots were significantly harder to pull off, but good shots still felt and performed as I expected. The big differences were around forgiveness, and the experience gave me a new-found respect for Nicklaus and all the other pros in his era who played competitive golf using this type of equipment.

Their ability to score was unquestionably hindered by the lack of help on offer, and yet Nicklaus was privy to the occasional 300-yard drive. It just goes to show the power and

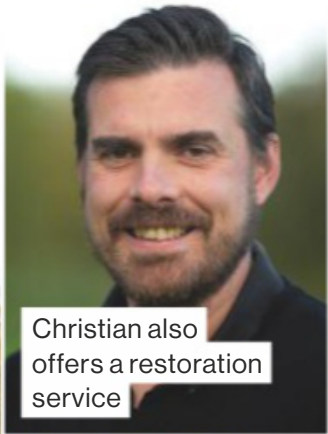
ball-striking prowess he and his peers possessed. They didn't know any different so found a way to make it work, and while I'm sure I could too in time, it would seem to be a foolhardy endeavour.

My experiment also highlighted the effect the modern ball has on the game in terms of distance but also stability through the air. It is arguably where the biggest leap forward has been made in this time period, and it helps you gain more control and predictability in every area of the game. I certainly wouldn't prefer to use these old-school clubs – we all have it so much easier these days thanks to

the advances in design and materials – but there was a sense of pure satisfaction and joy when ripping a drive with a persimmon driver or hitting the perfect 1-iron stinger. It was a delight to experience it for a day and I hope to try these clubs again in the future, just not with a scorecard in my back pocket.

GET INVOLVED

Share your passion for vintage gear on the Persimmon Golf Society Facebook page.



Christian also offers a restoration service



Chipping required a very precise strike!



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| 22 Mar | <b>Suffolk Spring Classic</b> Suffolk          |
| 29 Mar | <b>Ridgeway Rouleur</b> Oxfordshire            |
| 18 Apr | <b>New Forest Spring</b> Hampshire             |
| 19 Apr | <b>New Forest Spring</b> Hampshire             |
| 3 May  | <b>Surrey Cyclone</b> Surrey                   |
| 16 May | <b>Jurassic Beast</b> Dorset                   |
| 30 May | <b>Ride Cotswolds</b> Gloucestershire          |
| 13 Jun | <b>Vale Velo</b> North Yorkshire               |
| 28 Jun | <b>Peaks Tour</b> Derbyshire                   |
| 12 Jul | <b>Mendips Sportive</b> Somerset               |
| 25 Jul | <b>Malvern Mad Hatter</b> Worcestershire       |
| 9 Aug  | <b>Ride Yorkshire</b> North Yorkshire          |
| 5 Sep  | <b>Sussex Downs Classic</b> Sussex             |
| 19 Sep | <b>New Forest 100</b> Hampshire                |
| 4 Oct  | <b>Box Hill Original</b> Surrey                |
| 17 Oct | <b>Cobbler Classic</b> Northamptonshire        |
| 1 Nov  | <b>Cycling Down Dementia Norfolk</b> Norfolk   |
| 7 Nov  | <b>Cycling Down Dementia South East</b> Surrey |

\*See event page for details

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# Instruction

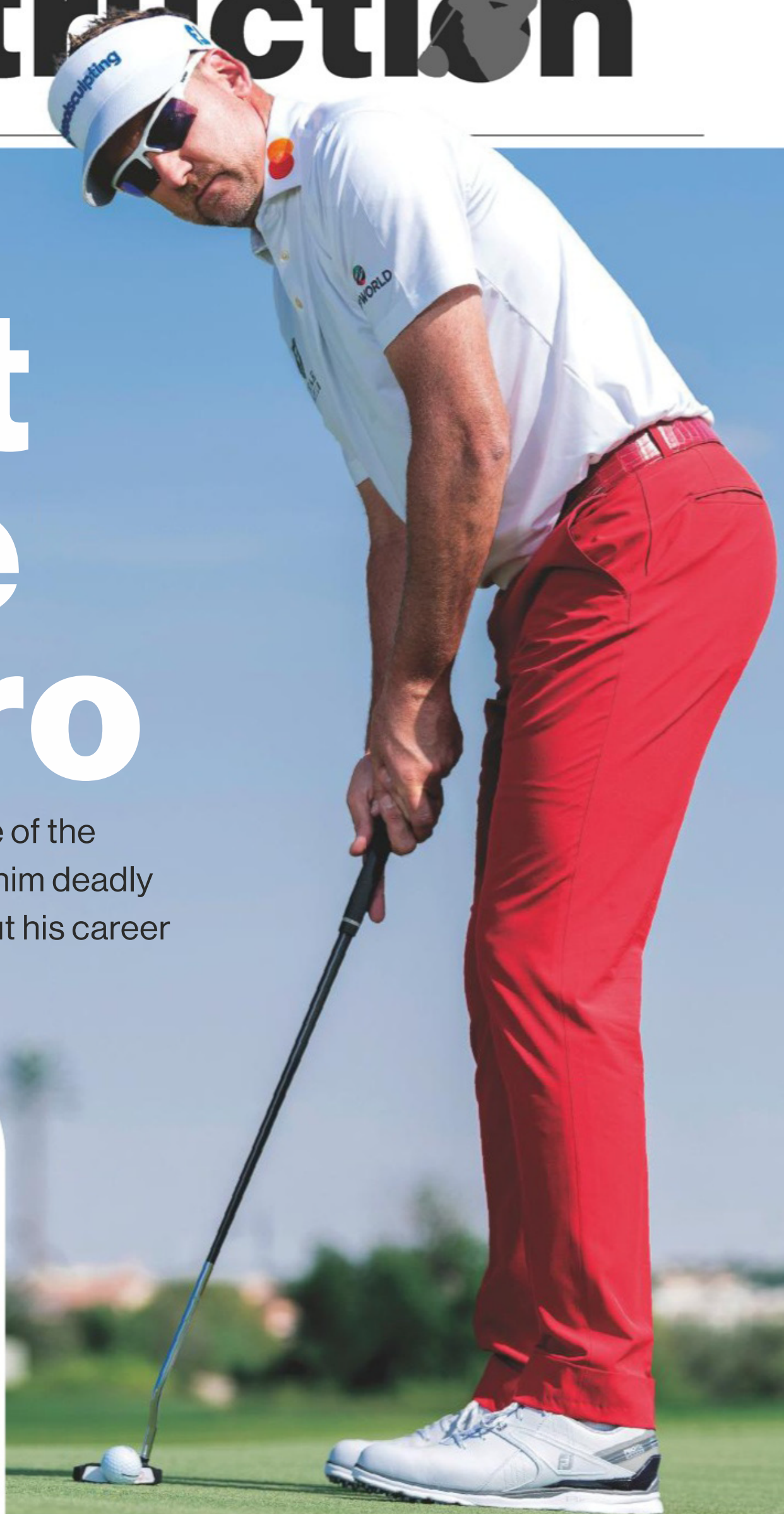
IAN  
POULTER  
WITH  
MICHAEL  
HARRIS

## Putt Like A Pro

**Ian Poulter** shares some of the secrets that have made him deadly on the greens throughout his career

**I** was always a pretty good putter from an early age. Putting was just something I practised a lot when I was at the club, whether that was as a junior spending a lot of time on the putting green or when I was working in the shop and had a break. I quickly picked up the natural feel of putting and was able to visualise putts going in, which I think is key. Putting has always been an aspect of the game I have really enjoyed and I hope my insight will help you become more effective with the flat-stick this season.

Photography: Tom Miles





# Different





# Strokes

**I**n today's game of golf there is no right or wrong. If you look at the strokes of some of the best putters in the world, you've got left hand below right, right hand below left, long putters, short putters, claw grips, fingers down one side and so on.

There are so many different styles in the world's top 50. For instance, Tommy Fleetwood putts very differently to Justin Rose. Justin uses a different putter to other guys on tour and you've got Adam Scott using the long putter. There is no perfect technique. The key is to be comfortable in your style. To be able to do this, you have to visualise the putt, read your line and pace and then make the stroke. How you do the last bit is up to you.

## Feel versus technique

I am a feel putter. I like to read the putt, stand over the ball and then make the stroke. To my mind, if you are

worrying about putting technique then you are already eating too much time into the 40 seconds you're given to hit the putt. So I think the more natural you keep it, the more relaxed you'll be. If your visualisation skills are working and you can see the line of the putt then it frees you up to go ahead and execute the stroke.

If you get technical and start thinking 'Are my shoulders square?', 'Are my hands in the right position?', 'Is my ball position right?', 'Are my hands too far in front of the ball?' then you're not thinking about line and pace, which are the real keys.

## By The Numbers

Ian Poulter's 2019 PGA Tour putting stats

# 24

Rank in Strokes Gained: Putting

# 41

One-putt percentage – ranked 37th

# 33

Birdie or better conversion percentage – ranked 32nd

# 36.5

Percentage of putts holed between 10 and 15 feet – ranked 10th



**“To read a green there are a number of variables, but speed dictates line more than anything else”**





**“The mistake I see amateurs make every week in Pro-Ams is under reading the break”**



### Speed dictates line

To read a green thoroughly there are a number of variables you need to factor in. You need to understand percentage of slope, grain and most importantly speed. Speed dictates line more than anything else.

Essentially there are three different lines you can take to hole a putt. The line that has the putt dying in the front edge, the line that has it dropping in at the side or the line that sees the ball hit the back of the hole. Once you have decided how you want the ball to enter the hole, you can work out your line and start to factor in severity of slope and grain.

### Miss high

The mistake I see amateurs making every week in Pro-Ams is under reading the break and therefore missing on the low side. If you miss on the low side, the ball has had no chance to catch the hole and drop in. When you next practise your putting, make a conscious effort to read more break into putts than you think there is and note where the ball finishes. What you see on the practice green will help your visualisation on the course.

### Round the clock

Drills are a useful way to spend time on the putting green and, for me, the single best one is round the clock. I set myself the target of holing 20 out of 24 putts from between six and eight feet from different points around the hole. If I don't manage it first time I keep going until I do. However, that's difficult, so set your distance at a level where you could realistically make 20 out of 24. Then, when you've achieved that, move further away from the hole.

## 13... & COUNTING

### Poulter's European & PGA Tour wins

- 2000** Italian Open
- 2001** Moroccan Open
- 2002** Italian Open
- 2003** Celtic Manor Resort  
Wales Open
- 2003** Nordic Open
- 2004** Volvo Masters Andalucia
- 2006** XXXII Banco Madrid  
Vale Romano Open  
de Madrid Golf Masters
- 2009** Barclays Singapore Open
- 2010** WGC-Accenture Match Play
- 2010** UBS Hong Kong Open
- 2011** Volvo World Match  
Play Championship
- 2012** WGC-HSBC Champions
- 2018** Houston Open

The more natural  
you keep it, the  
more relaxed  
you'll be

## MR RYDER CUP

**Appearances:** 6 – 2004 (winners),  
2008, 2010 (winners), 2012 (winners),  
2014 (winners), 2018 (winners)

**Individual record:**  
Played 22, won 14,  
halved 2, lost 6





# How to cure your hook

By Top 25 Coach Ged Walters

**1** The alignment sticks work by blocking the in-to-out path which is causing a hook. This drill will neutralise the swing path so you deliver the club into impact with the feeling of a more out-to-in direction.



**Caution:**

This drill is not a quick fix. Commit to it fully and repeat until you start to get control of your ball flight.



**2** The alignment sticks provide a visual constraint. Don't be so strict that they're in a position where you strike them too easily, otherwise you'll switch off. For the backswing, that visual aid is going to encourage you to swing more up. For anyone who swings from the inside, it's going to feel massively over the top and like you are going to slice it.



**3** I've hit the rear alignment stick here, which reminds me of that in-to-out swing path. Hitting the stick shows you're still delivering the club too much from the inside.



**4** You want to exit more towards your lead hip pocket. Again, that alignment stick is a visual aid and it will help you groove the swing path you're after.





# Stop skying

By Top 25 Coach Steve Robinson



This is a great drill to encourage the shallower angle of attack needed if you're skying your drives. Tee a ball up and place an empty three-ball sleeve four or five inches in front of it.

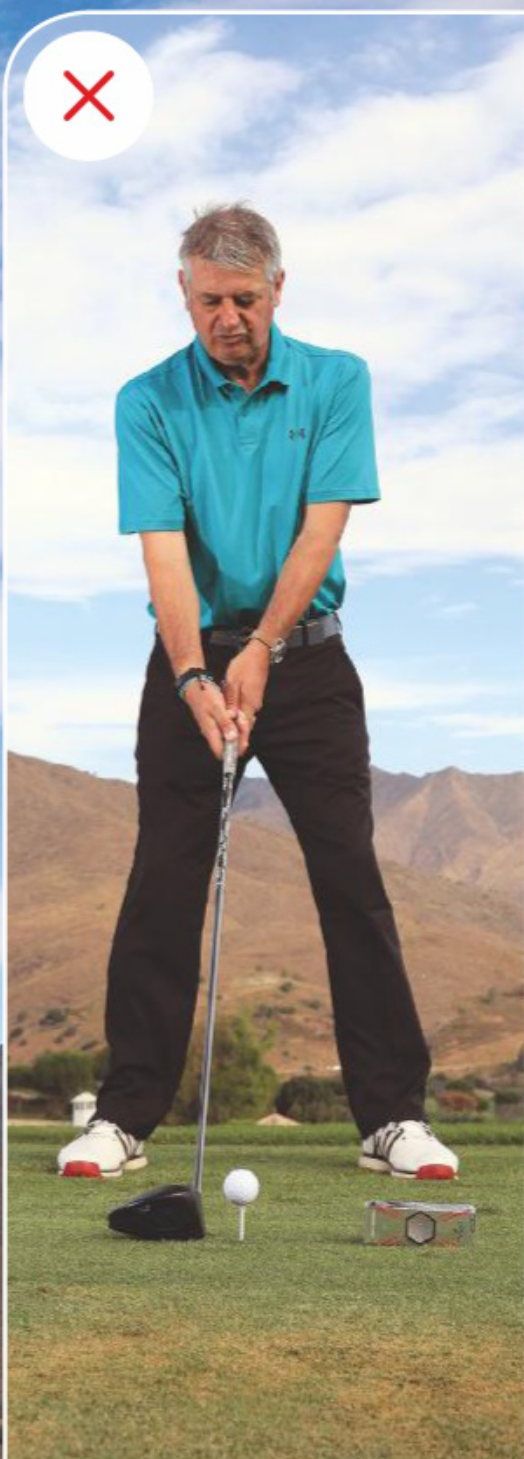
Your goal is to hit your drive without touching or disturbing the three-ball sleeve. If you can do this, you're hitting the ball on the up from where it's all but impossible to sky it.



**Find an upslope**  
Another good way to practise is to find a slight upslope to hit drives from. This will also encourage you to stay behind the ball more, rather than getting too steep.



# your drives



**1** Assuming your tee height is not miles out, the most common set-up causes of a skied drive are having the ball too far back in your stance, as per this photograph, or your hands too far forward.



**2** If your hands are too far forward, the chances are your impact position will then look something like this as you come back in too steeply, presenting the roof or top edge of the club to the ball.



**3** The key is to get ball and hand position right at set-up and then make sure you stay behind the ball through impact, as I'm doing here, rather than attacking the ball with too descending a blow.



# Give the hybrid chip a go

By Top 25 Coach John Jacobs

**1** The hybrid's nice rounded sole gives you more margin for error and makes it easier to chip with than any other club. Within reason you can play this shot as often as you want, particularly if you've got a lot of ground to cover but want your landing area to be close to you. There can be a tendency to rush from the top, so allow yourself a little time at the end of the backswing and resist any temptation to hurry back to the ball.





**2** Use your normal putting grip to keep the shaft relatively upright at set-up. This also sends out the right message to keep the hands out of the shot – the wrists hardly need to get involved because of the speed off the face. You should also grip the club very lightly as this is the best way to soften the impact. The harder you hold the club, the faster the ball will come off the face.



**3** The ball will be further away from you than when putting because of the shaft length, but think putting rather than chipping stroke. Maintain the triangle between arms, hands and club throughout. I like to think of it as ‘three address positions’, retaining the same triangle from address in both backswing and through-stroke. It won’t be a straight triangle, though, due to the shaft length – both arms will be flexed a little.



**Caution:**

You’ve got to be a bit careful as the ball tends to come off the face quite fast, but that also gives you more time to keep everything smooth.









# 10 Best Tips

## Stephen Gallacher

The 2019 Hero Indian Open champion offers simple, straightforward tips picked up over the course of a quarter of a century on tour

### 1 Beating a slice

Strengthen your grip a little. A slice is invariably from an outside path, so you could also practise with a bucket of balls on the inside of the ball and try to hit away from it, rather than in to it as you would from the outside.

### 2 Reading greens

I was told to always read putts side-on. If you've got a 10ft putt, I'd read it from the low side and break it into three. The first three feet doesn't really do much, the middle three feet I'd have a bit of a look at, and then at the end, when the ball is losing its speed, that's when it breaks the most.

### 3 Match play

You've got to change your thinking. You're not just playing the golf course, there's an element of playing the player too, and I think you've got to be aware of that. People say play the course, not the man, but I think you've got to do a bit of both.

### 4 Next shot after a shank

I've been blessed and think I've only ever had two in my career as a professional. But it does happen, perhaps if you're on a slope. Just forget it and say a few 'Hail Marys'.

### 5 Holing out from three feet

Be aggressive and don't worry about missing it. A lot of amateurs think about missing it – I think you've

got to just think about holing it. So be aggressive, take a straighter line and give it a bit of pace. Don't be tentative.

### 6 Increasing power

You go to the gym now. That seems to be the secret – you strengthen up. Look at guys like Brooks Koepka, Dustin Johnson and Rory McIlroy and how much they work in the gym before they play and when they're not playing. When I came out on tour there was still wood involved! Not many players hit it more than 280 then. John Daly was probably the only one, but now it's ridiculous.



### WHAT'S IN THE BAG?

**Driver:** Titleist TS3, 8.5°

**3-wood:** Titleist TS2, 15°

**Utility 3-iron:** Titleist 718 T-MB

**Irons:** Titleist 718 AP2 (4-PW)

**Wedges:** Titleist Vokey SM7, 52° & 56°;  
Titleist Vokey Prototype, 60°

**Putter:** Titleist Scotty Cameron TSB

**Golf ball:** Titleist Pro V1x

### 7 Bunker play

This should be easy because you don't need to hit the ball. You're aiming a few inches behind the ball, but I think a lot of amateurs still look at it. I'm looking at the bit of sand I want to strike and being aggressive. You're trying to duff it, so you need a bit of speed into the sand.

### 8 Better ball-striking

Hit balls with your feet together, because generally when you've lost your strike, you've lost your right-to-left balance with your feet. Hitting balls with your feet together gets it back straight away. Then, just gradually build it up from there.

### 9 Creating more wedge spin

Make sure your grooves are clean! I look in amateurs' bags and they're all dirty. We obviously change our wedges a lot, but the key is to make sure the grooves are clean. Then you can create spin with a shallow angle of attack.

### 10 How to practise

Check your fundamentals are right. Check your grip, put some clubs down so you know where you're hitting and can get shoulders, hips and feet all square, and then work on your ball position. If the fundamentals are wrong, it doesn't matter how you're swinging. If you're aiming wrong, you're not going to be able to hit your target.



# Rules



Joaquin Niemann shelters from the elements in Hawaii

## Borrowing Equipment

**D**aniel Sommerville, R&A Rules manager, discusses the moment when Joaquin Niemann found himself borrowing an umbrella from one of the Rules officials during the second round of the Sentry Tournament of Champions. The 21-year-old Chilean's own umbrella was broken in the high winds that struck at the Plantation course in Kapalua, Hawaii, so he had to look elsewhere for protection.

There is nothing in the Rules of Golf that would prohibit a player borrowing an umbrella from someone else, so what Niemann did at Kapalua was absolutely fine. In fact, a player could even borrow one from another player in their group, or from an official or a spectator at the

course. Items other than clubs which are carried by someone other than the player or their caddie are outside influences, even if they belong to the player.

But they become the player's equipment when in the possession of the player or their caddie. So, if you really wanted, someone could carry an umbrella for you along with other items such as refreshments or clothing and they do not have to be your actual caddie.

The Rules of Golf even allow you to use an umbrella to protect yourself from the elements while making a stroke. However, the player must be the one holding the

umbrella – you could not allow your caddie or anyone else to hold the umbrella in place for you (Rule 10.2b(5)).

Under the Rules of Golf you can borrow anything you want from others, apart from clubs. A player is limited to those clubs they have started with or added as allowed, but a player must not make a stroke with a club borrowed from someone else playing on the course.

There is an exception to this if you are playing foursomes or four-ball, which allows partners to share clubs so long as their total number of clubs does not exceed 14.

### R&A

#### Borrowing Equipment Essentials

- You may borrow any items from someone else apart from clubs
- You can make a stroke while holding an umbrella
- You may share clubs in foursomes and four-ball with your partner



# Your Queries Answered

**Q** Recently, a playing partner hit his ball by mistake during his practice swing from just off the green. He stated he had done this but wondered if the Rule was that he could replace it without penalty. I said I thought he could replace it but with a one-shot penalty, and I also said I thought he could choose to play it as it lies. Was I correct?  
**Italian Outcast, GM website forum**

**A** The player has accidentally caused his ball to move during a practice swing while in the general area of the golf course and so he gets a penalty of one stroke and must replace the ball (Rule 9.4).  
**Daniel Sommerville, R&A Rules manager**



Hitting the ball with a practice swing in the general area will cost you



## R&A winners

Each month, the readers whose queries are featured will receive an Open Championship putter cover plus a sleeve of three R&A logo Titleist Pro V1 golf balls



An old hole on your line cannot be filled in with sand

**Q** If you have a putt where an old hole is on your line, but it's been badly repaired so it drops a few millimetres below the actual putting surface, what can you do? Last year I witnessed a situation where one player had this, and another player said that you are allowed to take a small amount of sand from the bunker and put that on top of the old hole to make it level to putt over. Is that allowed?  
**Orikoru, GM website forum**

**A** An old hole plug on the putting green is considered damage and so a player may take reasonable actions to restore the putting green as nearly as possible to its original conditions, for example by using a normal ball-mark repair tool, tee or similar item (Rule 13.1c). However, it would not be permissible to place sand on the line of play to repair the old hole plug as that would not restore the original conditions.  
**Daniel Sommerville, R&A Rules manager**



# Rules Refresher – making next stroke from where previous stroke made

**T**ypically, this would apply when taking stroke and distance relief after losing your ball or hitting it out of bounds, or when you have decided this is your best, or perhaps only, realistic option under the unplayable ball rule (19.2). But there may be other circumstances when this Rule (14-6) applies, such as when a stroke is cancelled under the Rules.

Whatever the reason for heading back to where you last played from, it's important to know that how you proceed when you get back there depends on what part of the course that previous stroke was made from.

If you are playing again from the tee, the original ball or another ball can be played from anywhere inside the teeing area as defined by the Rules, and may always be re-teeed regardless of why you are heading back there.

If the previous stroke was made from the general area, a bunker or a penalty

area, you must drop your original ball or another ball in a relief area, the reference point for which is the spot from where you played the previous stroke, or as accurate an estimation of that spot as possible if you can't be 100 per cent certain about its exact location.

You are then allowed to drop within a one club-length relief area from this

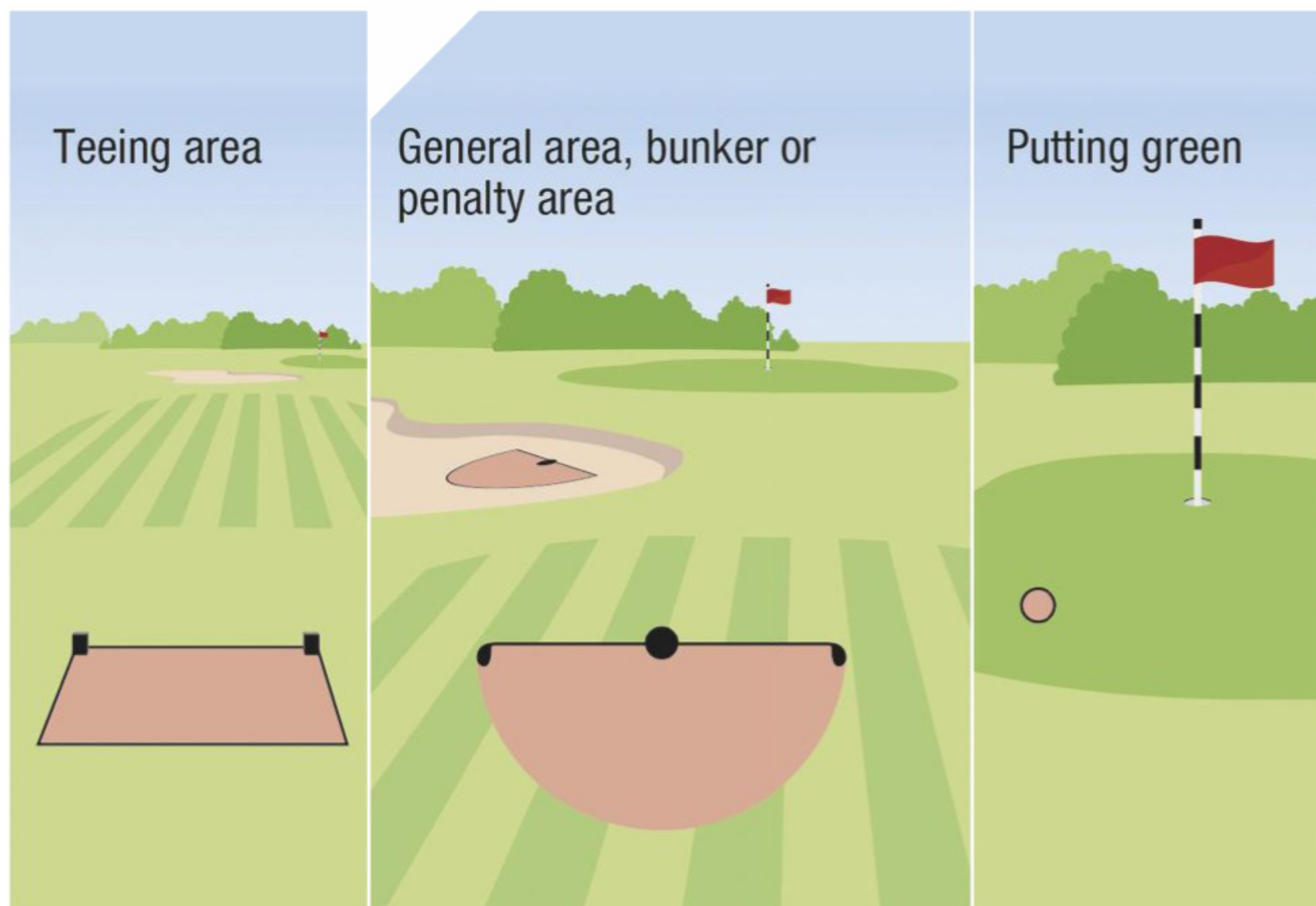
**“Remember, one club-length is now defined as the longest club you are carrying other than your putter”**

reference point, but it must be no nearer the hole and in the same area of the course as the reference point (e.g. you must drop in the bunker if your reference point is in the bunker). Rule 14.3 tells you everything you need to know about how to drop correctly in a relief area, and remember that one club-length is now defined as the longest club you are carrying for that round other than your putter.

Finally, there is the relatively rare likelihood of the previous stroke having been played from on the putting green. Perhaps a slope has fooled you and you have unfortunately putted off the green or into a penalty area and you believe your best option is to play again from where you last played. In this situation, you must place your original ball or

another ball on the spot from where the previous stroke was made, or again, estimate that spot to the best of your ability if you can't be 100 per cent sure where it was.

Should you happen to play your ball from a wrong place in breach of Rule 14-6, you will incur the general penalty of two strokes in stroke play or loss of hole in match play.





# Test Your Knowledge

**1** In stroke play, Jezz decides to take relief from a boundary fence thinking it is an obstruction. What is the ruling?



- A. Jezz gets a penalty of one stroke.
- B. Jezz gets the general penalty.
- C. Jezz is disqualified.

**2** In stroke play, Fergus strikes the sand in frustration after leaving his ball in the bunker with his first stroke. What is the ruling?



- A. There is no penalty.
- B. Fergus gets a penalty of one stroke.
- C. Fergus gets the general penalty.

**3** In stroke play, Fergus identifies his ball in the trees using a DMD. What is the ruling?



- A. The ball is lost and he must proceed under stroke and distance.
- B. Fergus can play the ball as it lies or declare it unplayable.
- C. Fergus can only declare the ball unplayable.

**4** In stroke play, Jezz arrives four minutes late for his tee time. What is the ruling?



- A. There is no penalty.
- B. Jezz is disqualified.
- C. Jezz gets the general penalty.

## Quiz answers

**1. B** – Jezz gets the general penalty (two strokes in stroke play). By taking relief when not allowed, Jezz has played from a wrong place and is penalised two strokes (Rule 14.7a). **2. A** – There is no penalty. Striking the sand in frustration or anger is not a penalty, as long as the player has not improved the conditions affecting the stroke (Rule 12.2b). **3. B** – Fergus can play the ball as it lies or declare it unplayable. If Fergus declares it unplayable, the reference point for lateral relief would be on the ground directly below where the ball lies in the tree (Int 19.2c/1). **4. C** – Jezz gets the general penalty (two strokes in stroke play). As Jezz arrived late for his tee time, but within five minutes, he is penalised two strokes applied to the 1st hole (Rule 5.3a).

In association  
with the





Tested by real golfers

# REVIEWS

Edited by **Joel Tadman**

## TaylorMade SIM Drivers £479



### Looks

The new SIM drivers have a lighter finish than the outgoing M5 and M6 (right), with a new chalk white section at the front that really helps with alignment. They also appear to have a slightly bigger footprint.



### GM Verdict

We tested all the SIM and M models in 9° in the same Diamana X-Flex shaft, which is one of the stock options for 2020, indoors on the Foresight Sports GCQuad before hitting further shots on the range. With the M6 I was creating a clubhead speed of 113.3mph, which produced a ball speed of 159mph and an average carry distance of 278 yards. In the SIM Max, the clubhead speed took an immediate jump up to 114.7mph. That

gave me a ball speed of 163.2mph, which is 4mph faster, and an average carry of 286 yards with a touch more spin.

In the M5 I was creating a clubhead speed of 115.6mph, which was delivering me a ball speed of 161.6mph and carry distance of 282 yards. Moving into the SIM, the clubhead speed was 115.8 mph, so a fraction up. The ball speed was 164mph, again slightly up, and the carry distance was 287 yards. So I was a little bit longer with the SIM compared with the M5 and eight yards longer with the SIM Max than with the M6. This suggests the aerodynamics have improved, but it's impossible to say for certain.

I felt comfortable hitting both SIM drivers, but it was the SIM I had the most confidence in. It just clicked with me and I

was able to hit a series of good shots with it in complete control of direction.

If you are someone with a consistent miss, let's say to the right, then the ability in the SIM to move the sole weight and add draw bias will help you hit more fairways. There is the option of the SIM Max D version with even more draw bias. Alternatively, if you struggle with strike, the extra forgiveness from the SIM Max might well be the way to go.

These drivers come with a premium price, but you do get premium performance. SIM isn't a big leap forward from M5 or M6, but we did see gains in distance without sacrificing accuracy.

**We hit SIM against the old M5 and M6**





## Up Against



**Callaway Mavrik** £469

All three driver models feature a Flash Face SS20 designed by a super computer to increase ball speed and accuracy.



**Titleist TS2** £499

Four different heads offer different spin and launch characteristics, all with faster ball speeds than prior models.



**Ping G410 Plus** £450

Adjustable perimeter weighting alters the shot shape. Also comes in lower-spinning LST and draw-biased SFT versions.

The SIM driver has just one sliding weight track

### Key Technology

- ▶ The asymmetric sole design is said to reduce aerodynamic drag in the last three feet of the downswing, maximising clubhead speed where it is needed most – just before impact.
- ▶ An Inertia Generator, rotated off-centre and positioned low and back, moves the CG lower, optimising launch. It increases forgiveness and helps the air travel quicker past the clubhead.
- ▶ The SIM driver features a 10g sliding weight that can create up to 20 yards of draw or fade bias, while the SIM Max has a larger face and heavier rear weight to increase forgiveness.



#### Feel

The sound is powerful and not overly loud, which we really liked. It's a dull hit from both drivers and they feel really solid and stable, like maximum energy is being transferred from club to ball at the point of impact.

**“There are three very appealing SIM drivers that will perform for every style and ability of player”**

Neil Tappin, GM digital editor





# Ping G710 Iron

## £169 per club

### GM Verdict

The G700 was Ping's longest and most forgiving iron and it says its replacement, the G710, offers even more.

Ping hasn't altered the lofts here. The 7-iron remains the same as G700 at 29.5° and consequently, despite the new design, we didn't experience any extra distance. In fact, our ball speed with G710 was slightly lower, but it did offer around 300rpm less spin with a higher launch.

So while our average carry distance with both irons was the same at 184 yards, it was notable how much more consistent the G710 iron was. From the ten counting shots with each on the GCQuad, the G710 ranged from 180 to 186 yards while the G700 ranged from 178 to 189 yards.

Strike and swing speed will obviously play a part here, but this extra consistency will be more useful to the average golfer than simply hitting the ball further. It should mean fewer greens missed and therefore

more chance of making par or better. Another thing we liked with G710 was the very high flight – a peak height of 39 yards means balls should stop quickly on the greens despite the lower spin.

The feel and sound has also greatly improved. The G700 has a loud, metallic sound to it, while the sensations with G710 are much more iron-like – a quieter, more muted sound at impact thanks to the epoxy material added behind the face.

Ping is always looking to make its clubs more playable for the average golfer and mid- and high-handicappers will appreciate the improvements made to its most user-friendly offering in the 2020 range. The addition of the Arccos shot-tracking sensors embedded in the grips as standard merely bolsters the appeal.



The G710 was a very consistent iron

### Key Technology

- ▶ The 17-4 stainless steel body and high-density tungsten toe and shaft weights increase the forgiveness as well as launch for more distance and accuracy.
- ▶ The strong yet flexible C300 maraging steel face is thin and precision machined. This delivers faster ball speeds for launching shots higher and further.
- ▶ A hydropearl chrome finish with black PVD coating provides hydrophobicity to repel water and improve performance through the turf and in wet conditions.

The G710 iron also comes in Power Spec with 1.5° stronger lofts



#### Looks

Not everyone likes the look of a darker-coloured iron, but for us the black PVD finish is sleeker and makes it appear more compact behind the ball than G700, while still looking inviting to hit.





# FootJoy Pro/SL Shoes

from £149.99



## Styling

The latest versions of Pro/SL are a throwback to the original from 2016 in terms of the shapes and lines on the rear section of the upper. They blend a traditional style with modern touches.



A redesigned Power Harness provides added support

## GM Verdict

The Pro/SL was such a popular shoe last year that if it was a brand of its own, it would be at number two in terms of UK market share behind FootJoy. Tour players and amateurs alike appreciated the comfort, stability and grip, and improvements have been made in all these areas with the new model.

On the standard Pro/SL, the extra perimeter stability is immediately obvious. You can feel it when you swing, but also see it thanks to the new shape of the Infinity outsole, which is more noticeable in the heel area. It is not off-putting in any way – in fact, Pro/SL remains one of the best-looking shoes on the market. The grip is excellent thanks to the extra contact points with the ground. Even in wet conditions you can go after your drive with no fear of slipping or any excess movement reducing control.

The Pro/SL Carbon is noticeably more rigid in all directions, ideal for golfers who need even more stability during their swing. That said, it still feels comfortable thanks to the extra padding around the ankle. It's a feature that arguably could have been added to the normal Pro/SL, which does lack that soft sensation other shoes on the market offer, although the softer, thicker tongue helps to a degree.

Given how stable Pro/SL is, there will be some golfers who don't see the need for the Carbon model, but if you want the best of everything and price is no object, the Pro/SL Carbon would seem to be the obvious choice. That said, both improve on prior generations and with no real weaknesses, they are worthy of five stars.



Both Pro/SLs provide a stable base to swing from

## Key Technology

- ▶ A new Infinity outsole is 11.5 per cent wider and has 30 per cent more traction points with the ground for increased grip.
- ▶ The dual density midsole is made up of firmer Fine-Tuned Foam (FTF) around the perimeter for stability underneath a softer foam for enhanced underfoot cushioning.
- ▶ The Pro/SL Carbon (£179.99) has a carbon fibre inlay running along the entire length of the shoe to increase stability, torsion rigidity and ground force optimisation.



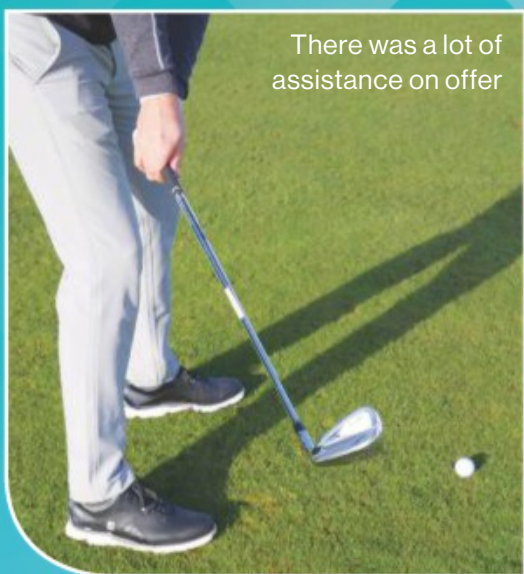
# Honma TWorld XP-1 Iron

£969 (Six-club set)

## GM Verdict

The TWorld XP-1 iron appears to be a faster, more forgiving version of the TWorld747 P iron and the mid- to high-handicapper will definitely appreciate this new level of performance. We're seeing a trend towards distance irons becoming more compact and the XP-1 is a classic example. With a 7-iron loft of 30°, this is still a club built to offer maximum speed, but we weren't expecting some of our shots to exceed 190 yards in carry distance.

The aforementioned P model has the stronger lofts, but the XP-1 seemed to be much more user friendly and launches the ball considerably higher with a strong, draw-biased flight. It also delivers extra ball speed and distance from a wider area, with greater accuracy thanks to a more stable clubhead. Spin averaging 5,500rpm will help keep the ball in the air and the light feel also helped us increase our clubhead



There was a lot of assistance on offer

speed. Many golfers suited to this type of performance are likely to notice a better overall feel and even more speed and launch from Honma's own Vizard graphite shaft options, but they will need to consider if the extra cost is worthwhile. Regardless, the XP-1 is a very playable set designed to make hitting good iron shots easier – it comfortably exceeded our expectations.

★★★★★



### Looks

Similar to the TWorld747 P model in terms of the shape and limited offset, but it does have a thicker topline that inspires confidence without looking clunky. Chrome details add a touch of class.



## Key Technology

- ▶ The high-performance design produces impressive distance and accuracy, thanks to a thin, fast clubface throughout the set.
- ▶ Hollow long-irons feature a tungsten sole weight to assist launch, while the short-irons have a deep cavity for control and precision.
- ▶ A high MOI is achieved with a low, deep CG for higher launches and longer carries.

Honma's graphite shafts are designed to work with the clubhead



# What's In The Bag?

## Henrik Stenson

The Swede recently returned to the winners' circle at the Hero World Challenge



### Driver

Callaway Mavrik, 8.5°, Mitsubishi Tensei Blue AV 65TX shaft.



### Fairway woods

Callaway Epic Flash Sub Zero, 13.5°, Project X Hzdus 'Hulk' shaft; Callaway Rogue Sub Zero, 18°, Mitsubishi Tensei Blue CK Pro 80TX shaft.



### Irons

Callaway Legacy Black, 3- to 9-iron, Nippon Pro Modus3 120X shafts.



### Wedges

Callaway Mack Daddy Milled 3, 46°, Callaway Jaws MD5 Raw, 52° and 58°, Nippon Pro Modus3 120X shafts.



### Putter

Odyssey White Hot Pro 7.



### Ball

Titleist Pro V1x.



### Midweek switch

Brooks Koepka used a TaylorMade M5 driver for the first two rounds in Saudi Arabia, then switched to a Callaway Mavrik Sub Zero for the weekend rounds.

### DIY irons

Charl Schwartzel bought a set of Miura blades online and then drilled holes into the back himself to fine-tune the weight. Bonkers.



### Pix for Ricks

Rickie Fowler started using the TaylorMade Pix TP5x ball at the Waste Management Phoenix Open.



## Gear News Round-Up

### Matt Wallace

has joined Callaway and will play a full bag that includes Mavrik woods, Apex Pro irons and Jaws MD5 wedges.

### Henrik Stenson

has signed a multi-year partnership with Ecco to wear its hybrid shoes. The Swede has been wearing the new S-Three shoe.

### Sergio Garcia

switched to the TaylorMade SIM driver in Saudi Arabia, despite using a Ping G410 Plus just weeks before in Abu Dhabi.

### Eddie Pepperell

will play a full bag of Ping clubs for the 2020 season, including G410 woods, i210 irons and a custom PLD PrimeTyne putter.

### Keegan Bradley

has switched into the TaylorMade SIM Max D driver, claiming to have picked up eight yards off the tee with the lighter model.



# Tested By You

Equipment bought, played and reviewed by you – the *Golf Monthly* reader

## Odyssey Stroke Lab Marxman Putter

**JAMES ADKIN**

East Grinstead, West Sussex

**Handicap: 18**



### Why did you decide to buy the product?

I'd always used an off-the-shelf blade putter but my backswing would often not maintain the correct path, which would result in off-centre strikes. When tired or nervous I would often turn the clubhead and miss putts I should really have been making.

### How has the product been performing?

The results of a fitting showed a mallet putter helped improve my club path. The feel is great and I get the added benefit of the long alignment line. The fitting was a quick and fun process that has resulted in me having a putter I know matches my stroke, boosting my confidence.



## Titleist TruFeel Ball

**BILL MARTIN**

Ballytore, County Kildare

**Handicap: 7**



### Why did you decide to buy the product?

I am a Titleist fan boy and I had a voucher for my old golf club that I needed to use up. I spotted TruFeel on the shelf and decided I'd try it for the winter instead of my usual Pro V1. I like my ball to feel soft and the lower price point appealed to me.

### How has the product been performing?

It feels nice off the wedges and putter, with a lovely roll on the greens. The biggest surprise to me is the extra yardage on cold, damp mornings. I've gained about a club in distance with the irons and in the softer conditions I don't feel like I'm losing control.



## Ping G410 SFT Driver

**OLLY COLE**

Watford, Hertfordshire

**Handicap: 16**



### Why did you decide to buy the product?

After a series of good finishes in competitions I had some prize vouchers for the local golf shop, so I had a driver fitting. I was looking to hopefully gain a few yards without sacrificing accuracy over my old Ping G30 SF Tec driver.

### How has the product been performing?

The G410 SFT is about ten yards longer and also much more accurate. In three rounds since I've even seen a slight draw on occasion, which shows you that the Straight Flight technology does what it's supposed to! The sound is better, too. I'm delighted.



Foremost Golf is the UK's largest golf retail group with over 1,000 expert PGA professionals nationwide. Visit [www.foremostgolf.com](http://www.foremostgolf.com) to find your local store and get expert advice.

Send in your reviews to [golfmonthly@ti-media.com](mailto:golfmonthly@ti-media.com)  
If we use it, you'll receive a **FREE £50 Foremost Golf voucher**



# Odyssey Stroke Lab Triple Track Ten Putter £269



It features a premium black PVD finish

## GM Verdict

When I first saw the Odyssey Triple Track putters, I thought they would change putting forever. Having tested them properly on the course, those thoughts still linger, but there are perhaps a few more considerations.

When you have the three lines on the Chrome Soft ball matching up with the three lines on the putter, you feel like you'll never miss a putt ever again – such is the effectiveness of the alignment system.

In reality, you do still miss occasionally and there will be some golfers who find the concept distracting, questioning whether the two are perfectly in sync. But even without using a Triple Track ball, the alignment aid is useful at highlighting aim.

It certainly has the potential to convert golfers who have previously not used a line on the ball to line up putts, given the three lines seem to make it easier than one. To get the most out of this concept,

you would need to switch to a Callaway Triple Track ball, which may not be a change golfers loyal to other brands would be keen to make. You need to consider the extra time it would add into your pre-shot routine, too.

Triple Track aside, the Ten putter is excellent. It blends forgiveness with consistent ball speed and impressive roll. You naturally get more assistance from the larger shapes in the range, but they will all help start the ball on target more often. The great feel, both in your hands and off the face, adds to the appeal.



## Key Technology

- ▶ The three lines on the centre of each putter utilise Vernier Hyper Acuity, the same technology used to land planes on aircraft carriers, to improve alignment.
- ▶ The putters also feature Stroke Lab shafts, engineered to help improve the tempo and consistency of your stroke.
- ▶ On the face, the Microhinge Star insert creates a firmer feel and pleasing sound while providing a truer, earlier roll.



### Feel

The Microhinge Star face, combined with the Stroke Lab shaft, makes it feel perfectly in balance and naturally squared up. Our putting from short and mid range improved after just a few putts.





ASK OUR  
EXPERT

**I'm an 18-handicapper. Am I good enough for a putter fitting?**

*Sean Taylor, via email*

Absolutely! Anyone will benefit from a putter fitting. In fact, higher-handicappers may even benefit more and are often using gear less suited to them than low-handicappers. The crucial elements to get right are the length and clubhead design to suit your stroke. Your local PGA Pro will be



able to help with this. Once you have the right spec and a clubhead that suits your eye, remember to choose a size and shape of grip that feels most comfortable.

**What is a grind and why do I need different ones on my wedges?**

*Bill Russell, via letter*

The sole dictates how the wedge interacts with the ground and the grind essentially refers to the shape of the sole, where material is taken away in different areas. Lower lofted wedges are mostly used for full shots so the grind is usually quite symmetrical. In the higher lofts, however, the grinds get more aggressive, with more material taken away in the heel and toe areas to let you open the face without the leading edge rising up too much. This enhances the versatility.

JOEL TADMAN ON...

# The PGA Show: the weird, wonderful and everything in between



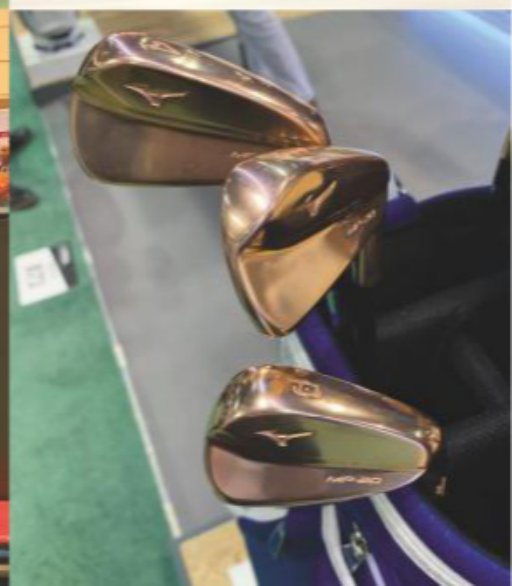
Once again *Golf Monthly* descended on mass to Orlando, Florida, last month for the annual PGA Merchandise Show. Before leaving I thought I'd seen almost everything that is new for 2020 already, but once again I was proved wrong. Besides chatting to industry gurus like Bob Vokey, Scotty Cameron and Guerin Rife, it was as much about the experiences as it was a product showcase, with brands coming up with innovative ways to immerse visitors into their latest gadgets and enjoy what they offer.

First up was a spot of FootGolf using the Foresight Sports GCHawk technology, followed by trying to hole a 16 per cent breaking putt on the Zen Green putting stage. I then headed over to Adidas to try (badly) and capture six hidden outsole lugs on an iPad via augmented reality and win a pair of Codechaos shoes – truly mind blowing.

Cool things I hadn't seen before were the Bushnell Wingman, which is essentially a GPS speaker unit that will attach to your buggy and play music while also telling you your yardages. Mizuno displayed a very special copper version of its MP-20 irons as well as some stunning milled M.Craft putters. I was also impressed by the minimalist Jucad trolleys and the new Garmin S62 watch, with a virtual caddie that takes into account wind direction and your shot data to suggest a club for the upcoming shot.

So, worry not. There are lots of new toys to add to your birthday present list.

A glimpse at the new products on display







The five big stick contenders

## JOEL'S TEST REPORT

# Best drivers of 2020 – which is our favourite?

We recently tested five of the best drivers on the market in 2020. We pitted the Callaway Mavrik Sub Zero, Cobra King Speedzone, Ping G410 Plus, TaylorMade SIM and Titleist TS3 against each other, but which would we crown as our overall favourite?

### ● Looks

Admittedly a subjective category and there is a variety of styles on offer, ranging from the traditional TS3 to the cutting-edge SIM. The Mavrik SZ is the most compact, but the SIM just edges it for its style and easy alignment.

### ● Feel/sound

The Ping has the loudest sound and is quite tinny, closely followed by the Titleist. The Cobra has taken a backward step with its higher-pitched sound too. So it's down to the Mavrik and SIM, which both feel really solid, but the SIM probably just edges it.

### ● Performance

You'll see from our video online that the launch monitor numbers were quite similar, but it was the Callaway Mavrik SZ that gave us the highest average ball speed. It was actually one of the easier models to control in terms of accuracy too, so it was a clear winner here.

### ● Verdict

While the Cobra King SZ unquestionably offers the most value with its lower price point, and they all performed admirably, it was the new SIM and Mavrik models that stood out for their all-round appeal. Get fitted for any of them and you'll be pleased with the results, but it was the Mavrik SZ that had the most 'wow' factor.

## THIS CAUGHT MY EYE...

### Trident Align

**What is it?** The world's first fully adjustable ball marker, deemed legal for tournament play, that allows you to fine-tune the aim of your putt even when the ball is not in place on the ground.

**GM verdict** Very clever and easy to use. Has potential to speed up the process of using a line on the ball and the extra lines at 90° provide extra aim assistance.

**Price** £24.99 inc. the stencil and pen.



The trident shape has multiple benefits

## MY ON-COURSE REVIEWS



### Srixon Q-Star Tour ball

Still delivers good distance off the tee with a noticeably softer feel than the Z-Star.

**Price** £34.99 per dozen



### Cleveland Launcher HB Turbo iron

I struggled to get past the looks, but it has no problem getting the ball airborne.

**Price** £499 (6-PW)



### Mizuno CLK hybrid

The wider, flatter shape sets up nicely behind the ball. It produced impressive carry

distances. **Price** £219





# Callaway Mavrik

**Price:** £849  
**7-iron loft:** 27°  
**Shaft:** True Temper Elevate 95 stiff, 98g, 37"

# Cobra King Speedzone

**Price:** £699  
**7-iron loft:** 27.5°  
**Shaft:** KBS Tour 90 stiff, 102g, 37.5"

## LOOKS

Mavrik has a noticeably darker finish and more offset than the Cobra SZ. It seems easier to align thanks to the two white scorelines near the leading edge and also has a much thicker topline.

7 ~ 8

Your eyes are immediately drawn to the carbon fibre section within the topline, but after a few shots you forget it's there. A little more traditional in shape with less offset and a lighter finish.

## FEEL/SOUND

Seems to offer a louder, higher-pitched and more metallic sound at impact, which is arguably more wood-like than the Cobra. The sound is still quite short in length, which contributes to a soft feel.

8 ~ 8

Still fairly loud, but a bit more of a 'thud' sensation at impact. It feels fast and forgiving, both on off-centre hits and through the turf thanks to the wider sole, but not overly soft.

## BALL FLIGHT

Gets the ball airborne effortlessly, with low spin helping to produce a strong flight. The extra offset tended to create a miss left for us, but should help slicers square the face at impact more easily.

8 ~ 8

Didn't quite flight the ball as high as the Mavrik, but there is ample speed to keep the ball in the air, helped by the longer stock shaft length and slightly higher spin. Misses were more evenly split.

## FORGIVENESS

Our carry distances and shot patterns were very consistent with this iron. Strikes low on the face or lateral misses were punished minimally – you would have to hit a really bad shot to miss the green.

9 ~ 8

Didn't quite have the directional control of the Mavrik, perhaps because of the longer shaft, but off-centre hits still performed well, with limited drops in ball speed and distance from heel or toe strikes.

## OVERALL APPEAL

It's unusual for the mid-size iron in the Mavrik range to have the strongest lofts. That said, it delivers everything a mid- to high-handicapper would want, but does come in at a higher price point.

8 ~ 9

An iron with this spec was always going to be long, but the ball flight hasn't suffered. There are the options of One Length for consistency and the Arccos Smart Grips for analysis, which add considerable value.

## TOTALS

40 ~ 41





Every Mavrik iron has a specific Flash Face Cup designed by a super computer using artificial intelligence to significantly boost ball speed and increase spin robustness

Two strips of carbon fibre replace steel on the topline and underneath the topline in the 4- to 7-irons. This creates a new I-beam type of construction that saves weight and increases structural soundness

Performance averages (7-iron)

|          | Ball speed (mph) | Launch (degrees) | Spin (rpm) | Peak height (yards) | Carry (yards) |
|----------|------------------|------------------|------------|---------------------|---------------|
| Callaway | 127.6            | 16.5             | 4,741      | 34                  | 190           |
| Cobra    | 128.6            | 15.4             | 5,045      | 33                  | 189           |



Range hitting played a key role in this test



Both are stunning irons to look at



Admiring the lower flight of the Cobra



# Putters

Odyssey Triple Track putters can be used in conjunction with a Callaway Triple Track ball to help with alignment

The Mizuno M.Craft putters have adjustable weights to alter the feel

Strategic weight placement on the Ping Heppler range increases forgiveness

**Y**ou need a putter in your bag that you're excited to pull out and positively roll in that birdie putt, not one you dread to use because you're scared of three-putting yet again. Confidence can often come simply from making a change, but modern technology will certainly make it easier to get the ball in the hole in a fewer number of shots. How? Well, alignment aids have become much more pronounced – the new Triple Track models from Odyssey are testament to this. There has also been a big focus on

forgiveness without sacrificing feel. Through adjustable weighting and clever milling patterns, brands are able to make the heads perform more consistently, regardless of the point of contact with the ball.

Looks and feel remain subjective – you need to love what you look down on and the sensations you get during the stroke – but results should ultimately trump all. To that end, we're hopeful that any one of the new models we've featured here has the potential to turn you from zero to hero on the greens this season.

**“I switched to a new shape last year and it transformed my putting, so don't be afraid to try a style or design you've not considered before”**

Joel Tadman, GM technical editor

## TOP BUYING TIPS

**1** The correct length is crucial in setting the eyes in the right position. Go for a fitting with a PGA pro to check what shaft length works best for you.

**2** Toe-weighted blades tend to suit golfers with stronger arcs to their stroke, while mallets usually favour actions with less curve.

**3** Most putter lines will have two or more stock grip options, so be sure to try them all to see which size and shape feels most comfortable.



# Best for alignment



## Odyssey Stroke Lab Triple Track £239-£269

The three lines assist with alignment, while the Stroke Lab shaft improves tempo and consistency. Five shapes.



## TaylorMade Spider S £299

Left, right and rear tungsten weights increase stability, while a thicker Pure Roll insert provides a better sound and feel. Comes in navy or chalk white colours.



## Ping Heppler £250-£275

The flat face produces a firmer feel and sound. A contrasting copper and black finish provides premium alignment cues. Nine length-adjustable shapes.

# Best for feel



## Scotty Cameron Special Select £380

The eight classic shapes feature thinner and flatter toplines, refined necks and performance-balanced weighting.



## Odyssey Toulon Design £429

New head shapes have been added in the charcoal smoke finish. Both 7g and 40g sole plates are available, in addition to the stock 20g, to alter the feel.



## Bettinardi BB Series £299

Each model is crafted from soft carbon steel milled to 350 grams and given an optimised Super-Fly Face milling for a responsive feel. Four shapes available.

# Best for forgiveness



## Odyssey Stroke Lab Black £239-£269

Five shapes in addition to the Ten and Bird of Prey boast the Microhinge Star insert and Stroke Lab shaft system.



## TaylorMade Truss £269

The Truss design is engineered for less twisting and improved feel thanks to two connection points from the hosel into the head. Comes in four designs.



## Cleveland Frontline £149

Tungsten Forward Weighting positions the CG closer to the face for better stability through impact and straighter, more accurate putts. Four shapes.

# Best from 2019



## Ping Sigma 2 £199

Two hardnesses of material within the insert create a soft feel, solid feedback and distance control on longer putts. True Roll grooves speed up off-centre hits.



## Scotty Cameron Phantom X £399

To maximise forgiveness, each of the nine models incorporates a solid aluminium face integrated with a 303 stainless steel head.



## Evnroll ER £309

A unique mill pattern on the face delivers uniform performance from different strike points. A variety of blades and mallets are available in two finishes.



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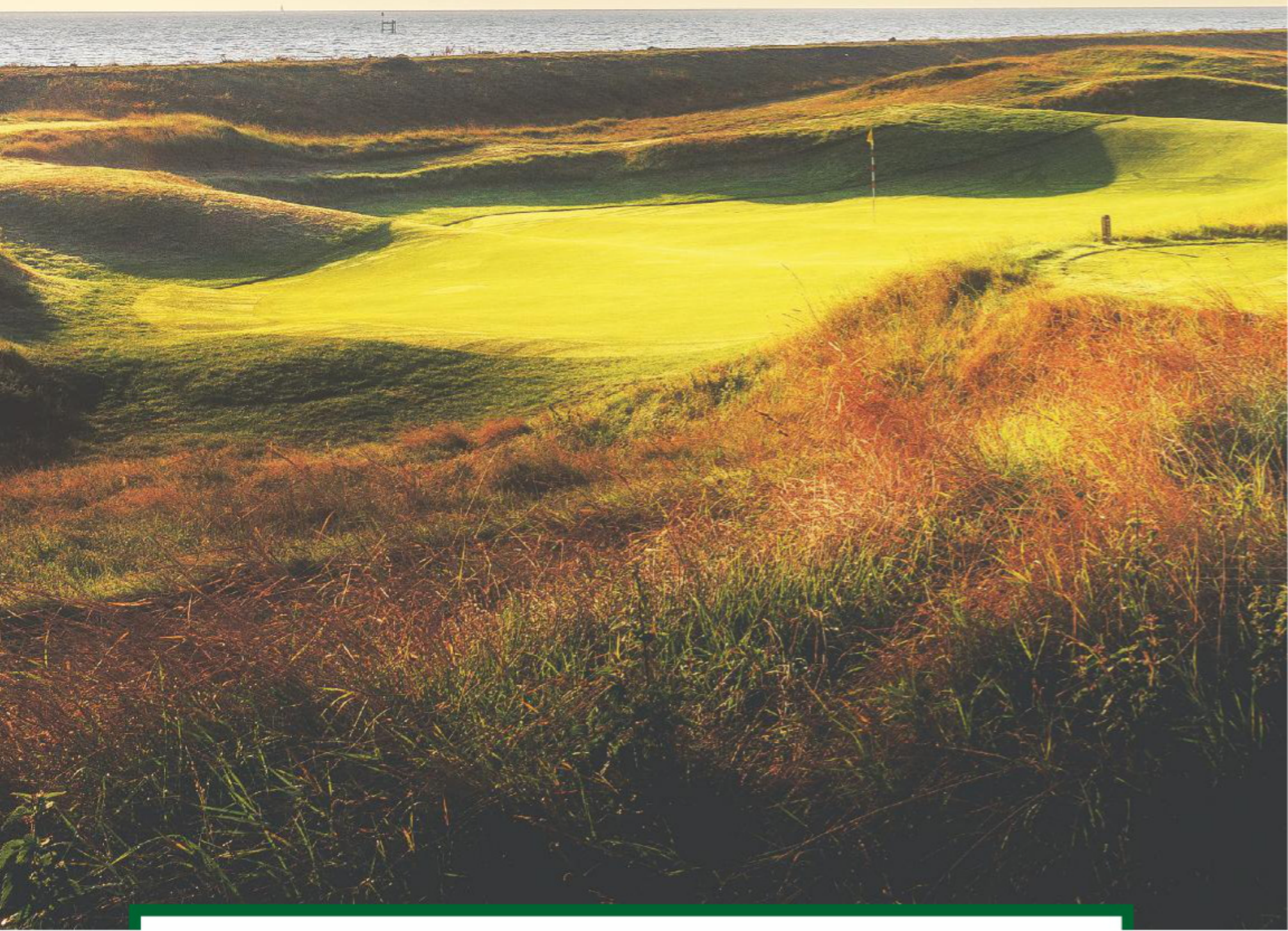
# 3 ISSUES FOR £5\*





# Courses

Edited by **Jeremy Ellwood and Rob Smith**



## Royal Cinque Ports

**R**oyal Cinque Ports is one of three Open Championship links courses, along with Royal St George's and Prince's, that lie almost back-to-back on the Kent coast between Sandwich and Deal. It follows a broadly out-and-back routing just north of Deal town,

with one or two deviations along the way, among them a 1st hole that plays back past the clubhouse in the same direction as the 18th and a variation on St Andrews Old Course's loop at the far end.

Most of the outward holes follow the sea wall in a northerly direction, hugging

it closely in places and serving up one or two interesting moments in among the taller dunes. The links then flits back and forth in a west-to-east and east-to-west direction for four holes from the 8th, before a run for home into the prevailing wind that is as stern a test as you'll encounter anywhere.





## ESSENTIALS

Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club, Golf Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6RF

**Stats:** par 72, 6,623 yards

**GF:** Mon-Thu: £105-£170 per round, £120-£200 per day; Fri-Sun: £135-£195 per round, £135-£225 per day

### History

The club was founded in 1892, with the original nine-hole links growing to a full 18 by the turn of the century and James Braid, Henry Cotton and most recently Martin Ebert involved in its evolution over the years. The club assumed its Royal status in 1910, a year after hosting the first of two Opens, with JH Taylor the victor.

It may only be fate that has prevented it from remaining on the rota to this day, for the first return,

scheduled for 1915, didn't happen due to the First World War, and although The Open did return in 1920, the club's next two proposed stagings in 1938 and 1949 were both thwarted when easterly winds and abnormally high tides combined to inundate the course.

### Signature holes

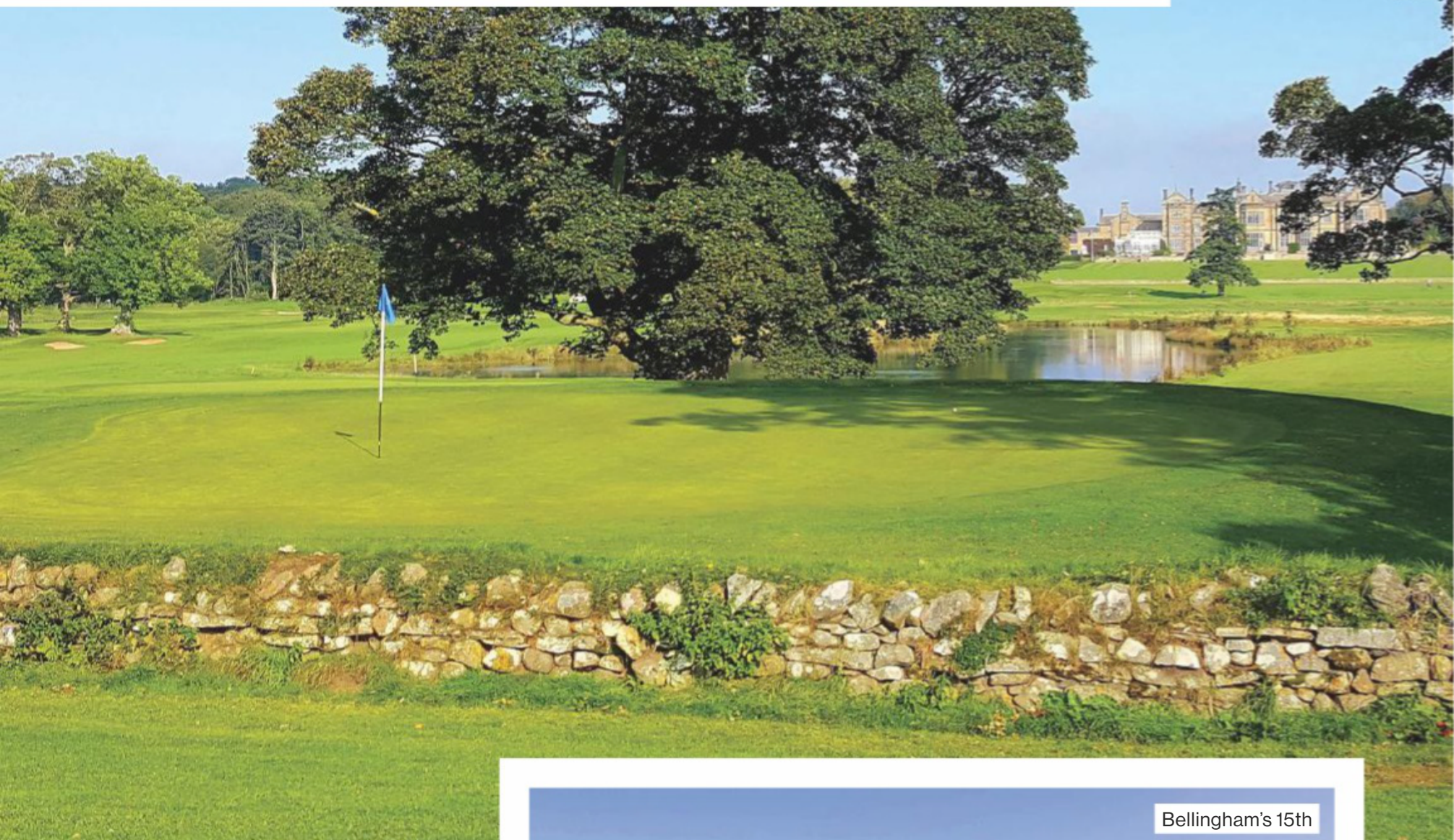
Many who play here will remember the par-5 3rd, which plays semi-blind to a fascinating sunken green set in a hollow in the dunes. This hole is one of

a small number remodelled recently by Ebert, with the fairway re-aligned further to the left. The cracking par-5 16th has also enjoyed a major facelift, with the re-introduction of a long-lost split fairway allowing an alternative final approach from a more elevated position on the left side. The short but teasing par-4 6th is another intriguing hole, with its green perched atop a steep bank right next to the sea wall.



# Northumberland

Jeremy Ellwood returns to this ruggedly beautiful northern county to revisit old favourites and try something new



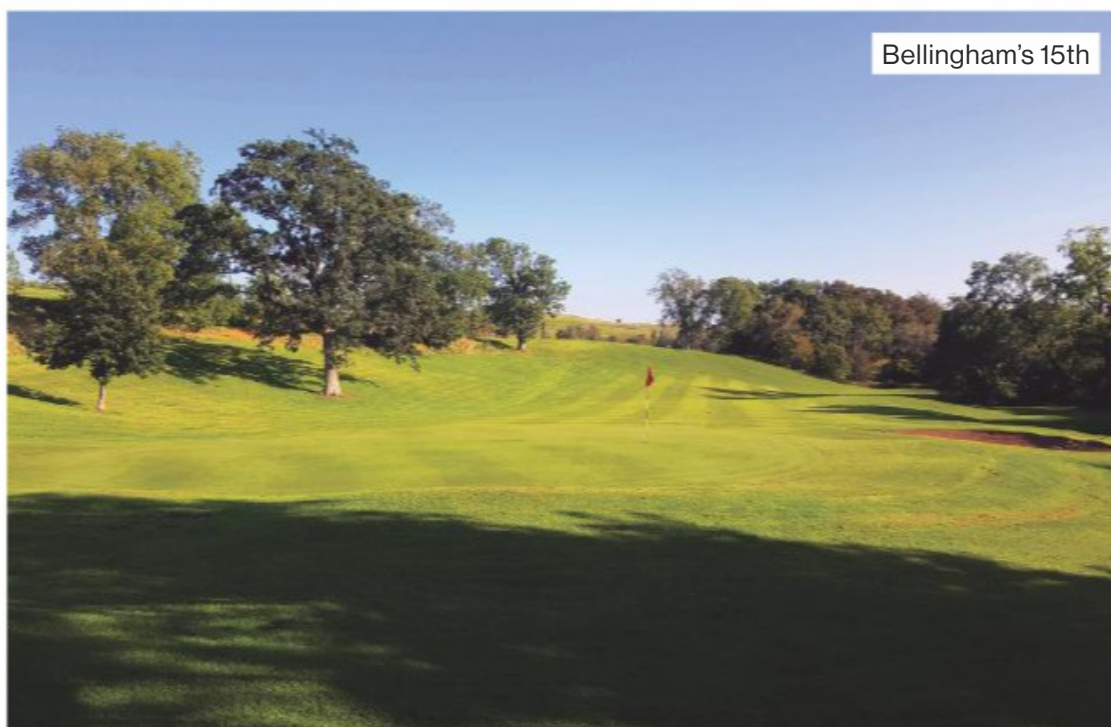
## Hexham

**Par 70, 6,294 yards**  
**GF: round: £20-£50**

This friendly club in the heart of Northumberland is blessed with a lovely course boasting some wonderful holes, starting with the excellent downhill par-5 1st. You'll remember the 9th – a clever short par 4 with a precariously narrow approach – and the par-3 10th back across the valley. The course finishes strongly too, with the short, downhill finale no doubt tempting some into a more aggressive strategy than is perhaps wise with OOB flanking the left.



A tough finish at Hexham



Bellingham's 15th

## Bellingham

**Par 70, 6,093 yards**  
**GF: round: £15-£30**

In 1996, this rolling layout in the North Tyne Valley grew from nine to 18 holes 103 years after opening. The early holes play around the clubhouse before

you climb further away on the 6th and 7th, and again on the 10th and 11th, the latter surely blessed with the world's widest par-5 fairway. The memorable 18th presents a downhill drive before you turn right and cross two gullies en route to the semi-blind green.





The 2nd green on the Douglas nine at Matfen Hall

Matfen Hall

Douglas/Standing Stone: par 72, 6,700 yards; Dewlaw: par 36, 3,357 yards

GF: round: £20-£25 – various packages available with food

Matfen offers 27 holes in a peaceful setting, and a gentler walking experience than the other hotel courses in this area. The Dewlaw nine serves up two suitably generous par-4 openers before greater precision is required on the short, dogleg-right 3rd. You emerge from the trees via the very pretty par-3 4th before a string of good holes all the way to the finish.

The Douglas nine also starts with a generous opener, this time a par 5, before a short downhill par 4 where you'll need an unlikely lucky bounce to jump the greenside ha-ha wall if you're to drive the green. The Standing Stone nine opens with a pretty becksideside par 3. Another ha-ha wall makes its presence felt short of the 4th green here, and a word of advice about the penultimate hole – you probably won't see the river you have to cross on this long par 3 on your first visit (the voice of experience).



The 5th on the Dewlaw

Dunstanburgh Castle

Par 70, 6,287 yards  
GF: round: £29-£33; day: £36-£40; twilight rates: £17-£25

James Braid's links starts with a stern opener before climbing to higher ground, from where the views along the stunning coastline are sublime. You plunge back

down on the 6th, with the course's links credentials then coming to the fore. There are many fine holes playing along rollercoaster fairways all the way out to the imposing cliff-top castle. The run for home from here is equally strong with, first, the course's solitary par 5 and then the 16th with its tucked-away, concave green.



Dunstanburgh Castle in the distance



LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Stay  
Matfen Hall, Matfen

This stately home enjoys a tranquil, away-from-it-all setting and offers a variety of room options. The Aqua Vitae spa is the place to relax and indulge yourself, with dining options ranging from the Library restaurant and Conservatory bistro to Keepers in the golf clubhouse.



Eat/drink  
Heart of Northumberland, Hexham

This Grade II-listed pub has been lovingly renovated, with menu highlights including the stottie and pease pudding and the pork and leek sausages.

Also play  
Slaley Hall and Close House are close to Matfen, as is Ponteland, a parkland course with a tough opening stretch. On the coast, Bamburgh Castle, Harry Colt's Alnmouth, The Northumberland and the Tom Morris nine-holer at Warkworth are all well worth a visit.



## ASK OUR EXPERTS

### Are you a fan of starting or ending a golf course with a par 3?

*Rob Gillett, Leeds*

I would rather ease my way into a round than start with a short hole, but I have no problem with finishing with one. To me, it's far more important that the golf course feels balanced and has a natural flow, rather than exactly where the par 3s and indeed the par 5s are located.

### How much do clubs value the *Golf Monthly* ranking system?

*Jeff Dean, Birmingham*

Having liaised with all of the top 200 clubs over the years, I would say that the vast majority consider them to be very important. The primary reason is marketing. They generate huge interest among golfers, which leads to greater green fee and society revenue. More importantly still, it fosters the members of the future.

### Because of your job, do you only get to play Top 100 courses?

*Colin Broadford, London*

Not at all. Jeremy and I both ended up writing because our enthusiasm for courses and love for the game led us here. I get to play courses right across the spectrum and play as much off-duty golf as on. I pay my green fees and I travel all the time. I still believe that every course, no matter how modest, has something to offer the golfer.

■ Got a question for Rob and Jeremy? Email it to [golfmonthly@ti-media.com](mailto:golfmonthly@ti-media.com)

ROB SMITH SAYS...

# Patience is a virtue



**B**y the time you read this, the worst of our incredibly wet autumn and winter will hopefully be a thing of the past. In my 40 years of playing, this has been one of the toughest times for clubs as they have wrestled with protecting their courses from further damage at the same time as keeping members and visitors happy. All of this is further influenced by the need to keep revenue coming in.

There were times when I doubted whether the course I was playing should have been open. My concern was the potential harm to the playing surfaces, as much by foot as by ball. Courses I have played over many years suffered substantially more than ever before, with two exceptions being my

games at the free-draining Gog Magog and the constantly improving Purley Downs. Elsewhere, closures, bunker washouts, marshy rough and temporary greens were common.

An interesting by-product of all this excessive rain is that in their hard-working efforts to put things right, many of our beleaguered greenkeeping teams discovered old, blocked drainage channels. Clearing these will help in future winters and it has, in many cases, given clubs maintenance knowledge that had long been mislaid. Coastal erosion is also significant, and forward-thinking clubs such as Formby are already preparing new playing surfaces away from the expected impact areas. It is also encouraging to see clubs such as Royal North Devon banish the environmentally unfriendly plastic tee.

While the apparent ravages of climate change are more devastating elsewhere and our sporting woes are minor compared with the forest fires in Australia, the impact on golf clubs all over the UK and Ireland is significant. We enthusiastic golfers need to be patient, and we should thank our course managers more than ever.

Purley Downs is set on chalk high in the Surrey Hills



Q & A



**Ken Moodie**  
*Golf course architect*

**What has changed most in golf course redesign?**

There's been a trend towards more restoration work as opposed to just remodelling or completely redesigning bunkers, particularly acknowledging the work of architects of the past like Mackenzie, Fowler and Colt.

**Making the most of their heritage, then?**

Yes. America has taken a lead in some ways, like Tom Doak with his restoration work at Mackenzie's Pasatiempo in California. Cypress Point was earlier – they started that process maybe 20 years ago, trying to model it on the old photographs. When I was at Moortown, some members were invited to the Mackenzie Society gathering. They saw what had happened at Cypress Point and wondered if something similar could be possible at Moortown.

**Where is most of your work coming from?**

Bunker refurbishments and altering placements to suit the modern game, mainly. Sometimes it's more restoration-based, with clubs trying to get the character of a heathland course back where trees have been allowed to grow in.



Walton Heath's New course stood up well to the poor weather

JEREMY ELLWOOD'S DIARY

Head to the heath

I wouldn't quite class myself as a fair-weather golfer, but golf does take a bit of a back seat in winter, and I'm definitely not a 'trudging round in the wet' golfer. Like you, I guess, several planned winter outings succumbed to the dreadful weather, leaving my quota a little down on previous years.

I was fortunate enough to play in the Seychelles and Mauritius before Christmas, more of which in the Travel Supplement that accompanies this issue, and that perhaps suppressed the desire to play when I returned. But come early January, I was champing at the bit and thoroughly enjoyed a knock at Walton Heath New with editor, Mike Harris. The course was in good shape at a time when many were under water, but with little run, one or two long par 4s were out of range.

Heathland layouts, along with links and downland courses, come into

their own in winter, and in late January I visited Alwoodley, Prince's and Royal Cinque Ports, all of which have been undergoing improvement works since my last visits.

I was particularly struck with how tree thinning has given Mackenzie's Alwoodley a much more open heathland feel once more. This excellent Leeds course definitely now has shades of Walton Heath, where that openness abounds.

● **Did you know?**

Off the very tips, the back nine on Walton Heath's New course falls just 36 yards shy of 4,000 yards!



Alwoodley has undergone a tree-thinning programme

1405

The year construction began on the castle that Ardglass Golf Club in County Down uses as its clubhouse

7,879

Maximum yardage of Next 100 course Rockliffe Hall, a Martin Hawtree creation near Darlington



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# An ode to the dormy house

Words **Jeremy Ellwood** • Photography **Geoff Ellis, Kevin Murray, Getty Images, @Crown Copyright (2020) Visit Wales**

Jeremy Ellwood recounts some of his fondest memories from dormy house stays during the course of his golfing travels





**T**here's something about staying in a golf club dormy house that really does it for me, especially out of season for some strange reason. I've been racking my brains to pinpoint what perhaps triggered this enduring appeal, and believe my first ever dormy house experience was at this year's Open Championship venue, Royal St George's in Kent, many years ago on a *Golf Monthly* winter away day.

The dormy rooms there are primarily for the use of members and their guests, as are the ones 50 miles south-west down the coast at Rye, but the vast majority are open to all, including those

at Royal Lytham & St Annes, where I have also been fortunate enough to stay on a couple of occasions.

However, when I say 'vast majority', we are talking about the vast majority of

a relatively small number, for there is still, perhaps slightly surprisingly, only a handful of clubs throughout the country that offer small-scale on-site accommodation, though I believe that figure is slowly growing.

Apart from those two Open Championship venues, I've stayed at three more dormy houses over the years – Tenby, Royal Porthcawl and Pyle & Kenfig, all in south Wales – plus the 'Fairway Lodge' at Bigbury Golf Club in Devon last year, which is



Jezz visited Tenby in January



Royal Lytham & St Annes offers on-site accommodation



effectively a dormy house in all but name. The Lodge at Cowdray Park in Sussex and the rooms at Gower Golf Club in Wales are a couple of others I've stayed at that spring to mind when it comes to small on-site accommodation offerings. Other clubs where I know members of the GM team have stayed in dormy houses include Burnham & Berrow in Somerset, Alnmouth in Northumberland, Formby in Lancashire and Aberdovey and Royal St David's on the west Wales coast.

Lone ranger

For the last three or four Januaries I have gone away alone for a couple of nights for a bit of early-year thinking time, usually to small-scale golf club accommodation and typically on the coast. Last year it was Prince's, Royal St George's next-door neighbour, which is admittedly several notches above dormy house status, but my other trips have taken me to Royal Porthcawl, Cowdray Park and then Tenby and Pyle & Kenfig just a week into this year.

Sometimes the accommodation is purpose-built, but more often it's a conversion of existing buildings or space. In several instances, it's former staff accommodation, as at Pyle & Kenfig close to Royal Porthcawl, which opted to convert its steward's flat into four ensuite twin rooms about five years ago, while Cowdray's Lodge is the former clubhouse.

It was the same at Tenby in Pembrokeshire, where I had stayed previously about seven years ago on a whirlwind trip around Wales with GM photographer Kevin Murray. Here, however, the number of rooms has grown from the three originally converted from the steward's flat with the addition of four more purpose-built



The 11th hole at Tenby in Wales

“It’s not about luxury and grandeur – it’s about being there at the heart of the golf club at the start of the day”

rooms in 2014. “It was quickly apparent that demand had outgrown supply,” club secretary/manager, David Hancock, told me in January when I asked about this expansion since my previous visit. “However, it was also apparent that one of the main requests for stay-and-play visits was from the small society group (10-14 players) looking for a short golfing break.”

Even though the majority of my dormy house visits have been solo, that first visit to Royal St George's was with about that number of people, as was another memorable *Golf Monthly* trip to Royal Porthcawl a few years ago to celebrate (if that's the right word) my 50th birthday. So I can understand the appeal of a group of mates wanting to go somewhere where they can simply park up on arrival and then potentially not use the car again until the journey home, and where the environment is a little more

personal and cosy than it might be at one of our many fine golf hotels and resorts. I guess it's that kind of home from home experience where the atmosphere is more akin to that of your home club's bar than a hotel bar.

In the heart of the action

For me as a solo traveller, I think the appeal is simply going to sleep and then waking up at a golf club. Having worked at a golf club for a number of years, and in the industry for over a quarter of a century, there is still something about the golf club environment that means it is where I'm at my most comfortable and happy when away from home. My natural habitat, if you like.

It's certainly not usually about the standard of accommodation, for although the dormy rooms I've stayed in have always been warm and comfortable, we are generally not talking five-star standard here. The rooms can sometimes be quite small, but that kind of adds to the appeal for me. It's not about luxury and grandeur – it's about being there at the heart of the golf club at the start of the day before anyone else, and potentially up and about around the club before anyone other than the greenkeepers.

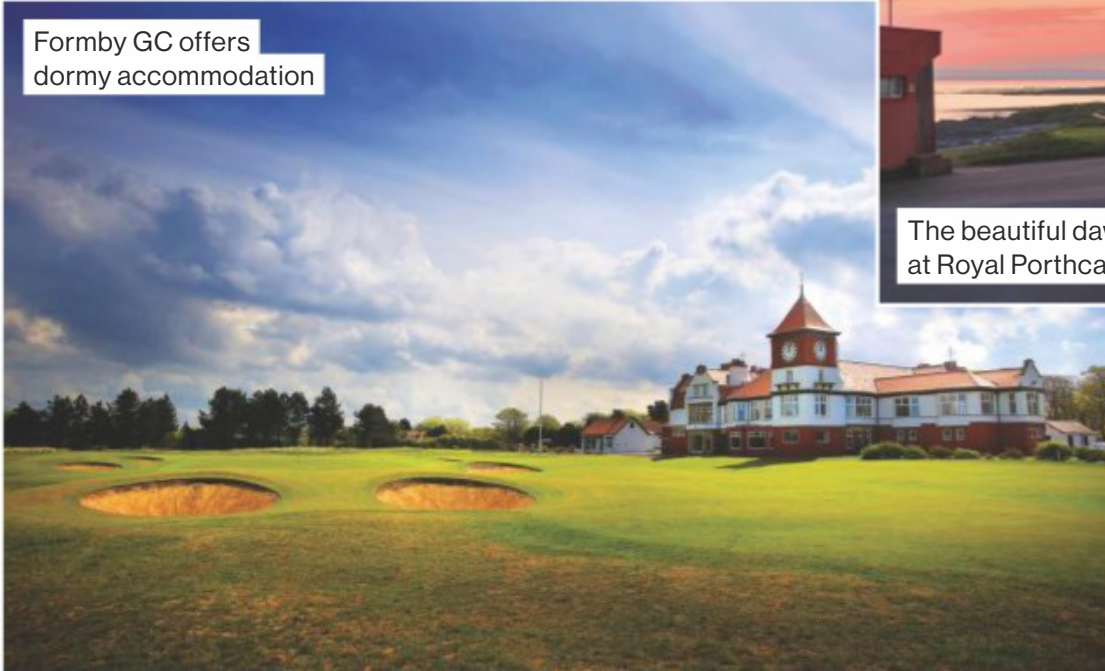
I have to confess that when I'm visiting golf courses, I quite often find myself thinking this would be a great place to wake up in the morning. The eye-catching yellow-painted 'castle' at Dunfermline Golf Club in Fife springs to mind, as does the grand building in Thrybergh Park that Rotherham Golf Club uses as its clubhouse. If others enjoy the dormy house experience as



Burnham and Berrow in Somerset



Formby GC offers  
dormy accommodation



The beautiful dawn  
at Royal Porthcawl



much as me, I would say adding on-site accommodation is certainly one avenue of diversification clubs might want to consider or explore.

One of my favourite dormy house memories is of wandering out of my room at Royal Porthcawl, mug of steaming coffee in hand, to greet the dawn and gaze out over the links and beach as the sun gradually rose. Another memory is from that first trip to Royal St George's with the GM team, where we hadn't quite clocked the distinct absence of late-night taxis before heading out for a team curry in Sandwich. Faced with a long walk home, we somehow managed to grease the palm of the curry house owner sufficiently for him to agree to ferry us back to the golf club.

### Food, glorious food

Where to eat is one thing you have to factor in, especially out of season when the clubhouse won't be open in the evenings. A bit of research is essential here, but usually you are not too far away from somewhere decent.

Hancock feels that is one of the big pulls of Tenby. "I think where we may have the advantage over other golf clubs that offer accommodation is that Tenby has become such a popular and attractive tourist resort now, and there are excellent restaurants and pubs within a ten-minute walk of the club."

On this January's visit I resisted the temptation to bounce around the local hostelries because of impending work deadlines, and it was the same at Pyle & Kenfig, despite two decent-looking pubs within a mile or so. For those travelling alone, staying at a deserted golf club a little way from immediate civilisation may not appeal, but I had no such qualms and actually relished the solitude and quiet.

And, of course, the majority who visit are likely to be in groups of varying sizes, and that is where the dormy house really comes into its own. Most rooms will be

twins or doubles, and prices to stay and play when sharing can be extremely eye-catching, sometimes to the point of it appearing that either the accommodation or golf are almost 'free' relative to normal prices, depending on how you apportion the cost.

It's certainly a very cost-effective way to play the Open links at Royal Lytham, while also giving you the opportunity to savour all the rich history sealed within the clubhouse walls. But it's invariably an extremely cost-effective way to sort the golf and accommodation at any dormy house you might choose to visit.

At Tenby, for example, one night with breakfast and two rounds of golf starts from just £79.50 per person out of season based on two sharing, and from £119 per person in the summer. At Pyle & Kenfig, the equivalent rates are £99 per person out of season and £130 per person midweek in the summer. At Clyne Golf Club, also in south Wales, where my GM colleague Rob Smith is heading later this year, they offer bed and breakfast plus unlimited golf in the winter for £49 per person based on two sharing! And summer prices for dinner, bed and breakfast plus two rounds were just £89.50 based on twin

**“Most rooms will be twins or doubles, and prices to stay and play when sharing can be eye-catching”**

The sun sets over the  
14th at Pyle & Kenfig



occupancy when I checked their website for this feature.

One perhaps surprisingly common word throughout this article has been 'Wales', which is undoubtedly blessed with a higher ratio of golf club dormy houses than the other home nations. Why? I don't really know. I'm tempted to say an element of 'keeping up with the Joneses', which I guess would be understandable in this part of the world. But I suspect it's more about seizing the opportunity, and I do feel there is perhaps a lesson to be learned here at a time when diversifying in some way may be the key to long-term health and survival for many clubs. Put me down as a real dormy house fan, please.





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# BILL ELLIOTT

Golf Monthly's editor-at-large and Golf Ambassador for Prostate Cancer UK



**L**ee Westwood's just done it at 46 and so has Graeme McDowell at 40. Phil Mickelson, who turns 50 this summer, remains highly likely to do it again while Tiger Woods, 44, has done it at Augusta and who would bet against a repeat before he's finished.

We're talking triumph and age here, middle age, the time when sportsmen are supposed to be offering clichés about their game on TV, designing golf courses or just lying back somewhere warm while giggling at the life they have enjoyed to date.

It's claimed that wisdom comes with age, but I don't subscribe to this particular adage. For me, it is not wisdom that arrives around the same time as sore knees and attractive wrinkles but an abrupt realisation that, mostly, as a race we are permanently marooned somewhere stupid. This thought is not what makes us wise but it does offer us a mixture of despair and cynicism that, in turn, removes the scab called naivety. Some people call us grumpy.

Whatever the truth here, there currently appears to be something in the air. While there always has been a chance in golf for an older player to triumph – as Jack Nicklaus did at The Masters when he was 46 – the recent successes of Messrs Westwood and McDowell on the European Tour are something else.

Nicklaus won in 1986 because he plugged into a memory and this memory was of a player who was beyond comparison in his pomp. He had been truly great for a couple of decades and for a couple of hours on a Sunday

## “Nicklaus plugged into a memory of a player who was beyond comparison”

afternoon in Augusta he was great again. Ask him and he can't explain it, not really.

Westwood and McDowell offer a different clutch of evidence that you can't keep a very good man down all the time. Very good but not great, not Nicklaus-like. Westwood got close but never quite made it, while McDowell briefly stroked greatness when he won his US Open but didn't follow up.

Be this as it may, their triumphs were reassuringly terrific to witness. Each was a testimony to their continued physical fitness, their alertness and, crucially, their desire. For the majority of us, it is the desire that diminishes along with the enthusiasm for the ordeal of wandering into the sharpest areas of competition.

It is also worth noting that these guys no longer, presumably, need the money. What they need is the adrenalin rush and the confirmation that they are not merely making up the numbers while thinking of something else to do with their lives.

There will be those who inhabit the carping edges of society who will seize on

their success as further evidence that you need athleticism to be a top-class golfer about as much as you need it to win an egg and spoon race. They are welcome to their opinion but they are wrong.

What it proves is that high-class golf is a game of thought and nerve as well as physicality and fitness, and that if you

approach the tussle with a mixture of experience and respect then, unlike many other games that chew you up and spit you out before you know it, golf may well offer you a seat at the top table at least one more time before you start dribbling.

One last thought on this. When Seve and

his pals were playing, the average age for a first Major was 31. It is now 32. Bet you didn't expect that. I know I didn't.

Neither Westwood nor McDowell appear to have lost any real distance, a fact I mention because I've just cast an eye over the latest report from the R&A/USGA that concludes that “the continuing cycle of increases – in distance off the tee and course lengthening – is undesirable and detrimental to golf's future”.

They point out that the hectic dash to lengthen courses is not only expensive as well as environmentally dubious but is scratching at the game's fundamental appeal, which is offering some joy to its participants. I know what they mean.

Is there anything more dispiriting than thumping your best drive on a par 4 and finding you still have more than 200 yards to the green? While I now have the handicap strokes to cater for this annoyance, this is not the point. I'm out there to have fun on top of a small sense of fulfilment. Making me feel small does not do it. Know what I mean?





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