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The Masters: Truly Second-To-None

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**ING FALL FORUM RETURNING TO
INN ON THE LAKES IN SEBRING NOV. 4-7**

Q1 / 2024

PLUS: GOLF'S FUTURE By Ed Travis

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CONTACT:

556 Teton Street, Lake Mary, FL 32746 • PH: 407- 474-0531
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THE MASTERS TOURNAMENT: TRULY SECOND-TO-NONE

By Mike May



The great thing about The Masters golf tournament is that you really don't have to like golf to really enjoy watching it. This historic piece of eastern Georgia real estate contains an element of class and prestige that permeates the atmosphere at the Augusta National Golf Club. That feeling begins as soon as you tune into the broadcast, or when you park your car and start walking toward the club.

The Masters is truly in a class by itself when compared to

other high-profile special events like, the Super Bowl, the World Series, the Olympic Games, a World Cup final, the Academy Awards, or a presidential inauguration in Washington, D.C. Those events are 'bucket-list' items to attend for millions of people, The Masters is perched on a different level. Simply put, it's second-to-none, ***'a cut above the rest' and as CBS' Jim Nantz states, 'it is a tradition unlike any other.'***

Everyone knows that The Masters is different, the players,

caddies, patrons, media, Augusta National's membership, official sponsors, AT&T, IBM, and Mercedes Benz, plus the CBS/ESPN broadcast crews pay extra special attention. Perhaps, that's because more than one television announcer has been banned from any future Masters telecasts, for saying the wrong thing.

Receiving an invitation to play at Augusta National, or in The Masters is one of the most coveted invites in sports.

Here are a number of facts about The Masters, which help make this event stand out from other events, not just in golf, but in all of sports.

1) **Dinner Reservations.**

Winners of The Masters each year have a standing dinner reservation on Sunday night with the members of the club inside the Augusta National Golf Club. The meal starts soon after the awarding of



the Green Jacket, upon the conclusion of the tournament.

2) Sleepover Special.

While it's well known that amateurs who play in The Masters each year are invited to stay in the Crow's Nest, which sits at the tip-top of the Augusta National clubhouse, many people would be surprised that it sleeps five and is 1,200 square feet of living space.

3) Trophy Time.

The permanent Masters trophy weighs 100 pounds and features the names of the annual winner, plus the runner-up. In addition to the Green Jacket, the winner of The Masters receives a replica of the real trophy and a gold medal, both of which he is allowed to take home. The permanent Masters Trophy was built in England and features 900 separate pieces of silver.

4) The Clubhouse.

The Augusta National clubhouse predates the building of the golf course as it was originally a private home built in 1854.

5) Keeping Up with the Jones'.

In the first edition of The Masters, in 1934, then known as the Augusta National Invitation Tournament, Bobby Jones competed in the event, where he finished in a 13th place tie with Denny Shute and Walter Hagen. Jones' 72-hole score was +6, which was ten shots behind the inaugural winner, Horton Smith.

6) Naming Rights.

The credit for the naming of each hole at the Augusta National Golf Club is given to Louis Alphonse Berckman, Bobby Jones, and Clifford Roberts, who adorned each hole with a plant for which it is named. The course starts with Tea Olive (the first hole),

though it was originally called Cherokee Rose, and concludes with Holly (the 18th hole).

7) Arnie's Plaque.

On April 4, 1995, a bronze plaque, in honor of Arnold Palmer's play and contributions as the first four-time winner of The Masters, was unveiled. The plaque is affixed to the water fountain which sits behind the 16th tee.

8) Jack's Plaque.

On April 7, 1998, a plaque, in honor of Jack Nicklaus' play and contributions, as the only six-time Masters champion, was unveiled. The plaque is affixed to a drinking fountain that sits between the 16th and 17th holes.

9) By Invitation Only.

There are 19 different criteria which The Masters Committee uses to draft the list of players who are invited to play in The Masters each April. The Masters Committee, at its discretion, also invites



international players, not otherwise qualified. Previous winners of The Masters are normally invited to return and compete every year.

10) Who Is Rae?

Rae's Creek, which meanders through the course on the 11th, 12th, and 13th holes at Augusta National, is named after John Rae, who died in 1780. Rae's house was the farthest fortress up the Savannah River from Fort Augusta. His house kept residents safe during Indian attacks when Fort Augusta was out of reach.

11) The Green Jacket.

The tradition of awarding The Green Jacket to the winner of The Masters started in 1949, when Sam Snead won. The tradition of



the members wearing a green coat started in 1937. The jackets were purchased from the Brooks Uniform Company in New York City. Each Green Jacket is adorned with brass buttons with the logo of the Augusta National Golf Club.

12) Par 3 Tournament.

The Par 3 Contest at The Masters was first held in 1960 and won by Sam Snead. To date, no player has ever won both the Par 3 Contest and The Masters in the same year. The course record is held by Jimmy Walker who recorded an eight-under-par round of 19 in 2016.

13) Winner Buys -- Next Year.

On the Tuesday night of Masters week, all previous champions of The Masters gather for the Champions Dinner. The defending champion of The Masters selects the menu and hosts the dinner. The only non-winner to

attend the dinner is the current chairman of the Augusta National Golf Club. This tradition started in 1952 with Ben Hogan. The meals have ranged from cheeseburgers, fries and a milkshake by Tiger Woods in 1998, elk and wild boar by Mike Weir in 2004, chicken panang curry by Vijah Singh in 2001 and Spanish seafood paella by Phil Mickelson in 2011.

“You’re in a room amongst great players,” said Gary Player. “The ambiance of the whole place is remarkable. And, you hear so many stories. It’s something special.”

14) Dusk-to-Dawn Destination.

For years, the premier accommodation option in Augusta has been the Partridge Inn, the grand dame of Augusta’s hotels. The P.I. Bar and Grill, the hotel’s famous restaurant, is the place to be and to be seen during Masters Week.

15) The Bridges Over Rae’s Creek.

The Augusta National Golf Club has honored three golfers by naming bridges in their honor.

The Sarazen bridge at the 15th green, was the first named for a former champion. It was dedicated on April 6, 1955, as a way to celebrate



the 20th anniversary of Gene Sarazen’s famous double-eagle, **“the Shot Heard Round the World,”** at the 15th hole during the final round of the 1935 Masters, which Sarazen later won in a playoff against Craig Wood.



The Hogan bridge crosses over Rae’s Creek, allowing players to reach the 12th green and is dedicated to two-time Masters champion Ben Hogan.

Both the Hogan and Nelson bridges were dedicated on the same day -- April 2, 1958.

The Nelson bridge crosses over Rae’s Creek, at the 13th green and is dedicated to two-time Masters champion Byron Nelson.

16) Mickelson’s Moment in Time.

While on his way to winning his third Masters title in 2010, Phil Mickelson drove the ball through the 13th fairway and into the trees



during the fourth round. Most players would have laid up short of Rae's Creek, but Mickelson took his six iron and struck a perfect shot, from the pine straw, onto the green which he converted into a birdie four, which paved the way to his third Green Jacket. A commemorative plaque was placed on the spot, among the tall pines, at the 13th hole.

One special part of The Masters tournament is the fact that it's a reflection of golf's global growth in the last 50 years, especially since 1980, when Seve Ballesteros became the tournament's second non-American winner. The first, of course, was Gary Player, who prevailed on three occasions – 1961, 1974, and 1978.

Since 1980, players from Germany (Bernhard Langer, twice, in 1985 and 1993), England (Nick Faldo, three times, in 1989, 1990, and 1996 and Danny Willett), Wales (Ian Woosnam), Scotland (Sandy Lyle), Argentina (Angel Cabrera), Canada (Mike Weir), Fiji (Vijah Singh), South Africa (Trevor Immelman and Charl Schwartzel), Spain (Ballesteros, again, in 1983, Jose Maria Olazabal, twice, in 1994 and 1999, Sergio Garcia, and Jon



Rahm), Australia (Adam Scott), and Japan (Hideki Matsuyama) have won this event.

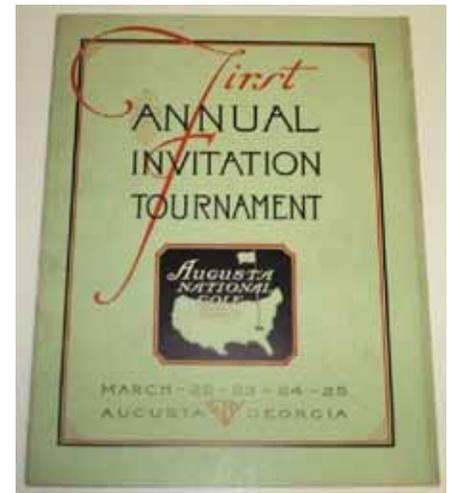
Another note, only 17 players have won The Masters at least twice

While so much attention is given to the winner, three players are tied with the most runner-up finishes, Hogan, Nicklaus, and Tom Weiskopf each finished in second place on four occasions.

We hope you enjoy the 2024 Masters and that these few tidbits can help you

win the next Masters trivia contest.

The Masters is truly **'a cut above the rest,'** and **'a tradition unlike any other.'**



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EVEN THE MASTERS CAN'T CONTROL THE LIV

By Fred Altvater



The membership at Augusta National has been very good at controlling anything and everything that could distract from the pomp and circumstance of this annual rite of spring. Corporate signage is not allowed and they even dictate the timing of advertisements to the television networks that are broadcasting the event.

The membership of Augusta National Golf Club is comprised of CEO's, CFO's and other leaders of corporate American, who are accustomed to controlling every aspect of their business and

that mindset spills over the administration of the Masters tournament.

This year the elephant in the room is the combination of LIV and PGA Tour players that are coming together for the first time this year. Fred Ridley, current Chairman of Augusta National and the Masters, can't control who joins, or doesn't join the LIV, but he does control who receives an invitation.

Rory McIlroy has toned back his rhetoric, but a general chippiness is apparent among other

players on both tours. The unpleasantness has continued both in media interviews, as well as on social media. The move by defending Masters champion, Jon Rahm to switch to the rival LIV has been an especially explosive topic in the golf world.

Last year it was predicted that LIV players would not perform well at the Masters, due to their shorter schedule, 54-hole events and lack of competition against PGA Tour quality players. That prediction was never valid due to the fact that there are several major championship winners among the LIV membership namely, Brooks Koepka, Dustin Johnson, Cam Smith, Patrick Reed,

Bryson DeChambeau, Sergio Garcia, Phil Mickelson, Martin Kaymer, Louis Oosthuizen and Charl Schwartzel.

Brooks Koepka, who always gets excited for the majors, led most of the way through the first three rounds of the Masters last year, but slipped in the final round on Sunday to let Jon Rahm pass him for the victory. Rahm was a member of the PGA Tour at the time. Koepka did come back to win the PGA Championship the next month.

After the dust had settled on Sunday evening, at the Masters, Koepka and Mickelson finished tied for runner-up, behind Rahm, while Patrick Reed tied for fourth, giving LIV players

three of the top six spots at the 2023 Masters.

Even though the LIV Tour does not receive Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR) points and many of the top names on that tour are rapidly sliding down the world rankings, several LIV players will tee it up this year at the 2024 Masters.

Top 50 in the OWGR is just one of several criteria to earn a Masters invitation, plus past winners are normally given an automatic invite.

Past major championship winners like, Rahm, Johnson, Mickelson, Garcia, Reed and a few other LIV players have five-year exemptions into all







four major championships, which includes the Masters.

The LIV has split the loyalties of the players and it is unfortunate that we now only get to see the best players compete against one another on four occasions each year.

Without OWGR points awarded to the LIV and as exemptions from winning previous majors expires, these opportunities will become even less rare.

That is a huge loss for professional golf.

The Masters can control a few special invitees and does have a tradition of inviting leading international players who are not otherwise qualified for the tournament. This year Chairman Ridley gave a special invitation to Joaquin Niemann, who qualified for the tournament in years past, before he switched to the LIV.

Augusta National and The Masters can normally dictate everything that happens at the Masters Tournament, but they can't mend the broken professional golf scene right now.

They will still host The Masters and golf fans will still be amazed at the beauty and tradition of this annual harbinger of spring.

Hopefully Augusta National and the other ruling bodies in golf, the USGA, the PGA and DP World Tour can find a solution to this rift in men's professional game and get back to producing competitive golf featuring the biggest names and best players for golf fans to enjoy.

If The 2024 PGA Show Is Any Indication,

By Mike Jamison



Ann Liguori



Women's Golf Day founder
Elisa Gaudet



the golf industry is in for a successful year.

A high level of positive energy was apparent throughout the Orange County Convention Center January 24-26, including the ING Hospitality Room.

The International Network of Golf (ING) celebrated its 30th year of recognizing outstanding achievement by its members through the ING Media Awards and ING Industry Honors. Both awards programs were presented at the PGA Show to full capacity rooms.

For the ING Media Awards, Gary Van Sickle and Ann Liguori each won First-Place honors in two categories. Van Sickle, who writes for SI.com and other outlets, won First-Place in the Opinion/Editorial category with "The PGA Tour Is Losing Its Identity." He also was tops in the Profile category with "Caddyshack Cameo" which appeared in NewEngland.Golf. Van Sickle also was an Outstanding Achiever winner in six categories.

Liguori's winning entry in the Radio Segment category was her interview with Bernhard Langer on her Talking Golf With Ann Liguori show in New York. She also won the Podcast category with her interview with Gary McCord.

The Met Golfer was selected the winner in the Publications Category with its August/September issue. Top Radio Show,



Eric Nelson and
Gary Van Sickle

for the second straight year, went to Chuck Garbedian's Garbedian on Golf, PGA Championship Edition, WRNW, Milwaukee. Steve Kashul's The Golf Scene won in the TV Show Category.

In the ING Industry Honors, Women's Golf Day Founder Elisa Gaudet and Tour Edge's 723 Drivers were among the winners.

Gaudet has overseen tremendous growth in Women's Golf Day since its debut eight years ago. The event moved from one day to a weeklong affair last year, and saw participation in 1,300 locations worldwide.

The Tour Edge Exotics 723 features two separate driver designs designated as Extreme (E) and Competition (C) spec. The E723 drivers are MOI+ designs built for maximum forgiveness, while the C723 designs are all about harnessing power and

dialing in low spinning distance.

For only the second time in the 30-year history of the ING Industry Honors, there was a tie in a category. Rapsodo Mobile Launch Monitor 2 Pro and the Blue Tees Golf Player+ GPS Speaker shared top honors in the Product Ingenuity-Technology & Training category. Also, Zero Friction's STRIDE, an autonomous electric golf bag, won the Product Ingenuity-MISC. category. Other winners were Mountain View CC for Print Ads and French Lick Resort in the TV Commercial category.

A few companies and products caught our eye during the PGA Show.

AMERICAN FIT - ING's official apparel company American Fit is a wholly owned subsidiary of Valgroup International with offices in Santa Fe, Argentina and throughout South America. It fashion designs in New York and produces higher-end apparel from its production facilities in Lima, Peru.

American Fit may be a new name in the Golf Apparel industry, but it is certainly not new to designing men's and women's golf apparel as it has long been associated with some of the most major of golf apparel brands as their private label manufacturer.



Said CEO Diego Leventhal, “Now is the right time to launch our own brand as we have many distinctive designs and types of materials that we felt needed to be introduced to the golf apparel markets. Only a vertically positioned apparel company like ours could properly undertake bringing to the golf industry a new slant on the golf apparel business while at the same time providing PGA professionals personalized and very profitable collections to sell.”

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Bridgestone has created a golf ball with a three-step process stamp to help your focus. The outer red circle and arrow help

you remember to identify your target and analyze the shot. 2) The yellow circle spurs you to visualize the shot path. Then you focus on the green dot as you prepare to strike the ball. Jason Day is using this golf ball on The PGA Tour.

CERTIFRESH CIGAR – For 25 years, CertiFresh Cigar® has offered the finest brand-name cigars that are delivered in a perfectly humidified custom package. Boveda’s patented two-way humidity control device is the cornerstone of CertiFresh packaging — this keeps the cigars at a precise 69% humidity that guarantees their freshness for one year without a humidor. CertiFresh packaging is individually customized for an impact like no



other cigar sales program, and has revolutionized how premium cigars are distributed to and sold at nontraditional cigar retailers.



GREENKEEPERS – Greenkeepers, Inc. was founded in 1996 as one of the pioneers in the non-metal cleat revolution. Their invention of the outward-angled, traction-tooth golf cleats is still being used around the world today. Since then, GreenKeepers has introduced several products many golfers know and love, including the 4 Yards More Performance Golf Tee, the Line-M-Up stenciling device, the Myball golf ball personalizer, and the PosiSet grip counterweights. The newest addition to the line is the Dri Mark Mini Marker, including the Line M Up Pro Dual.

ZERO FRICTION – Headed by John Iacono, Zero Friction is known industry wide for producing

cutting edge products and creative packaging for its retail partners. Zero Friction’s line includes gloves, performance tees, rangefinders, balls, bags and accessories. The latest success story is the Wheel Pro STRIDE, a first-of-its-kind



lightweight, autonomous electric golf bag. Boasting Smart Follow Technology, the STRIDE bag stays within three feet using a pocket-sized remote control, complete with automatic stop and intelligent gyroscopic control for stability.

ZOOMBROOM GOLF BREEZE – This product, rated excellent on Amazon,



is the perfect tool to add to a golf bag to blow away debris, blooms, leaves and branches that often slow down the game or disrupt a shot.

It’s like a typical leaf blower only it is 2-pounds, cordless, easy to control, and has the power comparable to a large battery-operated leaf blower. The Golf Breeze fits easily within most golf bags, and is permitted under the rules of golf (Rule 15.1). ⚡

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ING Fall Forum Returning To Inn On The Lakes In Sebring Nov. 4-7

Early-Bird Registrants Rewarded With 3 Dozen Bridgestone Tour B Golf Balls

The early birds will get the rewards when they register for the ING Fall Forum, scheduled for Nov. 4-7 at Inn On The Lakes in Sebring, FL.

The rewards come in the form of THREE-DOZEN Bridgestone Tour B golf balls – a \$100 value. The golf balls will go to the first 12 people who register for this annual event, and will be delivered at the Fall Forum.

The ING Fall Forum will follow a similar format to those of the previous two years. ING attendees will be playing in the Citrus Golf Trail Open Pro-Am, and will also compete in the annual Durland Cup.

Kate Strickland of Wander Media will be on hand to conduct a marketing seminar. There will also be product press conferences, a state of the industry roundtable discussion and the networking ING is famous for.

Early Bird entry fee includes two rounds of golf, two dinners, three breakfasts, a welcome reception and a lunch, along with a welcome goodie bag. Early Bird entry fee for Media is \$150, and for Non-Media is \$250. This pricing is good through May 31.

Keep an eye out for hotel reservation details in the coming weeks.

For early-bird registration, visit www.ingolf.com, or email mike@jamisongolf.com.





ING Fall Forum

Nov. 4-7, 2024
Inn On The Lakes
Sebring, FL

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

TIME	EVENT	WHERE
MONDAY, Nov. 4		
4 pm -6 pm	Forum Check-In	Inn On The Lakes Meeting Room
6:30 pm	Welcome Reception	TBD
8:30 pm	<i>ClubING</i>	Inn On The Lakes Bar
TUESDAY		
7 am-7:45 am	Breakfast	Delivered To Your Room
8:30 am	CGT Open Pro-Am	Sun 'N Lake CC
1 pm	Awards Lunch	Sun 'N Lakes CC
3:30 pm-4:15 pm	Roundtable: Media/Marketing	Inn On The Lakes Meeting Room
4:30 pm	Press Conferences: <i>TBD</i>	Inn On The Lakes Meeting Room
6:30 pm	Dinner	Inn On The Lakes
8:30 pm	<i>ClubING</i>	Inn On The Lakes Bar
WEDNESDAY		
7:30 am-8:15 am	Breakfast	Inn On The Lakes Meeting Room
8:30 am	Social Media Marketing: Presenter: <i>Kate Strickland</i>	Inn On The Lakes Meeting Room
9:15 am	Press Conferences: <i>TBD</i>	Inn On The Lakes Meeting Room
Lunch On Your Own		
1 pm	Durland Cup Golf Tournament	TBD
6 pm	Golf Awards Dinner	TBD
8 pm	<i>ClubING</i>	Inn On The Lakes Bar
THURSDAY (Checkout Day)		
7 am-9 am	Breakfast	Delivered To Your Room

Calculating Move

After four years of feedback and research, the **World Handicap System™** gets three tweaks to make it more flexible, equitable, and welcoming.

BY KEVIN KLINE



When the World Handicap System was first implemented in 2020, it unified the game by providing a consistent Handicap Index® calculation for millions of golfers around the world and was based upon three key principles: be inclusive, provide a consistent measure of ability, and remain modern. Four years later, with the first revision to the WHS™, those same principles apply to the three main changes.

After four years of research and listening to feedback from golfers around the world, including many MGA members, the USGA (and R&A) introduced changes that went into effect on January 16, 2024 and make for a more dynamic and welcoming system, all to enhance your enjoyment of the game.

Golf has experienced a global resurgence since WHS became effective, which many would attribute to the pandemic since outdoor activities were safer. Current golfers took advantage of a more flexible schedule to play the game they love; former golfers dusted off the old clubs that were sitting in the garage; and new golfers were introduced to the game. Many countries have seen a significant increase in the number of scores submitted for handicapping purposes since the WHS was introduced, reflecting golf's broadening appeal.

It's one thing to get out and tee it up, but millions of golfers have now chosen to step to the level of maintaining a handicap and posting their scores. The number of golfers in the U.S. with a Handicap Index eclipsed 3 million for the first time in 2022, representing

a 16% increase since pre-COVID. Globally, more than 100 million scores have been posted each year since 2020, unifying millions of golfers around the world through a standard measure of playing ability. Here at home, MGA members posted more than 3 million scores each of the past four years.

The 2024 update leverages the performance data gathered from around the world, in addition to feedback received from many of the 125 countries now using the WHS. This first update to the WHS is part of an ongoing review of the Rules of Handicapping™ and Course Rating System™ with a continued emphasis on accuracy, consistency, and equity. Although the Met Area is observing an inactive score posting season until April 1 (April 1 – November 14 is the active season),

and scores played locally are not eligible to be posted for handicap purposes, we've been hard at work behind the scenes to get ready for the upcoming season to promote and educate our members on the new changes. Your go-to source is mgagolf.org for all WHS information, and our staff stands ready to answer your questions, but while we're all dreaming about lush fairways and greens in the dead of winter, here's a quick rundown on the three key changes in store for 2024 and how they might affect your game.

1) Incorporating shorter length courses into the Course Rating and Slope Rating system

The overall length requirements for Course Rating in the WHS has been significantly reduced. Previously an 18-hole course must have been at least 3,000 yards to receive a Course Rating and Slope Rating (or 1,500 yards for 9 holes). Starting in 2024, the yardage requirements have been cut in half, to 1,500 and 750 yards, respectively, enhancing the portability of a Handicap Index to make the system more accommodating for all players. This is good news for golfers who regularly play par-3 and shorter-length courses and have wanted those scores to count toward their Handicap Index. The change is intended to expand the WHS to thousands of shorter length courses and enable more golfers to obtain and use a Handicap Index.

Locally, this change allows golf courses in the Met Area that under the old length requirement were not able to be rated to now become eligible for score posting for handicap purposes. The MGA will conduct the ratings for these facilities over the next two seasons so that they become available for score posting. The change also has potential for growing the MGA portfolio of member clubs to include shorter executive and par-3 courses throughout the Met Area that previously were ineligible. If your course does not have a Course Rating and you think it should based on the new changes, please reach out to the MGA so we can look into it.

2) An updated approach for holes not played

Formerly, when golfers had to stop play on holes 10 to 13, they just posted a nine-hole score, and when 14 to 17 holes were played, they used net par for the remaining holes to post an 18-hole score. For example, we've

all tried to squeeze in a quick round as the sun is setting and not been able to quite finish. The new procedure differs from what is in place today and generally eliminates the use of net par for holes not played.

With the 2024 revision going into effect, when 10 to 17 holes are played, an 18-hole Score Differential™ will be determined by adding the player's Score Differential from the holes played to an expected Score Differential for the number of holes not played. Keep in mind that at least nine holes with a nine-hole Course Rating and Slope Rating must be played. Since a player's expected score is not specific to a course or reliant upon the course's stroke index allocation (as net par had been), this will lead to more consistency.

It is important to note, golfers who play 10 to 17 holes are required to post their score hole-by-hole so the appropriate Score Differential can be calculated from the holes that were played to combine with the expected score for the number of holes not played. Score posting tools are available using the MyMGA app that provides hole-by-hole posting capability. All MGA members can download the MyMGA app for score posting, stat keeping, and other valuable tools. Although 10- to 17-hole rounds are uncommon for most players and are typically a result of circumstances such as darkness, inclement weather, or match play, this change will result in a premium being placed on the holes played, more flexibility in terms of posting scores, and more accurate Score Differentials.

3) A new treatment of nine-hole scores

Formerly, nine-hole scores were combined in the order posted to create an 18-hole Score Differential, which could take weeks or even months and lent itself to volatile results due to the order in which scores were combined. The new procedure is far more responsive and equitable. For example, when two good nine-hole scores combined and produced an 18-hole Score Differential that was better than any of the player's single 18-hole scores, the result was an artificially low Handicap Index.

Beginning in 2024, when a player posts a nine-hole score, an 18-hole Score Differential is automatically calculated for the round using the player's nine-hole Score Differential and expected Score Differential based on their current Handicap Index, allowing the nine-hole round to be consid-

ered in the player's Handicap Index calculation right away. So, no more waiting on nine-hole scores to combine, as they will count toward your Handicap Index the very next day. As part of this change, golfers are required to play and post all nine holes with a valid nine-hole Course Rating and Slope Rating instead of the previous minimum of seven holes. The change places a premium on the holes you played combined with an expected Score Differential for consistency and fairness.

The MGA staff will be conducting webinars and seminars throughout the winter and spring to help educate our members and club handicap committees on the revisions. The USGA will continue to work with The R&A and National Associations around the world to ensure that the WHS is providing golfers with a system that provides a sensible balance between inclusivity and integrity, making it as easy as possible to get a Handicap Index. These changes will help unify the game by providing a more dynamic, welcoming, and enjoyable system for the more than 3 million golfers in the U. S. with a Handicap Index and provide opportunities for growth – creating more golfers with a Handicap Index, more courses getting rated by their local Allied Golf Association, and more scores posted for handicap purposes. ■

To learn more about the WHS, please visit mgagolf.org or contact Member Services, of which **Kevin Kline** is the director. He can be reached at kkline@mgagolf.org.

MGA Rules and Handicap Seminars

Open to all members, these seminars cover updates and information on updates to the Rules of Handicapping and the Rules of Golf. All seminars begin at 9 a.m.; please register at mgagolf.org.

Saturday, March 23

The Apawamis Club, Rye, N.Y.

Saturday, April 6

Cherry Valley Club, Garden City, N.Y.

Saturday, April 20

Montclair Golf Club, West Orange, N.J.



On the Right Foot

Golf shoes can be an afterthought, but your game - and feet - could benefit from a bit of research and advice.

BY KEN VAN VECHTEN

One-quarter inch over standard. Two degrees upright. Steel shaft, 135 grams, stiff-flex, tipped, and spined. Two wraps of tape under the upper hand, five for the lower. Grip reminder-rib rotated 23 degrees clockwise. OK, we get the clubs, but what about your shoes? Beyond “Size 10, and they’d damned well better be black,” have you given them much thought over the years?

“Shoes are equipment,” says Andrew Lawson, Puma Golf’s production line manager for golf shoes. “They have to be comfortable; they have to perform. They are a piece of your equipment.”

So, lace - BOA, Velcro, whatever - up and come along.

Looking for shoes at retail might appear daunting. PGA Tour Superstore’s website shows 220 offerings for men and 122 for women. Puma alone has 55 options.

Brand loyalty can be a guiding tenet: Years of experience with FootJoy... why try Skechers? The thing is, models *do* vary across product lines. A friend’s advice or a cue from your pro could lead to a eureka moment and a new find. Short of having a personal cobbler, running the gauntlet of all those SKUs in the golf shop is in your best interest. It need not be that disconcerting.

“One of the best things you can do is talk to a retail specialist,” Lawson advises. “They know what they sell. They know, for instance, that this brand and model is going to fit more narrowly, this brand and model wider. That is one of the advantages of specialty retail.”

Beyond the big three personal likes - cleated or cleatless; waterproof or not; leather or synthetic - Dr. Kevin Jules, golfer, podiatrist, and professor of surgery at New York College of Podiatric Medicine, has some work-for-most-folks bits of advice:

1. Try shoes later in the day, when your feet have expanded, and spend time padding around in them.
2. Beware too much arch support.
3. Avoid excessive lift in the heel.
4. Look for a wider toe box.
5. Flexible material is your friend. Golf is an athletic endeavor; let your feet be active and responsive.

Heel lift, also known as drop, or the amount a shoe declines in height from heel to toe, gained a lot of attention several years ago with the minimalist/zero movement in running and other active sports. In a nutshell, the drop in such shoes ranged from zero to just a few millimeters, putting the foot in what proponents contended was a more natural and supportive position. It often was accompanied by a toes-lie-flat wide forefoot, a low midsole, and minimal arch support. It then moved into golf and has more recently ebbed. Ecco once had the Biom Zero model, for instance, and the forerunner of the concept remains True Linkswear, though in addition to offering its flat shoes, the company has branched out to offering shoes with a moderate drop of 6 to 8 mm.

To drop or not appears to be driven as much by market as method, with proponents of a large amount of lift, 12mm or so, averring that it puts players in a more advantageous, toe-down position for better stability





COURTESY OF ECCO

and impact. Others take the opposite tack, obviously. By Jules' reasoning, a small amount of heel lift is fine, but it is really only a necessity for those with a physiological impairment: "Heel lift is rarely necessary unless someone has a lower-extremity gross limb-length difference, meaning a hip issue, or they've had a femur fracture or a tibial fracture where they have resultant shortening."

If Tiger Woods post-car crash comes to mind, Jules says that's spot on.

He also advises to beware of excessive arch support in a shoe. One of the potential problems of it being built prominently into the shoe is that anatomical needs vary, so what might work for you might not work for your playing partner even though you might have the same size foot.

As Lawson says, "A shoe's fit and feel are completely subjective. There is no objectivity because what is comfortable to one person could be absolutely horrid to another."

Jules' concluding advice is that a person with significant foot maladies should avoid looking for relief in a non-bespoke shoe: "Golf shoes are not really made to address the needs of people who have significant foot issues or ailments. People who seek medical consultation

for that type of foot condition usually require something constructed that would go into the shoe" – an orthotic.

Ecco echoes such thoughts: "The design process is about ensuring that the human anatomy is first, the foot-first approach," says Todd Davidson, national sales manager. "The foot-first approach to shoemaking is guided by Danish design principles, so that's simplicity. If it doesn't have a function, it doesn't go into the shoe.... Our process creates a 3D anatomical last of the entire foot, so the curve, contour, and support are built into the footbed in a unified structure. You probably won't need your orthotic."

Ecco follows a free-toes approach, too. Wide toe boxes are just part and parcel of its shoes because the supportive structure emanates from the heel to the instep, locking the foot in place, but allowing the forefoot to sit more broadly.

"The part of the foot that needs to be secured is secured," he adds. "The part of the foot that needs room and comfort gets room and comfort."

Perhaps the deciding factor, however, is appearance. Ego. Fashion. A statement. We'll leave it to Lawson: "Ultimately, the final purchasing decision is aesthetics. Style." It's better to look good than feel good? You decide. ■

The Business Of Golf

Golf's Future—Technology Driven Entertainment

By Ed Travis

Those of us who have played golf, sometimes known as pasture pool, for a while tend to think of our game as 18 holes, four to five hours long, in all kinds of weather. Still true, but a whole new dimension has arrived. The truth is our game is becoming an entertainment business built around sophisticated technology and appealing to a younger demographic not typical of golf.

To explain let's look at a few figures from the National Golf Foundation. They tell us in 2022 there were 41.1 million people who participated in golf in some form with more doing it off-course than on-course.

The reaction by most long-time golfers is almost invariably, "What? Say that again!"

Restated, 15.5 million 'played' off-course golf while 13.2 million played on-course golf and 12.4 million did both, i.e., played 18 with the foursome Saturday morning then took the kids to TopGolf on Sunday. Splitting that number up, off-course becomes 27.9 million and on-course 25.6 million.

Counted in the off-course number are those going to driving ranges and miniature golf plus golf entertainment centers where balls are hit with flight tracking appearing on a monitor and giving ample opportunity for socializing with food and beverages a major draw. These centers have been around for the past 20 years or so and are growing quickly but the patrons' demographics are attracting attention from industry insiders.

The NGF data shows off-course users are younger than on-course golfers with an average age of 31 years versus 46 for on-course and women account for 41% compared with just 28% on-course. Interestingly, the percentage of non-whites is also greater, 40% versus 22% on-course.

The fastest growing segment of the off-course phenomenon



is most likely simulator golf which according to the NGF had 6.2 million players last year, an increase of 73% from 2019.

Simulators have sensors that feed data to sophisticated computer software, so ball flight is shown on a large screen that depicts golf holes allowing users to 'play' almost any course including famous ones such as Pebble Beach or Shinnecock Hills in an indoor environment.

Significantly, 53% of simulator users don't play on-course golf at all which can be viewed as a ripe conversion opportunity for golf course operators.

Businesses such as sports bars are capitalizing on simulators for entertainment to attract patrons while teaching and club fitting retailers like Golf Galaxy, PGA Tour Superstore, Club Champion and GolfTec use them extensively.

Home use of simulators has mushroomed too. It was enlightening to talk with Joe Neumeier, founder and managing partner of Ace Indoor Golf, a provider of turnkey design and installation of residential and commercial simulator packages. Neumeier said, "The golf simulator business is booming. It was valued at \$1.3 billion worldwide this past year and is expected to grow at a 10 percent compound annual growth rate in the near future. Both commercial and residential installations saw significant growth in 2022."

Neumeier further revealed that residential and commercial business for

Ace Indoor grew by more than 50% in 2022 and the growth has continued in 2023.

The simulator market is becoming increasingly crowded and at the PGA Show in January more than a dozen simulator software companies had exhibit space including FlightScope, Foresight Sports, Full Swing Golf, SkyTrak, SmartGolf, Trackman, and Uneekor.

Golf fans will also have the chance to see PGA Tour stars competing in the new simulator golf league founded by Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy named TGL. Six four-man teams will play against each other in an indoor venue being built in Palm Beach, Fla. The 1,600-seat arena will have a huge 64 by 46-foot screen for full shots while shots under 50 yards and putting will be played on three hi-tech artificial greens with the capability to change slope and contours to produce an almost infinite variety of putting surfaces. Set to open in January of 2025, each TGL show will be two hours airing on ESPN and ESPN2 in a match play format.

The financial health of TGL is assured. Teams have been purchased by investors with extensive experience in other professional sports from Major League Baseball and the National Football League to Premier League, NASCAR and the National Hockey League.

The game of golf has been around for centuries with relatively few changes, but as modern technology is applied, changes are coming faster and opening up lines of growth we could have never imagined even a few years ago.

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Tour Edge



With all due respect to Billy Joel, more and more Met Area golfers are hopping flights to Palm Beach if not Miami Beach to spend winters – and more – in southeast Florida.

BY TOM CUNNEFF

Ponce de León didn't find the Fountain of Youth in Florida in 1513, but – little known fact – he did discover New Yorkers “wintering” in the Palm Beaches.

OK, that's not entirely true. They were called New Amsterdammers. All joking aside, it does seem like forever that Met Area residents have been fleeing to southeast Florida at the first sign of frost, and the seasonal migration seems to be increasing with a flipping of the script, too: It used to be that we “wintered” in Florida, but more and more of us are instead “summering” in the Met Area.

“I've got friends who weren't retiring and started moving to Florida pre-COVID back in the late teens, and I didn't understand it,” says Ken Bakst, the founder of Friar's Head on Long Island. “Then COVID hit, and a lot of people who used to just vacation there in the winter all of a sudden started living there most of the year.”

Helping to accelerate the transition: FOMO (fear of missing out; half your friends are there); ease of access (all five New York City airports offer direct flights to Palm Beach International Airport); no state income taxes; the work-from-home trend; and improved

infrastructure. In 2022, nearly 65,000 New Yorkers traded in their state driver's licenses for Florida's, according to the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

“Those of us who manage clubs in the Northeast have noticed that members are leaving earlier and coming back much later than ever before,” says Colin Burns, who was the general manager at Winged Foot Golf Club in Mamaroneck, N.Y., for 31 years before recently joining GGA Partners, a leisure industry consulting firm, to help with its executive search function. “It used to be, ‘When the club closes, we'll go down to Florida.’ Now, the exodus begins in September-October, and instead of showing back up in March or April, it's more like May now, so it's changed dramatically.”

While the shopping, entertainment, and dining options have increased noticeably in recent years, particularly in West Palm Beach, so has the membership at many clubs. Rounds skyrocketed during the pandemic as membership rosters filled up. Now, most clubs have long waitlists, and the best chance of getting into some clubs is to buy a home in a golf community associated with it.



Left: The Jupiter Inlet is home to the Jupiter Lighthouse and Museum. Above: The ocean and inlet on Hutchinson Island in Martin County.

Architectural Bake-Off

Several developers are capitalizing on the surging demand just to the north and west of Hobe Sound, where a dozen architects are cooking up eight new courses within a 10-mile radius. One of those developers is Bakst, who says that for years Friar's Head members have come up to him and said, "If you ever do anything down in Florida, I'm in," to which he'd respond, "The chances of me doing anything in Florida are slim to none."

Turns out slim won.

Bakst, who preferred spending the winters in California, where all three of his children currently live and parents have lived since the late '70s, never imagined he'd be one of the many Friar's Head members who spend part of the winter in Florida. If he were to build another course, he had his sights set on the Southwest somewhere, but his wife, Suzanne, had other ideas. She imagined the family in Florida with a plethora of friends who had already moved there, but there was one big problem.

"We absolutely fell in love with Florida, which took us by surprise, but Kenny wasn't going there without great land for a legacy project,"

says Suzanne, a real estate agent who promised to find him a piece of property.

"That's my wife," Bakst chuckles.

They quickly hit pay dirt – literally – in the spring of 2021. "We drove past the property several times, but it wasn't listed for sale," Suzanne says, adding that they got an email out of the blue from Tom McNicholas, a representative of the family who owned the property. "Meeting the landowner was nothing short of serendipitous."

Unbeknownst to Bakst, McNicholas, a former investigative journalist, says he had been vetting him for six months because the owners wanted to quietly sell the 4,000-acre property to someone with Bakst's credentials as a course developer and conservationist. A former tree farm, the land is located just west of I-95 in Martin County, Fla., and is covered with cypress, oaks, and towering pines. Bakst is preserving 90% of it as open space.

Thanks to its slow-growth philosophy, Martin County, where many of the new courses are located, is a lot less dense than the urban sprawl to the south, but The Ranch is only a 30-minute drive to Palm Beach International. Most of the courses under construction are not real estate plays, save for Discovery Land Co.'s first Florida community, Atlantic Fields Golf Club in Hobe Sound, which abuts Michael Jordan's club, Grove XXIII. The GOAT's place opened in 2019 and set the fuse for the boom in Martin County, which has a lot more gated cow pastures than gated golf communities.

"That's what most people are excited about, just being with nature," Suzanne says. "The whole concept is that you can have everything you want, but you don't have to be in an urban area to have it."

While there will be some homesites at The Ranch, none will be along or near either of the two courses to be built by the design team of Rod Whitman, Dave Axland, and Keith Cutten. Axland oversaw the construction of Friar's Head for Bill Coore and Ben Crenshaw, while Whitman did some of its shaping. The East Course will be expansive with vast views and a scrubby openness similar to parts of Friar's Head, while the West Course will be routed through trees and around wetlands, yet both courses will have seamless green-to-tee transitions and no man-made ponds or lakes in play. There were so many hole options on the more than 6 square



Above: The 13th green of the West Course at The Apogee Club. Opposite page: The Ranch's golf courses are being built on the site of a 4,000-acre former tree farm.

miles of land that it took the architects more than a year to do the routings.

Both courses will utilize the sand from the excavation of two world-class bass fishing lakes when construction starts this year. One of the country's best amateur players (he won the 2023 MGA Senior Amateur, in addition to the 1997 U.S. Mid-Amateur), Bakst is also building a 175-acre range and short-game area, a par-3 course, and a 10-hole practice course.

"Florida doesn't need just another golf community, and that's

why no homes will infringe on golf or the wildlife habits," Bakst says. "Florida is becoming more and more of a destination not just to vacation or winter but to live and raise children."

Apex Neighbor

Abutting The Ranch to the north and east is the 54-hole Apogee Club, where Gil Hanse and Jim Wagner's West Course opened for play in December. Michael Pascucci, the founder of Sebonack Golf Club in Southampton, N.Y., and a founding partner of The Bear's



Addison Reserve Country Club



Jonathan's Landing Golf Club



Tesoro Club



The Club at Admirals Cove

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- Mission Resort + Club
- Reunion Resort & Club
- Seagate Country Club
- Streamsong Golf Resort
- Tesoro Club
- The Club at Admirals Cove

Club in Jupiter, Fla., has teamed with Stephen Ross – the owner of the Miami Dolphins and the largest private real-estate developer in the country, including Manhattan’s Hudson Yards – to build Apogee on a 1,200-acre site along the St. Lucie Canal. Kyle Phillips, who designed Kingsbarns Golf Links in Scotland, is designing the North Course, while Tom Fazio II and Mike Davis, the former chief executive officer of the United States Golf Association, are crafting the South Course, a Melbourne Sandbelt-like design with sharp-edged bunkers cutting into greens and un-Florida-like elevation change. The South Course opens later this year and is Davis’ first course since he left the USGA two years ago to pursue a design career.

“I miss the USGA and the people immensely, but I don’t miss traveling 200 days a year, and I’ve always wanted to do this,” he says, adding that he’s been doodling golf course designs since he was young. “One of the best benefits of the three decades I spent at the USGA was that I have seen most of the world’s great golf courses, and I always enjoyed setting up golf courses for championships because you had to understand design, the players you were setting it up for, agronomics, and weather. Time will tell if I’m any good at this, but I’m enjoying it immensely.”

While all three courses will have their own distinct characteristics, common elements include wide, firm-and-fast fairways that will allow the ground game to flourish; very little water in play; and few forced carries. Caddies and ease of walking will be other hallmarks. Davis and Fazio’s vision for the facility is much like one you’d find in the Met Area: a country club, not a golf community or one limited to just golf – the two types typically found in the Palm Beach area. But it takes a lot of money to build a three-course facility without real estate sales to fund it, so Davis went to Pascucci, who then brought in Ross.

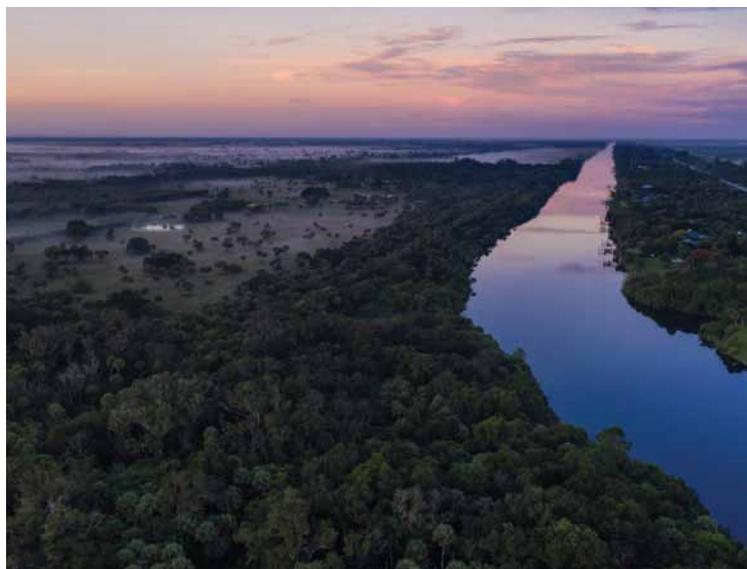
“They’re like kids in a candy store with this project,” Davis says. “They love it. It’s a legacy project for them, but it only works if you have what I’d call ‘patient money.’ This thing never would have happened without them.”

Davis and Fazio are overseeing the construction of all three courses, as well as the two practice facilities, including a 270-degree range, and two short courses. The best part for Davis is that Apogee is only about a 15-minute drive from his Jupiter home, which he’s had for a decade and used to belong to Toney Penna. A member at Seminole, Davis often flew down to Jupiter for long weekends when he was at the USGA.

“Just that ability to see sunshine, green vegetation, play golf and get outside was magical,” he says. “But the area is becoming far more year-round than it used to be. When I used to live down here in the late 1980s, you’d have restaurants and stores close in the summer. None of that happens now.”

Although Davis sold his New Jersey home when he left the USGA, many of the members at Apogee are from the Met Area, so he sees a lot of familiar faces. Colin Burns, a senior adviser on the project, held a gathering at The Links Club in Manhattan last fall to entice prospective members, and the interest was high, he reports.

In addition to the people involved, the land is also special, at least when it comes to Florida’s flat, unspectacular terrain. Not only is the parcel dotted with 10,000 old-growth specimen trees, but, like other courses in the area, they have an unlimited supply of water from the St. Lucie Canal, and the sandy soil is the perfect base for growing grass and firm-and-fast play. Hart Howerton is designing the two clubhouses and 40 villas, while New York-based Meyer Davis is doing the interior design.



“A big attraction,” Burns says, “is the idea of not having to buy a home but being able to come down with your family for two or three weeks, stay in a 3,800-square-foot, four-bedroom villa, and then at the end of your visit, just turn the keys in and leave.”

The way things are going in the area, good luck getting them to leave. ■

Snowbirdies

MGA members aren’t the only ones flocking south; many club pros do, too. Carly and Dylan Newman, assistants at Nissequoque Golf Club and Meadow Brook Club, respectively, on Long Island, have spent their last six winters in their two-bedroom townhouse in Jupiter with a state-of-the-art simulator in their converted garage.

“We know so many other club pros and even PGA Tour pros that live down here,” Dylan says, “so it’s a pretty cool spot.”

Dylan keeps his game sharp by playing in tournaments, as well as with members from Meadow Brook and Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase, N.Y., where he used to work, at their clubs, while Carly just started as an assistant pro at the Apogee Club near Hobe Sound, Fla.

“It keeps me fresh and ready for the next season,” she says. “I’m always learning new things, and I get a head start on the new products coming out. For me, it’s important to work year-round because I don’t want to miss out on that. When we go to dinner, we see so many other pros, so we’re fostering friendships left and right. We stay connected to the network to make our craft the best it can be.”

The only hard part is trying to balance their own needs with those of their Met Area clubs, who want them to stay as long as possible and come back as early as possible. “But the fact that our industry allows us to have two jobs is really special,” Carly says. “Not many people can say they’re a snowbird at 29 years old. And luckily for me, I’m married to another pro, so we have no excuse not to be here.”



Dylan and Carly Newman at Arcola celebrating Dylan’s victory in the 108th Met Open Championship in 2023.

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n e w s

The evolution of **Women's Golf Day** continues to impress. Now in its 9th year and across 84 countries around the globe WGD has launched a new website with an integrated online social community, WGD CONNECT to support its impressive growth. The



new website functionality enables golf locations to promote tee times, fittings, instruction, travel, events and more all year long and provide more opportunities to engage, empower and support women around the globe - every day of the year. Golfers will enjoy a new level of connectivity with WGD CONNECT where men and women can connect

with women around the corner and around the world.

Last year WGD pivoted to a weeklong celebration, in response for the growing demand to make WGD golf events accessible to more women in their respective communities. Traditionally the WGD celebration has taken place on the first Tuesday in June, but with more venues appreciating the significance that participating in this global celebration of women's golf WGD was quick to respond. Locations can now host an official event any day from the last Tuesday in May to the first Tuesday in June.

"Growing demand for additional days from host locations prompted us to expand to a weeklong format,

resulting in impactful and significant activation each day of the week," commented founder of Women's Golf Day and ING member **Elisa Gaudet**. "We started on May 30th with the WGD Palooza digital day, then on May 31st with the ringing of the opening bell at the NYSE with Acushnet (Titleist and FootJoy). Having lived in NYC for 10 years it was thrilling to see WGD billboards running for a few weeks in Times Square as well as in Silicon Valley."

ING member **Les Schupak** recently was honored

as a recipient of the USGA's **Ike Grainger Service Award**. This award is presented to a USGA member who has served 25 years as a volunteer committee member and provided exemplary service to the USGA and the game of golf.



"I was particularly touched as Ike Grainger served as the president of the Metropolitan Golf Association in 1950 and I share that experience being the 2007-2009 MGA president," said Les. "It was an exhilarating and emotional ceremony for the over 300 who attended."

Three ING members recently published books. Radio show host **Ann Liguori's** "Life on the Green, Lessons and Wisdom from Legends of Golf," came out at the end of February. (Hatherleigh Press, in partnership with Penguin/Random House). The book features 12 legends, (6 men and 6 women), sharing life wisdom, what they learned from their iconic golf careers that they use in their day-to-day. Each legend shares fun stories, historic anecdotes, and wisdom that apply to all.



ING Executive Director **Mike Jamison** published his first novel, "False Pretenses," in March on Kindle Direct Publishing/Amazon. The mystery and suspense novel is based on the interactions of two newspaper journalists who meet under unusual circumstances and eventually fall in love. Undercover work involving a Major League baseball star, a Mob boss, a corrupt Police Chief and more keep readers on the edge of their seats. And there is some golf coverage as well.

Dave Hamilton, retired former owner of the Putting Arc, has completed his most recent book, *The Big Ring Swing*. This is a new take on Ben Hogan and Five Lessons. With a simple Hula-Hoop and yardstick, you can learn to release the club like Ben Hogan and Jack Nicklaus.

Tiger Woods played the all-new 2024 **Bridgestone TOUR B X golf ball** for the first time in competition at the Genesis Invitational in Los Angeles. The new ball was designed by Bridgestone's R&D department with significant input from Tiger himself, who has officially switched from the TOUR B XS to the TOUR B X, due to the X providing a bit more "pop," off the tee while still providing shot stopping spin on approaches and shots around the greens.

"I tell people all the time how important it is to get ball fit," said Tiger, "and if you've been fit, to get fit again. Bridgestone re-fit me into the new TOUR B X, and it's got a little more pop off the tee and the control I need around the greens."

American Fit, ING's official apparel company, now has a sister brand for Pickleball enthusiasts. The Valgroup, parent company of American Fit, launched Points & Lines at the PGA Show.

"The unveiling of Points & Lines is an extension of American Fit and Valgroup and our dedication to producing premium collections for the upscale golf and racquet sport dedicated pro shops, clubs and resort boutiques," said American Fit CEO **Diego Levental**. American Fit is one of the most fashion-forward golf apparel companies and the maker of several major private label collections.

Zero Friction, LLC proudly showcased its award-winning ladies' golf gloves in celebration of International Women's Day 2024 on Friday, March 8.

"We take great pride in championing women's equality and providing a fantastic array of golf gloves and other innovative products tailored for women to enhance their performance on the course," said John Iacono, founder and president of Zero Friction. "Women in golf epitomize grace, determination, and skill, and we're honored to contribute, even in the smallest way, to their enjoyment of the game."



ING member **Fred Seely** was a co-chair of the 8th annual Celebration of Golf banquet presented in February by the Jacksonville Area Golf Association. The banquet annually honors a person from Northeast Florida with the Deane Beman Award and this year it went to Tom Dudley, a veteran USGA rules official who also has been president of the Florida State Golf Association.

The ModGolf Podcast recently reached the coveted 100,000-download mark. ING **Colin Weston** started the podcast in 2017 and it has enjoyed steady growth over the years. Golf Genius Software has been the major sponsor since 2019.

RULES OF GOLF

2024 ANNUAL QUIZ

Think you've got the Rules of Golf all figured out? Test yourself with our annual Rules Quiz. Let the NCGA be your guide to the Rules of Golf. Remember, knowing the Rules can help save you strokes!

BY RYAN GREGG, NCGA
Chief Operations Officer

1 A player's ball comes to rest on a red line defining a penalty area and is also touching sand in a bunker. Which area of the course does the ball lie?

- A. The ball lies in the general area.
- B. The ball lies in the bunker.
- C. The ball lies in the penalty area.
- D. The ball lies in either the bunker or penalty area.

2 A player's tee shot comes to rest in a greenside bunker. The ball is partially buried in the sand. Their next stroke buries the ball deeper in the sand. The player decides to declare the ball unplayable and drops the ball outside the bunker on the back-on-the-line relief. The player completes the hole in two more strokes. What is their score for the hole?

- A. 5
- B. 6
- C. 7
- D. 8

3 Which of the following is true regarding obstructions?

- A. A player is entitled to relief for a wall that is entirely out of bounds, provided it does not define the boundary of the course.
- B. A player is not entitled to relief for a ball lying on top of a movable obstruction in a penalty area.
- C. A player is entitled to relief without penalty for interference by an immovable obstruction in a penalty area, provided the ball lies outside the penalty area.
- D. A player is entitled to relief from an immovable obstruction if there is interference on the player's line of play.

4 In stroke play, a player's tee shot came to rest in a red penalty area. The player chose to proceed with the back-on-the-line relief option. The player drops their ball almost one club-length to the side of the line. The ball rolled and came to rest on the line. The player played to the putting green and holed the putt. What is their score for the hole?

- A. 3
- B. 4
- C. 5
- D. 6

5 In stroke play, a player's tee shot goes into a wooded area. The player then searches for 2 minutes and finds their original ball has broken into multiple pieces. What is the ruling?

- A. There is no penalty. The player must substitute and replace another ball as near as possible on the spot where they found the largest piece of the original ball, and the original stroke counts.
- B. There is no penalty. The player must substitute and drop another ball within one club-length of where they found the largest piece of the original ball, and the original stroke counts.
- C. There is no penalty. The player must play another ball from where the previous stroke was made, and the original stroke does not count.
- D. There is no penalty. The player must play another ball from where the previous stroke was made, and the original stroke counts.



6 Which of the following is an outside influence?

- A. An opponent's caddie in match play.
- B. A loose impediment.
- C. Wind.
- D. Water.

7 A player's tee shot comes to rest on a sprinkler head very close to the putting green. The player measured a one club-length relief area from the nearest point of complete relief and dropped a substituted ball on the putting green. The ball remained within the one club-length area on the putting green. The player completed the hole in two more strokes and then played from the next hole. What is their score on the hole?

- A. 3
- B. 4
- C. 5
- D. The player is disqualified.

8 In which one of the following may a player's original ball be played without penalty?

- A. The player searched for 1 minute, returned to where the original ball was played, and dropped and played a provisional ball. The original ball is found before the 3-minute search time expired.
- B. The player searched for 1 minute, returned to where the original ball was played, and dropped and played another ball without announcing it as a provisional ball.
- C. The player's caddie searched for 2 minutes before the player arrived, and the player and their caddie then searched together for another 2 minutes.
- D. The player has played their provisional ball from a point nearer the hole than where the original ball was estimated to be, but then finds it (the original ball) within the 3 minute-search time at a point nearer the hole than where they played the provisional ball.

9 In stroke play, Player A and Player B both hit their tee shots on the putting green at a par-3 and both are a similar distance from the hole. Player A mistakenly marks, lifts, replaces and plays Player B's ball that ends up short right of the hole. Player B marks and lifts Player A's original ball and notifies Player A of their mistake. Player A returns Player B's ball to its original location and Player B replaces Player A's. Player A then holes their original ball from its original location with the next stroke? What is Player A's score on the hole?

- A. 4
- B. 5
- C. 6
- D. 7



10 After proceeding correctly in taking lateral relief from a red penalty area, and as the player awaits their turn to play, natural forces caused the ball to roll back into the red penalty area where it could not be retrieved. What is the ruling?

- A. The player must replace a new ball at the spot from where it was at rest after taking relief, without penalty.
- B. The player must drop a new ball at the spot from where the ball was at rest after taking relief, without penalty.
- C. The player must drop a new ball at the spot from where the ball was at rest after taking relief, getting a one-stroke penalty.
- D. The player must replace a new ball at the spot from where it was at rest after taking relief, getting a one-stroke penalty.

11 Which one of following statements is true about a provisional ball?

- A. If the original ball played from the teeing area might be out of bounds, a player who wishes to play a provisional ball must do so before leaving the teeing area.
- B. The original ball is found in bounds within 3 minutes of starting to search for it. If the player decides it is unplayable, the provisional ball becomes the ball in play.
- C. If the original ball played from the teeing area is known to be in a red penalty area, the player must either continue with the provisional ball under stroke and distance or take penalty area relief.
- D. If a player makes a stroke at a provisional ball from a spot nearer the hole than where the original ball is estimated to be, the provisional ball becomes the ball in play.

12 A player played their first stroke of the round with stickers on the face of their club. They were inadvertently left on from a club fitting exercise from a few days earlier. The issue was brought to the attention of the Committee. What is the ruling?

- A. The player gets a two-stroke penalty and may use the club for the remainder of the round after removing the stickers.
- B. The player gets a two-stroke penalty and may not use the club for the remainder of the round.
- C. The player is not penalized and may use the club for the remainder of the round.
- D. The player is disqualified.

13 In match play, the player's caddie uses the flagstick to show the aiming point by touching the putting green surface. The caddie leaves the flagstick in place while the player takes their stance, starts the back swing, and then lifts it before the club moves forward for the stroke. This happens on the first three holes before the opponent requests a ruling from the Committee. What's the ruling?

- A. The player is not penalized as the caddie moved the flagstick prior to the player making a stroke.
- B. The player loses each hole where the breach occurred.
- C. The player loses the hole where the breach occurred the first time as it is a breach of the same rule.
- D. The player loses only the third hole since the opponent waited until then to make the request.

14 In four-ball stroke play, where each player is carrying 14 clubs, Player A borrows their partner's putter to make a stroke on the fourth hole. Player A returns the putter to their partner who uses it for the rest of the round. What is the ruling?

- A. There is no penalty for sharing clubs between partners.
- B. Player A gets a two-stroke penalty on the fourth hole. There is no penalty for their partner.
- C. Player A and B both get a two-stroke penalty on the fourth hole.
- D. Player A's score cannot count on the fourth hole and their partner cannot use the club for the remainder of the round.

15 In stroke play, the player's tee shot comes to rest in the fairway a foot behind a sprinkler head. The sprinkler does not affect the player's stance, lie of ball or area of swing for their next stroke. However, the sprinkler head is popped up in a position that would affect the player's line of play. The player pushes the sprinkler head down with their foot and then plays to the putting green. What is the ruling?

- A. The player is not penalized.
- B. The player gets a one-stroke penalty.
- C. The player gets the general penalty.
- D. The player must correct the mistake by replaying the stroke.



16 In stroke play on the 6th hole, a player hits their tee shot toward some boundary stakes on the right. Believing that the boundary stakes are movable obstructions, they pull one out of the ground that was interfering with the area of their intended swing. They played the ball into a greenside bunker then took three more strokes to complete the hole. The player returns their scorecard with a score of 5 for the 6th hole. Before the competition closes, the situation is brought to the Committee's attention. What is the ruling?

- A. The player's score of 5 stands on the 6th hole since the discovery was made after the player returned their scorecard.
- B. The Committee must add the penalty strokes the player failed to include and revise the player's score to 7 on the 6th hole.
- C. The Committee must add the penalty strokes the player failed to include plus an additional two penalty strokes for returning an incorrect scorecard and revise the player's score to 9 on the 6th hole.
- D. The player is disqualified for failing to include the two penalty strokes and returning a lower score than taken on the 6th hole.

17 In stroke play, Player A's third stroke from the putting green is slowly moving past the hole when player B hits the ball back to Player A and says, "that's good." Player A replaces his ball from where it was hit by Player B and holes their next stroke. What is Player A's score for the hole?

- A. 4
- B. 5
- C. 6
- D. 7



18 In match play, Player A arrives at the putting green first and marks and lifts Player B's ball on the putting green. Player B's ball was on Player A's line of play. What is the Ruling?

- A. No penalty to Player A since they are an outside influence to Player B's ball.
- B. Player A gets a one-stroke penalty for moving Player B's ball without authority.
- C. Player A gets a two-stroke penalty for moving Player B's ball without authority.
- D. Player A loses the hole for moving player B's ball without authority.



Answers:

1. C. Rule 2.2c. The ball can lie in only one area of the course at a time.
2. B. Rule 19.3b. Four talent strokes and two penalty strokes.
3. C. Rule 16.1a (2). Definition of Obstructions, Abnormal Course Conditions.
4. D. Clarification 14.3b(4)/1. The ball is in a wrong place irrespective of where it comes to rest, even if it comes to rest on the line. The player gets a two-stroke penalty under Rule 14.7a. Don't forget the original penalty stroke for relief from the penalty area.
5. C. Rule 4.2b. The player is required to cancel the stroke and play again from the teeing area.
6. B. Definition of Outside Influence and Natural Forces.
7. C. Rule 16.1b. The player has played from a wrong place and gets the general penalty under Rule 14.7a. When the ball is in the general area, the reference point and relief area must be in the general area.
8. A. Definition of Lost and Rule 18.3. The player's original ball is in play until another ball is substituted or 3 minutes after the player, caddie or partner has searched for it.
9. D. Rule 6.3b and Rule 14.7. Player A substituted a ball in the wrong place twice and receives a total of four-penalty strokes and three talent strokes.
10. A. Exception 2 to Rule 9.3 states that when a ball at rest after being dropped, placed, or replaced (anywhere but on the putting green) under a Rule is moved by natural forces into another area of the course, the ball must be replaced (not dropped) on its original spot.
11. D. Definition of Provisional Ball and Rule 18.
12. D. Rule 4.1a(3), stickers are considered an external attachment to the club, and it is thereby deemed non-conforming club. Playing a stroke with a non-conforming club results in disqualification.
13. A. Rule 10.2 and Definition of Stroke
14. C. Rule 4.1b and Rule 23.9a(2). Partners may share clubs as long as they carry no more than 14 between them, Rule 23.7. Both players get the penalty for the violation.
15. A. Clarification 8.1/10 allows a player to put a movable part of an immovable obstruction back in its intended position.
16. B. Rule 8.1 and Exception - Rule 3.3 The player gets a two-stroke penalty for improving the conditions affecting the stroke and since the player didn't know they incurred a penalty, the committee can add it after the scorecard has been returned.
17. C. Rule 11.2c(2) Player A was required to cancel the stroke and replay their third stroke. Since they did not replay the stroke, they get the general penalty and the stroke counts.
18. B. Rule 9.5b a player may not mark and lift an opponent's ball in play without the authority of the opponent.



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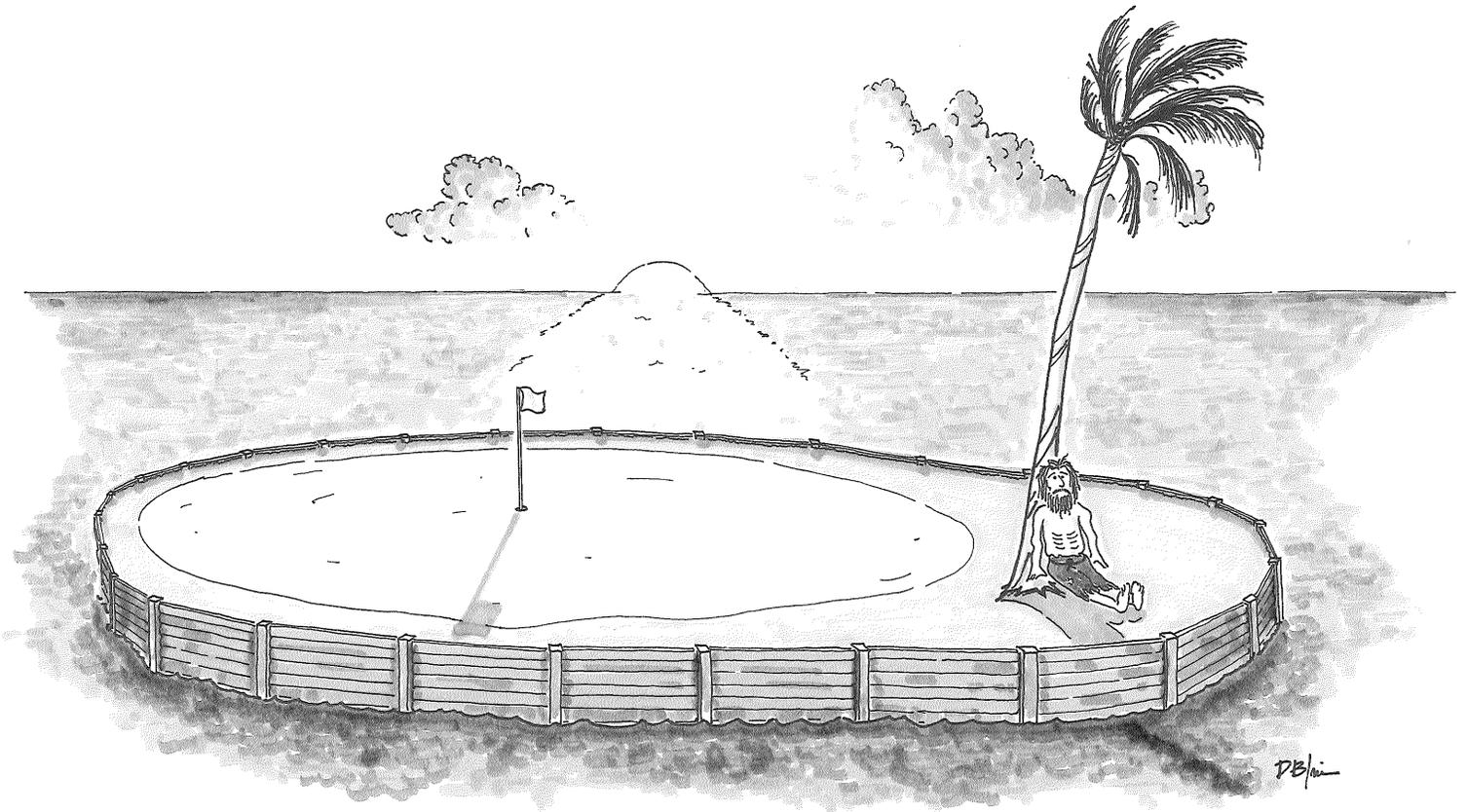
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Stranded on a deserted island green

Drawing by ING member David Irwin