

Ponte Vedra 

Recorder

INSIDER'S

*Tournament
Guide 2018*



**WHO'S GONNA
WIN THIS YEAR?**

Where to watch
THE PLAYERS

THE  **PLAYERS**[®]

PLAYERS moving
to March in 2019



SO MANY Favorites

All your favorite shopping and dining in the Heart of Ponte Vedra Beach!
Delight in the exceptional selection of stores, restaurants and services.
Stroll landscaped walkways and relax lakeside at the Village Green.

SHOPPING

Major Stores

CVS Pharmacy
Publix

Apparel, Shoes & Accessories

A'Propos Boutique
Carla Shoes & Accessories
Chico's

John Craig Clothier
Lemon Twist Boutique
Marcia's Place
Mon Amie Boutique
Scout & Molly's Boutique

Decor, Jewelry & Gifts

Opulence of Southern Pines
Pineapple Post
J Turner & Company
Village Arts Framing & Gallery
Village Jeweler

Specialty

ABC Fine Wine & Spirits
Bluemercury
Calvet Couture Bridal
Clean Ocean Surfboards
Cutter & Cutter Fine Art Gallery
Kuhn Flowers
Peterbrooke Chocolatier


DINING

Aqua Grill
Caffé Andiamo
Metro Diner
Nona Blue Modern Tavern
Trasca & Co. Eatery

SERVICES

Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices
Chase Bank
Hilton Garden Inn
Ling's Alterations & Formalwear
Pure Barre
Savelberg Cleaners
Sawgrass Nails
The Brace Place Orthodontics
Wells Fargo Bank

Sawgrass Village

 /sawgrassvillage
sawgrassvillagepvb.com

Located at the entrance to TPC Sawgrass on A1A in Ponte Vedra Beach
3.5 miles south of Hwy 202/Butler Blvd OR .5 mile north of CR 210/Palm Valley Rd



Once in a Lifetime Opportunity!
Build your custom dream home in the heart of Ponte Vedra Beach with ocean access across the street. This enclave of 23 estate-sized home sites on Ponte Vedra Boulevard is surrounded by majestic Live Oaks with pristine preserve and lake views. **Starting in \$600,000s**



Exemplary Oceanfront Living on Ponte Vedra Blvd
Hacienda style home nestled on 1.47 acres of pristine oceanfront. Spanning 4,527 SF this bright airy, 4bd/5ba, home offers a resort like atmosphere with large oceanfront pool/ spa and private beach walkover. **\$3,990,000**



Sophisticated Coastal Living at its Best!
This 5-bedroom, 4+ bath, home is the epitome of southern charm with over 8,400 sq. ft. that showcase spectacular ocean views. The open living areas, including large formal dining room with grand fireplace, lend themselves to entertaining everything from large celebrations or simply enjoying intimate moments near a roaring fireplace. **\$6,375,000**



Exemplary Oceanfront Living on Ponte Vedra Blvd
This oceanfront estate is built like a fortress with 2-story masonry construction. Set on 1.45 acres this home is designed with to capture expansive ocean views from almost every room. This is an exceptional opportunity for your most discerning buyer. **\$6,150,000**



Luxurious Beach Residence with Private Beach Access
Enjoy the best of beach living in this recently updated interior, expansive 125' x 600' wooded lot with a spectacular natural environment and private beach access. Impeccably maintained home by award winning Benchmark luxury home builder with bright open plan perfect for entertaining large or intimate socials. **\$2,070,000**



Spectacular 200ft Oceanfront Estate on Ponte Vedra Blvd
Offering expansive ocean views from every room and exquisite detail in finishes throughout. This 4 bedroom, including 2 master suites each with private sun decks, 6.5 baths home features elevator, formal living room and dining room with butler's pantry, an office/library, a workout room with full bath and steam shower, theatre/media room, and a 4 car garage with temperature controlled workshop and storage all on high position on the dune makes this an elegant estate to call home. **\$6,150,000**



A Sophisticated and Luxurious Retreat on Ponte Vedra Blvd
This impressive 4 bedroom and 5 full & 3 half baths oceanfront home reflects that magical merging of beach living and architecture. Situated on 220ft of Oceanfront and designed by Residential Designs by Kevin Gray, Inc and built by Elwood Collier, this estate is a masterpiece of design and craftsmanship. It's location atop one of the highest natural sand dunes along the Florida coast (with the finished floor elevation is approximately 33.5' above sea level) allows owners the ultimate beach living experience. **\$8,750,000**



Sophisticated European Inspired Marsh Landing Home
This 4 bedroom / 4.5 bathroom home offers a light filled open plan for gracious and expansive entertaining. The centerpiece of this unique home is a lush garden courtyard providing a private sanctuary including pond, fountains, and fireplace. This custom home is the perfect setting for everything from casual dinners to large celebrations or simply unwinding with a book at the end of the day. **\$925,000**



Build Your Dream Home!
One of the largest and prettiest estate lots in Pablo Creek Reserve. Near end of the street for added privacy. One of the most sought after communities in the area. Convenient to Beaches, Airport, and Downtown. **\$402,500**



Steps from Ponte Vedra Beaches
Do you enjoy listening to the ocean waves while you relax with a glass of wine? This first floor unit is steps away from Ponte Vedra beaches as well as The Lodge & Club, an exceptional resort with dining, fitness, and several pools. **\$650,000**



Desirable Oceanfront Location
Situated in the middle of the most desired oceanfront location in NE Florida. This first floor unit was totally renovated with the finest finishes and craftsmanship, 2br, 2bapplus powder room, plus office have staurnia floors mahogany doors and built in custom cabinetry. **\$1,775,000**



Beach Living at its Best!
The WaterMark is a luxury, 11-story 25 unit oceanfront condominium in Jacksonville Beach. The WaterMark offers spacious oceanfront terraces, secured lobby, two parking levels and private storage units. Completed in March 2005, this gated property includes private beach access, an ocean-side pool with a heated spa and secured, covered, ground-floor parking. **\$659,000**



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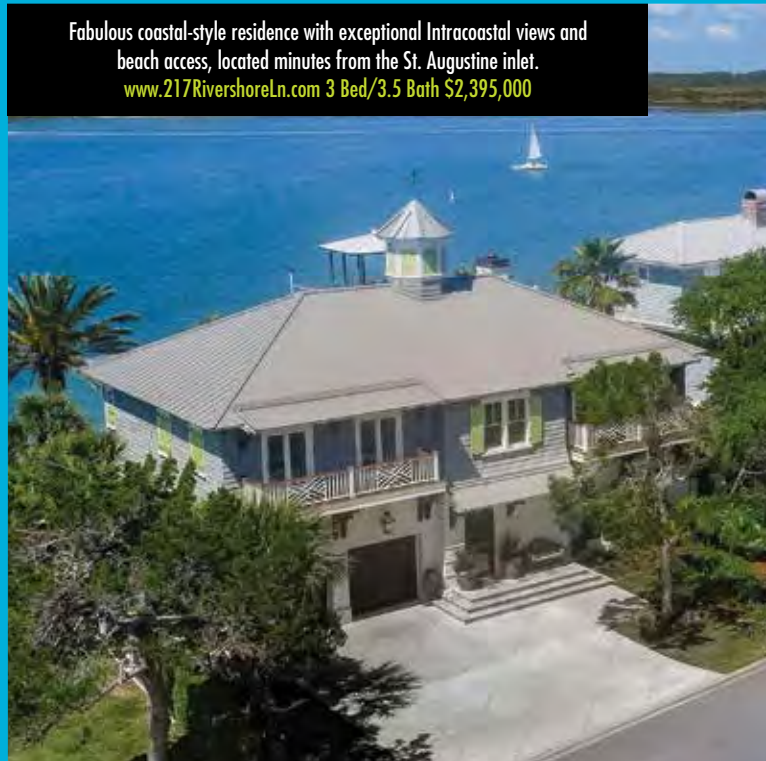
This ultimate East Coast Cottage offers sweeping ocean views and is just a stroll to the Ponte Vedra Inn and Club!
www.417PonteVedraBlvd.com 5 Bed/4 Bath 2 Half \$6,395,000



The MOST appealing Harbour Island location with direct Intracoastal access and two 50 ft boat slips in front of property in the private harbour.
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Beachwalk is located 1 mile east of I-95 on County Road 210 (Exit 329).





Crystal Lagoons



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145 MUIRFIELD DRIVE
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1221 1ST STREET S., UNIT 1C
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3BD/2BA/1HB • 1,654 sq ft



Hazel Cooksey • 904-868-6332



417 TRIPLE CROWN LANE
\$2,880,000
6BD/5BA/2HB • 8,535 sq ft



Jane Chefan • 904-463-1179



228 GNARLED OAKS DRIVE
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4BD/4BA • 3,581 sq ft



Michele Rossie • 904-534-1148



559 PONTE VEDRA BLVD.
\$3,950,000
3BD/4BA/1HB • 2,945 sq ft



Bishop & Hutchings Team
904-502-4239 • 678-576-5707



140 MUIRFIELD DRIVE
\$1,895,000
5BD/6BA/2HB • 5,769 sq ft



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123 1ST STREET S. #603
\$949,000
3BD/3BA • 2,274 sq ft



Nicholas Eklund • 904-575-1197



692 OCEAN PALM WAY
\$2,995,000
4BD/3BA/1HB • 4,490 sq ft



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OPC NEWS

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5 MINUTES FROM DISNEY



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Welcome to **THE PLAYERS!**

Every year, THE PLAYERS Championship is contested at THE PLAYERS Stadium Course at TPC Sawgrass in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. This year, the PGA Tour's signature event will be played May 8-13.

Each year, we continue to challenge ourselves to improve the experience for our players and most importantly, for you, our fans. While many fan favorites are returning—including Trucks on 10, the Wine Lounge presented by William Hill Estate Winery and Taste of Jax — we've added new venues we're sure you'll enjoy:

- PGA Tour Fan Shop – Expanded to 21,000 square feet, the PGA Tour Fan Shop will include 2018 specific items including collaborative designs with Flomotion, a popular Northeast Florida based outdoor apparel company.
- McKenzie Noelle Wilson Foundation Kid Zone featuring The First Tee experience – An air-conditioned venue with activities for the whole family.
- Fan Bleachers presented by Mayo Clinic (16 tee and 17 green) and Publix (12 green) – Open to the public bleachers with concessions available.
- Bier Garden presented by Hoptinger – 10 craft beers will be on-site for the beer lovers.
- Palm Valley Village – Features wines from William Hill

Estate Winery and food prepared by local favorite, 4Rivers Smokehouse.

- The Family Care Suite presented by Baptist – A comfort station for nursing moms and diaper-changing dads to escape the heat and care for their little ones.

THE PLAYERS has become the ultimate showcase of golf, and our region, because of your support. The tournament highlights all that Northeast Florida has to offer, with more than 1 billion households across 226 countries and territories outside of the U.S. receiving the tournament broadcast each year. It's Northeast Florida's time to shine on a global stage.

In closing, I want to thank you in advance for your attendance and engagement. Without you—our fans who make up this wonderful community we call home—our proud partners and our volunteers, this tournament could not happen. This is our community's event, and I hope you take pride in it as much as we do.

Share your experience with us via #THEPLAYERS, and you may see yourself on the scoreboard on the Island Green! I look forward to seeing everyone at TPC Sawgrass May 8-13.

Jared Rice
Executive Director, THE PLAYERS Championship



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ADMISSION TIMES

Monday, May 7

- Practice day for professionals
- Course closed to the public

Tuesday, May 8

- Gates open at 7:30 a.m.
- Practice day for professionals

Wednesday, May 9

- Gates open at 7:30 a.m.
- Practice day for professionals

Thursday, May 10

- Gates open at 6:15 a.m.
- First round of competition begins at approximately 7:30 a.m. (threesomes off of No. 1 and No. 10)

Friday, May 11

- Gates open at 6:15 a.m.
- Second round of competition begins at approximately 7:30 a.m. (threesomes off of No. 1 and No. 10)

Saturday, May 12

- Gates open at 7:30 a.m.
- Third round of competition begins at approximately 8:30 a.m., depending on the size of the cut (twosomes off No. 1)

Championship Sunday, May 13

- Gates open at 7:30 a.m.
- Final round of competition begins at approximately 8:30 a.m., depending on size of the cut (twosomes off No. 1)



Navigating THE PLAYERS

Photo by TONY EUBANKS

TICKETS

Tickets for THE PLAYERS 2018 are on sale at THEPLAYERS.com, as well as at 56 Publix stores throughout Northeast Florida and the surrounding areas, including two locations in Georgia.

Stadium Passes are \$25 for Tuesday, \$20 for Wednesday; \$60 Thursday and Sunday, \$65 for Friday and \$70 for Saturday. Fans can also purchase a weekly Stadium Pass for \$225, which includes admission Tuesday-Sunday. Stadium Pass prices are exclusive of sales tax and do not include parking.

FAMILIES

Taking the kids to THE PLAYERS? You're in luck: Youth 18 and younger are admitted free of charge when accompanied by a ticketed adult, and there is no limit to the number of youth fans admitted with that ticketed adult. That means youth sports coaches, for example, can bring the whole team with one paying adult.

What's more, the "Family Plan" offers additional savings. Families receive two adult Stadium Passes, unlimited youth admission at the gate and two \$10 concession vouchers. Family Plan packages are \$120 for Thursday and Sunday, \$130 for Friday and \$140 for Saturday (taxes not included). Family Plan packages are available online at THEPLAYERS.com, as

well as at 28 participating Daily's convenience stores.

Parking passes cost extra, but any car with four or more passengers parks for free under THE PLAYERS' "Four for Free" policy. To take advantage of the parking offer, download a voucher at theplayersparking.clickandpark.com.

MILITARY/VETERANS

THE PLAYERS provides all career military – including active duty, Reserve, military retirees and dependents – with complimentary admission to the tournament throughout the week, while veterans receive discounted admission. Career military and veterans also receive access to the Birdies for the Brave® Patriots' Outpost – a hospitality tent reserved exclusively for the military that offers complimentary food, beverages and activities.

To receive a voucher for complimentary or discounted admission, visit THEPLAYERS.com and click on Tickets and then Military Tickets.

Parking is not included in the complimentary or discounted ticket price. Parking passes may be purchased at theplayersparking.clickandpark.com, or guests may take advantage of the "Four for Free" policy that provides free parking to cars with four or more passengers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16 ■




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PARKING & TRANSPORTATION

On Tuesday and Wednesday, as in previous years, fans can still park for FREE in the general parking lot, and no parking pass is required. Thursday-Sunday, however, fans are required to purchase parking in advance (\$30 Thursday and Sunday per day for general parking; and \$35 Friday and Saturday per day in general parking). Parking passes can be purchased at THEPLAYERS.com/parking.

Four for Free

Fans with four or more guests in a vehicle can park for FREE Thursday through Sunday with the “Four for Free” parking voucher. Fans can go online to THEPLAYERS.com/parking (click on the “Tickets” tab) to download the voucher, which allows free parking in the general lot off of CR210. A new voucher must be downloaded and printed for each day (or saved on an electronic device); there is no limit to the number of days guests can park for free, but there is a limited number of vouchers per day.

Shuttles from downtown

Shuttles are available from downtown-area hotels to TPC Sawgrass for THE PLAYERS, Thursday through Sunday of tournament week. Shuttles from the Jacksonville Landing, Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, DoubleTree Riverfront and Lexington Hotel will be available to hotel guests and for residents to “park and ride,” providing a convenient and cost-effective way for fans to get to and from the tournament. Fans can access the shuttles by purchasing a shuttle pass at the hotel (Omni Jacksonville, Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront, Lexington Hotel and DoubleTree Riverfront) front desks for \$10.

FDOT Partnership

THE PLAYERS has teamed up with the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to encourage fans traveling to and from the tournament to use FDOT’s 511 Traveler Information System for information on crashes, congestion, construction and more. Motorists in the area can get information by calling 511 toll free, visiting FL511.com, downloading the free Florida 511 mobile app on Android and Apple devices or by following the program on social media. Individuals can also sign up for route-specific text, phone or email alerts via the FL511.com website.

Uber

The Uber pickup and drop off process includes drop off at Sawgrass Marriott Conference Center with shuttle services to the Davis Love III entry. A shuttle will return Uber riders back to Sawgrass Marriott Conference Center for staged Uber pickup. Riders can call Uber once back at the Sawgrass Marriott Conference Center.

Pedal to THE PLAYERS

THE PLAYERS offers complimentary bike parking during the tournament, from 7:30 a.m. until the end of play. Spectators can ride their bikes to the Couples Gate off of ATP Boulevard or to Gate B located inside the Sawgrass Gates off of PGA Tour Boulevard. Tournament volunteers will secure and monitor the bikes, free of charge.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 ■

le macaron

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104 Muirfield Dr	3 BR	\$999,000	6th Fairway/Lake
108 Settlers Row	4 BR & Ofc	\$1,095,000	11th Fairway
100 Mayfair Ln	4 BR & Ofc	\$1,189,000	Lagoon/Pool
109 Indigo Ln	4 BR & Ofc	\$1,190,000	Lagoon/Pool
281 Plantation Cir S	4 BR & Ofc	\$1,199,000	8th Fairway/Pool
289 Plantation Cir S	4 BR & Ofc	\$1,500,000	8th Fairway/Pool

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DISABLED GUEST SERVICES

THE PLAYERS Disabled Guest Services program provides shuttles during the tournament. There will be 14 shuttles on the course. A van shuttle, which is wheelchair accessible, is available to and from accessible parking in the general parking lot and shuttle row, adjacent to Davis Love III Entry for spectators wishing to access the practice area, clubhouse or No. 1 tee. Carts will run from the time gates open each tournament day until 30 minutes after play.

Cart shuttles will only pick up and drop off from the designated locations below.

- Behind 16 green by Couples Gate and The Courtyard
- Behind 17 tee by the food court
- Players' left of 9 fairway by Wine & Dine on 9
- Players' left of 9 green by Greenside Lounge and past chairman
- Clubhouse area behind 3 tee
- Players' right of 16 tee in front of Patriots' Outpost
- Players' right of 15 fairway at Taste of Jax



Photo courtesy of the PGA TOUR

WHAT TO DO AT THE PLAYERS

The PGA Tour Fan Shop at Nicklaus Gate

Improved in 2018, the PGA Tour Fan Shop at Nicklaus Gate has been redesigned and expanded to over 21,000 square feet, including new product lines and exclusive gear.

The McKenzie Noelle Wilson Foundation Kid Zone

The McKenzie Noelle Wilson Foundation Kid Zone is an enclosed, air-conditioned and interactive destination for kids and families attending the tournament. It features a restroom trailer, videoboards, shaded area and more. Hours of operation are Tuesday-Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Thursday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 ■

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Autograph Zones

Autographs are not allowed on course during practice days and tournament competition days. THE PLAYERS has designated “Autograph Zones” at the below locations to allow fans the opportunity to meet their favorite players and get their signature.

- Main player practice grounds/driving range
- Scoring area behind 18 green

Stadium Village and the 17th Hole Challenge presented by Grant Thornton, Optum and Morgan Stanley

Located behind 18 green, the Stadium Village is an air-conditioned public fan zone that features a centrally located bar, open table seating, luxury restrooms and the 17th Hole Challenge presented by Grant Thornton, Optum and Morgan Stanley, which is a replica of the famed 17th hole where fans can take two free shots at the Island Green or purchase an additional chance for a \$5 donation to the First Tee of North Florida.



Photo courtesy of the PGA TOUR

The Family Care Suite presented by Baptist Health

The Family Care Suite presented by Baptist Health is a new initiative that will serve as a skin screening center for healthy skin and also a comfort station for mothers to nurse their babies and have a private, comfortable venue as needed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 ■

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The Grove

New in 2018, The Grove has been leveled and turfed to improve access and seating for spectators. Located in the area behind 17 tee and 16 green, The Grove is an outdoor, shaded area that is open to the public. The area includes pavers, table seating and an upgraded walkway from the Nicklaus Gate that will lead fans directly to the location. The Grove will include a large video board showcasing the Golf Channel and NBC broadcast. It will also feature a social media board covering THE PLAYERS social media feeds. The area is also in close proximity to the larger permanent restrooms located behind 16 green and 17 tee.



Photo courtesy of the PGA TOUR

The Bier Garden presented by Hoptinger

New in 2018, THE PLAYERS will feature the Bier Garden presented by Hoptinger adjacent to the Couples Gate, in the old Courtyard location. Spectators will have a variety of beers on tap to choose from.



Photos by SUSAN GRIFFIN



DINING

The Wine Lounge presented by William Hill Estate

The Wine Lounge presented by William Hill Estate is a stylish and contemporary recreation of William Hill Estate's Napa Valley tasting room, complete with tables and seating. With views of the par-3 8th hole, the Lounge gives guests the chance to sample wines while watching the tournament.

Taste of Jax

Located behind 11 green and 12 tee, this public venue offers flavors from local restaurants, a Grey Goose open-air bar, permanent restrooms and video boards. Taste of Jax includes food and drink from Candy Apple Café, Hawkers Asian Street Fare, Mojo Kitchen and Zoe's Kitchen.

Wine & Dine on 9

Fans can enjoy gourmet small plates prepared by Matthew Medure, a top Northeast Florida chef, and varietals from William Hill Estate Winery in a beautiful garden setting. This venue is located left of 9 fairway and includes a videoboard and permanent restrooms.

Food Court

Located to the left of the Nicklaus Gate entrance, there are plenty of local restaurants to choose from in the Food Court, including Bono's Pit Bar-B-Q, Brucci's Pizza, Firehouse Subs, M Shack and Tropical Smoothie Café. There's also a permanent restroom and shaded seating area near this area.

Trucks on 10

Located between 10 fairway, 11 fairway and 15 green, this public venue offers flavors from local food trucks, an upgraded restroom and an open-air, centrally located Michelob ULTRA mobile bar. Trucks on 10 includes food from Cely's Filipino Food, Delish Kabob's, Mama's Food, Naomi's and Up in Smoke BBQ.

Tacos on 12

Located between 11 tee, 12 green and 13 tee, TacoLu will be serving food and beverages. Seating and shaded areas are also included here.

Food and drink can also be found in THE PLAYERS Club (requires ticket), Fan Bleacher presented by Publix, the Benefactor featuring the ULTRA Club and Oakley Lounge, the Turn, the Oasis, the Patio and Fan Bleachers presented by Mayo Clinic, among other locations throughout the course.

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BAG POLICY

Opaque bags measuring 6 x 6 x 6 inches and smaller or clear bags 12 x 6 x 12 inches and smaller are allowed inside the course grounds.

Clear THE PLAYERS bags are available at 28 participating Daily's convenience stores for a \$5 donation to The First Tee of Northeast Florida.

RESTROOM FACILITIES

THE PLAYERS has constructed four large-scale, permanent public restrooms, which include dedicated water bottle fountains for fans to fill up water bottles/cups.

They are located at The Patio (near No. 10 tee/No. 16 tee), Wine & Dine on 9 (near No. 5 green/No. 9 fairway), behind 16 green (near The Grove) and Taste of Jax. As in prior years, there will be additional temporary restrooms throughout the tournament as well.

WATERFORD CRYSTAL ENGRAVING

Sunday, May 13 (approximately 7 p.m.)

Tom Brennan, Waterford Crystal spokesperson and master artisan, will be onsite to engrave the winner's name onto the trophy following the last putt on Championship Sunday.



APPROVED BAGS

			
Bags smaller than 6" x 6" x 6"	Clear Bag smaller than 12" x 6" x 12"	1-Gallon Plastic Freezer Bag	Medically Necessary and Diaper Bags*

*Infant and Medical supplies will be permitted after proper inspection.

NON-APPROVED BAGS

				
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Patterned Plastic Bag	Folding Chair Bag (Folding Chair is Allowed!)			

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Photos courtesy of the PGA TOUR

Where to watch at **THE PLAYERS**

By KATHY BISSELL

If you've been to THE PLAYERS numerous times, you already have your favorite spots to sit and holes to watch. But if you're new to the tournament or you want to try a couple of new viewing areas, you might want to glance through our all-star locations. There are a few tweaks to the course this year: nothing to throw you off your game but things you'll want to know and avoid.

My information is based on first-hand experience. In the more than 300 PGA Tour events I've attended as a member of

the media in the last I'm-not-going-to-say-how-many years, I've had about every problem you can have on a golf course. I've been trapped by bad gallery roping with no way out countless times, harassed by marshals who wouldn't let me go where I knew I was allowed to go and gotten crushed by antsy crowds from coast-to-coast. I once broke an ankle behind the 8th green at The Olympic Club. If you've ever been there, you know why. That hole should be banned!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 ■

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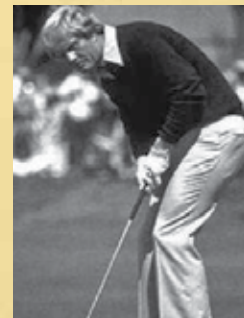
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There are good ways and bad ways to watch golf. Do you want to stand on the side of the fairway where the sun is in your eyes, or do you want the shady side of things? And because several holes come together at TPC Sawgrass in many places, you can take shortcuts or circle back to see another group.

Some people like to watch the first or tenth tee shots, and those are both easy to do at TPC Sawgrass. My dad liked to do that at The Memorial a couple of times. He had a small folding stool and binoculars, and, no lie, he would sit by the tee and take out the binoculars to see what ball the players were using. He'd study the drivers, watch the tee shot, and, I guess, pick up the balls as they got to the fairway. He was a little golf-possessed, but there's nothing wrong with that. He won his club championship six times and still has the course record even though he's been deceased for several years. (To be fair, my mother was also a club champ. Twice.)

FRONT NINE

This year, there are a few small changes starting right at the first hole. The tee now has no bleachers. However, the PGA Tour has made a little bit more of a hill behind it, so there's a little more slope to stand on. Honestly, I tried it out last year, when the hill was small, and it was great. If you only want to see one or two players, you can probably slither in, watch their shots and then slither out. If you want to watch Tiger Woods or Phil Mickelson, you'll have to get there a few groups early.

There's a shortcut language to knowing where to go. It's pretty simple: left or right side of the hole. At THE PLAYERS, it's left on the first five holes. And sometimes it's smart to go right to the landing area and skip the tee shot.

Here's a tip to speed you on your way. As soon as you hear a tee shot being hit, you can walk for 30 seconds. Then stop and wait for the next tee shot. It works on second shots, too. But do NOT move when a guy takes his putting stance until after he hits the ball. Golf is all about courtesy to all the players.



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On the 1st, even from 30 yards away from the green, you can see the putts, depending on where the pin is. Worst case, you can see the reaction of the golfer, and you'll know if it was miss or make.

Skip ahead to the middle of the 2nd hole. There are plenty of mounds for standing. You can see the tee shots land and second shots hit. Walk up a little to watch bunker shots and putts.

After that, if you are following a particular player, your best bet is to go around the 3rd tee to the slope left of the hole.

You can go behind No. 2 green and walk down right of the 3rd. But if you do that, you can get trapped when players leave the hole and go to No. 4 tee. You will have to wait while players, caddies, TV people and scorers get to go ahead. It's a bit of a bottleneck. If you are watching Tiger or Phil, definitely take the left side, not the right.

At No. 4, give up the tee shot and hike half or three quarters of the way down to see where the tee shots land and how the approach shots are hit. Players aren't hitting booming drives anyway. It's a layup

hole unless you are nuts. Walk a few more paces for putts. They have supposedly made that hill left of No. 4 a little lower so it's an easier walk.

Give up the drive on No. 5 because the tee is now so far back it's practically in Nassau County. If you really want to walk back there, circle back of No. 4 green and you'll see it. I think you'll change your mind.

The 5th is a little hilly, like the 4th, but go on up to where the second shots land. You can cross over to the right side of the hole there, but I don't recommend it. I've found that the mounds on the right side block your view of half of the green. The left has plenty of areas to watch from, and you can watch the putts from there, too. In addition, they've added some mounding back of No. 5 green for better viewing.

Here's a bonus: There's a variety of food and beverage options behind the 5th and left of the 9th. If you can't get happy with refreshments in those places, you can't get happy.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32 ■



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Fabulous 5BR/5.5BA oceanfront home with gated entrance and plenty of room for everyone. Wide open floor plan with elegantly appointed kitchen, dining area with stained glass and great room with fireplace opens to huge deck with hot tub and summer kitchen. Media room, elevator and 2 master suites each with ocean facing balcony. Spacious low maintenance yard with under-lit Bocci court and plenty of room for a pool. MLS 886414

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The next group of holes is right on the 6th, right on the 7th, left on the 8th and left on the 9th.

Before the 6th, you have to make your first big decision. Do you really want to walk the 6th and 7th? Or do you want to take a break and let them play two holes and come to you on the 7th green?

Once you go down the 6th, you are committed. There's no way back except by going forward. If you go to the 6th and 7th, beware of the bottleneck between the two holes. You don't want to be right of No. 6 green when Tiger Woods is playing the hole. We might have to send a search party after you. You could scoot ahead to the back of 6th green and as soon as the putt drops, get over to the 7th early to see the tee shots. Unfortunately, the marshals are pretty quick with those ropes, and you can easily get blocked.

If you take the 6th and 7th, you have an easy shot to the 8th tee. There's a mound behind it with excellent viewing of the tee shots.

There is also a bleacher behind No. 8

green. You can watch car crash golf all day from there. That green is unhittable and unholdable. If golf balls bled, the green and surrounding area would be crimson.

BACK NINE

The 9th is another hole where I let them do their thing off the tee while I take the cart path and walk up to the second shots.

However, the 9th has a great shortcut to the 18th and 17th. Take the cross-walk that's in front of the tee area, and you'll end up by the 18th tee. It might be perfect for you. You can sit and watch disasters and brilliant shots all day.

If you do it the traditional way and walk all the way down the 9th, there's supposed to be new mounding behind No. 9 green. There's also more food and beverages.

The next holes are right at 10th, right at 11th, right at 12th, green at 13th and right at 14th.

You'll have quite a walk from the 9th to the 10th tee, but once there, the best place to see the tee shot is either on the mound to the right of the tee, or on the



mound that's behind the tee. Then, it's the right side of that hole to the green. Don't go behind the green. You'll get stuck and have to wait for groups of golfers to go to the 11th tee.

Look right when you are halfway up the 10th hole, and you'll see the 11th fairway. That's your next target. You'll be able to

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see tee shots land on the 11th, but you can only see the actual tee shots if you walk back another par three. Once again, the tee is back, back, back, back ... basically in the Publix parking lot.

The 11th is a great watching hole. From the right side, you can see the drives land, see the second shots hit and see the putts, as you

stroll down the cart path or grass on the right.

To reward you for going to the 12th tee, there's a food and beverage bonanza in the shade between the 11th green, 12th tee, 14th green and 15th tee. Tacos on 12 from TacoLu is hard to pass up. Lots of your friends will probably be there. You'll also find Candy Apple Café, Hawkers Asian Street Fare, Mojo Kitchen and Zoe's Kitchen.

They modified 12 green again this year. The green slope was so severe last year that balls bounced off of it and into the water. Complaints ensued. They have now raised the surface of the green on the left-hand side to solve that. However, there is still a bleacher area, and it was so popular they added another one behind it that faces the 13th green. It's an excellent area to watch scoring nightmares and point and moan when there's a disaster. And the 12th should have lots of birdies because it's so short.

Now, I've been assured there's a bridge you can take along the left side of 12 to get to the green on 12, but there's probably zero way a Tiger Woods-sized crowd

could get over this bridge in any kind of hurry. I'm serious. I would just avoid it. If you are determined, try it on Tuesday or Wednesday and see how it works to see if you can handle it on Sunday.

I tend to find my way up to the 12th and 13th greens by way of the grassy area between the right side of 12 and the right side of the 14th. In fact, I'll walk backwards up the 14th to get to the 13th green if necessary, or take the shortcut across the 11th tee and access that area from there.

Don't even worry about the 13th tee. There are some places you don't have to go, and that's one of them.

The 14th is a tough go. Once again, I say skip the tee shot unless you get stuck in the gallery behind the 13th. The tee area is small, and just wiggling your nose is enough to bother a player's tee shot in that location. It's traditionally one of the two hardest holes. You have to barely breathe because you never want to cost a golfer a shot with something you do.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 34 ■

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After the tee shots are hit, take the cart path on the right side of the 14th to the landing area. Make sure you preserve a view of the green. If you get too close to the green, it gets hard to see the putts.

Now on the last four holes, there are a bunch of choices. On the 15th, you can go right or left with two different outcomes. If you want to see the hole and see the tee shots of a particular group you are following on the 16th, take the right.

If you go left, you can get stuck before you get to the green. Your only way out is to go backwards over to the 16th hole and do a crossover and then walk backwards toward the tee. By the time you do that, the tee shots will be hit. So, if seeing those shots is important to you, go right at the 15th.

After the 15th hole, take the cart path that brings you out by the 16th tee. From there, take the cart path on the right of the 16th to the crossover, and you'll end up on the left side of 16.



If you continue down the right side of the 16th, you'll get trapped behind the crowd at the 17th, and believe me, there's little room to even get on that hill behind the island green. You'll be stuck.

If you take the left side of the 15th for tee shots, you can watch a part of the hole, and cross back into the woods to the left side of the 16th. You'll come out some-

where near where golfers hit their second or third shots. You'll be able to see the 16th green and the side of the 17th green from there.

I like to find my way to the left side of the 16th hole, see where the tee shots land, watch the approaches and putts, or disasterters, and then watch the 17th from there or follow around the left side of the 17th and

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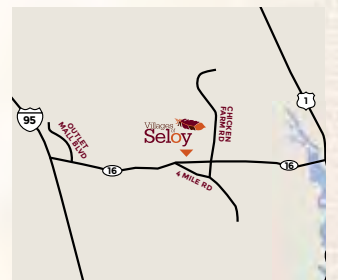
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up and behind the 18th tee and on to the finish.

Now, sometimes what you think is the best place to watch might not be. For instance, late on Sunday, the best place to watch the final hole might be across the pond, on the hillside that is actually to the right of the 9th green. There's a hospitality platform there, but there's still grass someplace unless they've "hospitalitied" the whole thing down to the water. It's worth checking early in the week to see if you like that location.

In that area, you won't be looking directly into the sun on Sunday when the last putt drops like you would be if you were on the right side of the 18th hole. You can see the second shots from across the pond, and you can see the final putt.

To get there, you can take the crossover back from behind the 18th tee to the 9th hole, stay on the right side of the 9th and you'll be in the right place to watch the finish. Again, check it a day or two in advance to see if you like it.

MORE VIEWING TIPS

Best holes for easy watching on a slope: 17th, 16th, 18th green, 3rd, 11th, 10th, 4th.

SHORTCUTS

- **1-5 and 9th.** Sometimes, if I only want a flavor of what's happening and don't need to see every shot, I'll do No. 1-5 and then skip ahead to No. 9 by cutting through that area behind five.
- **3rd to 5th to 9th.** You can skip the first two holes and start at the 3rd. Then do the holes through the 5th, and skip over through the woods to the 9th. This is handy if you want to watch two different players who are a few groups apart. Or if you are hungry. There's food there. And then you can even cross over to the back nine.
- **9th to 5th.** You can start at the 9th green and walk backwards to the 5th to catch a group.
- **9th crossover to 18th.** Walk backwards down 9th and cross over to 18th and 17th.
- **10th to 12th to 13th and 14th.** After the 10th, go near the 11th tee and take the crossover to the 12th and 13th greens.
- **10th to 11th to 15th to 16th.** Start at the 10th and do the 11th, then walk over the mound behind 11 green and you'll be on the right side of the 15th hole that takes you back up to a location under the 16th tee.
- **10th tee to 16th.** Start near the 10th tee and take a right on the cart path to the right of the 16th tee. Take the cart path on the right side of the 16th to the crosswalk that gets you halfway down the 16th.

FREEBIE AT THE END

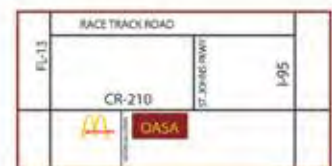
The 18th will have folding chairs to sit on, and if you are in one of them when the tournament finishes on Sunday, you can take that chair home with you. Serious. How about that? You must wait for the last putt to drop. Then it's yours.

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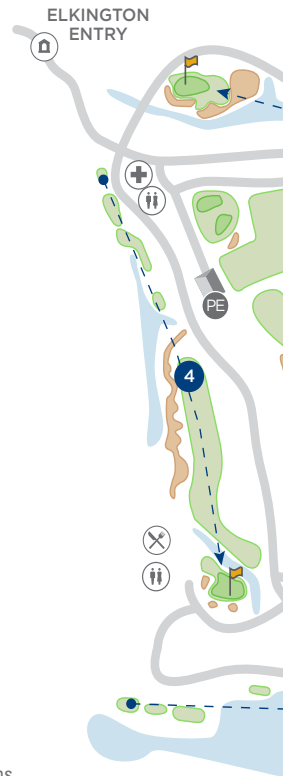
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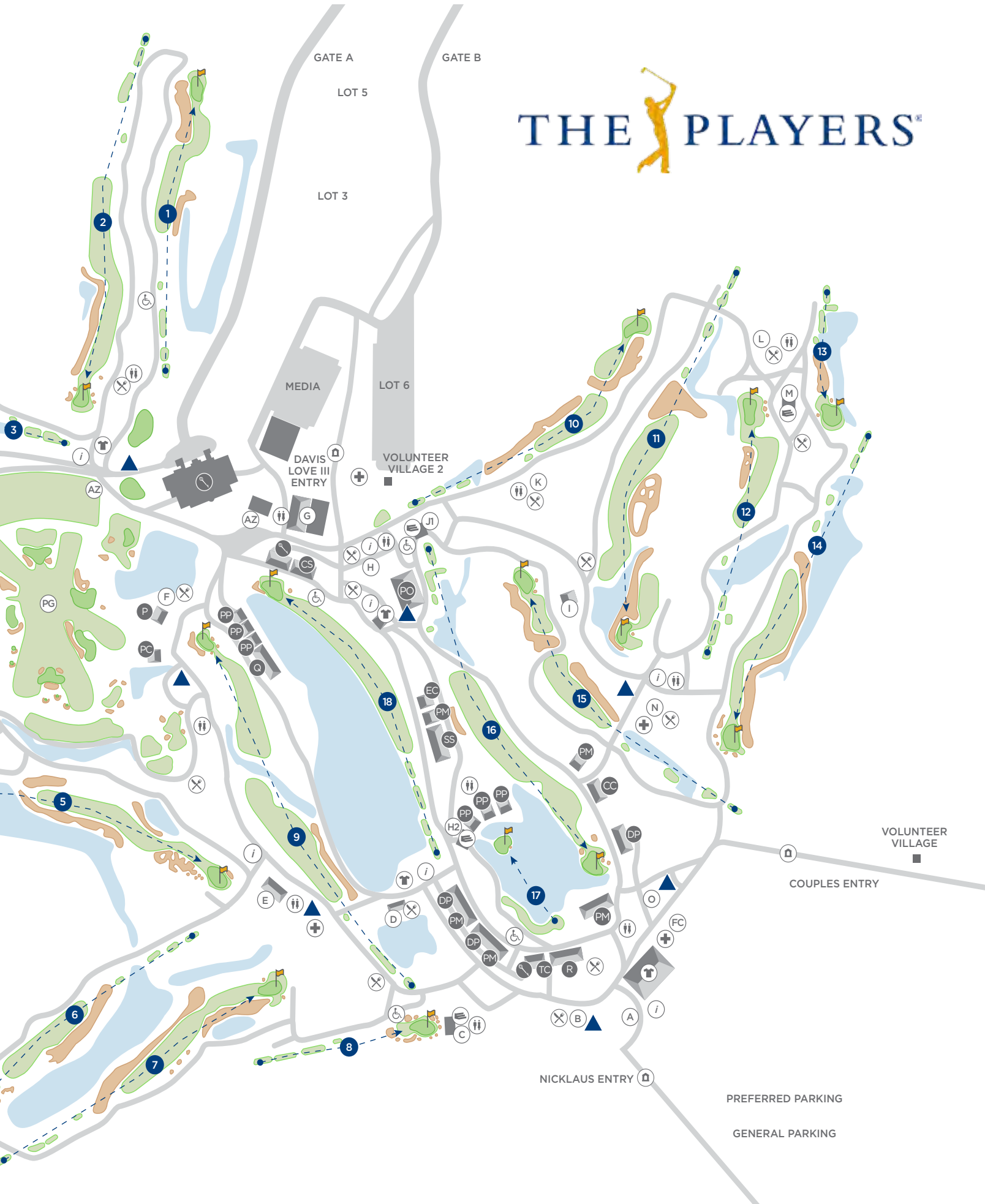
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YARDS	423	532	177	384	471	393	451	237	583	3651	YARDS	424	558	302	181	481	470	523	137	462	3538	7189

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Si Woo Kim becomes youngest

PLAYERS champion ever

By **KATHY BISSELL**

When Si Woo Kim won THE PLAYERS Championship, he was really an international man of mystery. No one knew much about him except that he was Korean, and that at age 21, he had become the youngest winner of THE PLAYERS in tournament history. And, of course, he had defeated the deepest, strongest field in golf on a torturous course. He had basically become a stealth golf weapon.

Looking into someone who has such secret qualities, it takes a while to discover all his positive attributes. However, back in South Korea, Kim wasn't stealthy at all. He was headline material who had qualified for the PGA Tour at the ripe age of 17.

KIM'S STORY

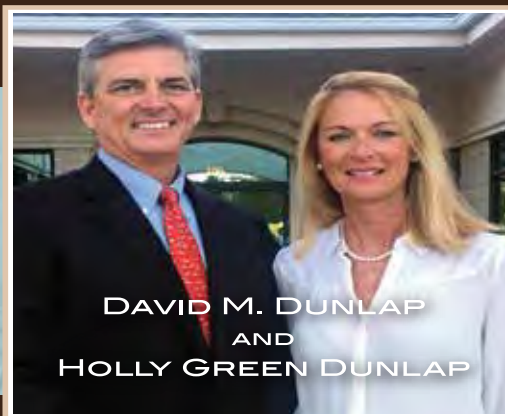
Kim, it seems, was the Sergio Garcia or Rory McIlroy of his country. Yet, even though he had proven he could play high-level golf, he almost had to go underground for five months after Q-School until he turned 18 because of the PGA Tour's age requirement.

When Kim's 18th birthday came and went, he entered PGA Tour events, but found little success and lost his card. However, being the strong, silent type, he didn't give up. He reloaded on the Web.com circuit where he won the Stonebrae. Kim became the second youngest to win on the Web.com tour.



Photos by DON CHRISTIAN

CONTINUED ON PAGE 40 ■



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Jason Day, who won THE PLAYERS in 2016 and bestowed the trophy upon Kim in 2017, was the youngest.

Kim's place on the Web.com money list in 2015 guaranteed him a PGA Tour card for 2016. He played and played, 34 tournaments in all. That's a lot, even for a rookie.

In August, he was successful, winning the Wyndham Championship on the basis of a second round 60. This is a very short time between joining the PGA Tour and victory. So, perhaps we should not have been surprised when he was able to battle his way to the top at THE PLAYERS. But we were.

"When I was national team member I had many experience in the international tournament and because of that Q-School when I was 17, that was last Q-School, and so that's why I just want to have experience," Kim said after his Wyndham victory. "I never expect to be — have a card."

Kim was referring to the change in qualifying for the PGA Tour, which now happens by only finishing in the top 25 on the Web.com Tour or by finishing in the top 25 of the Web.com Q-School. Before that, there was a PGA Tour qualifying school — a series of advance or go home tournaments — to qualify for the PGA Tour. It was in effect for about 50 years.

"At this tournament I aggressively played," he explained about Wyndham. "I already made top 125, feel confidence, so I don't have any fear to attacking the pin."

At that time, the top 125 players on the money list were exempt for the next season. Now, it is the top 125 on the FedEx points list. With the victory, Kim also got the standard gift of a two-year exemption. Knowing he could tee up at any regular PGA Tour event for two seasons, he knew he could work on his game and be a little selective and not play 34 events.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 42 ■



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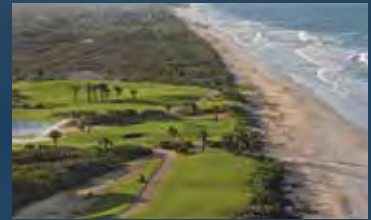
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“My goal is winning one more time next two years,” he added then.

Even though he had one victory to his credit, like the Spanish Inquisition in “Monty Python,” no one expected him to show up and win at THE PLAYERS. You expect the usual suspects, the guys you know already. The Mickelsons, the Garcias, the McLlroys, the Spieths, the DJs. Those guys. You don’t expect Si Woo Kim.

KIM COMES OUT ON TOP

Of course, Kim is stealthy, and that’s why he surprised us with the win. It wasn’t easy, though. It wasn’t a Greg Norman tournament record or Davis Love 64 or a Fred Couples 63. There were struggles along the way.

For the final round, Kim was paired with former British Open champ Louis Oosthuizen in the second to last pairing of the day. At the start of the round, he was two shots behind the overnight leaders, Kyle Stanley and J.B. Holmes.

Oosthuizen played the front nine at 1-under and hopped on the bogey train at



the 13th and 14th, both tough holes. He did eagle the 11th and birdied the 16th, but by that time, Kim seemed in control even though he just made pars. Everyone else was, understandably, having trouble with the course.

Stanley had two birdies and crazily enough one of them was at the 17th. But

he had too many bogeys and ended up posting 75.

Ian Poulter climbed up the leaderboard with two birdies on the front, but he stalled out after the 11th and added two bogeys that he could not afford.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 44 ■

Janet E. Johnson, P.A.

Criminal Defense Attorney



Janet Johnson is committed to aggressively defending people accused in all criminal matters in state and federal court. In practice since 1994, she is a member of the Florida Bar, The Federal Bar, Colorado Bar, as well as the Florida Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers. She has been on the faculty of FACDL “Blood, Breath & Tears” annual DUI seminar. Ms. Johnson appears as a legal commentator on CNN, HLN, CMA, and Fox News. She has been awarded the very highest possible rating, the AV preeminent rating™, from Martindale-Hubbell® and was named a fellow to the prestigious Litigation Counsel of America™, as well as one of the ten best criminal defense attorneys nationally for client satisfaction by the American Institute of Criminal Law Attorneys.

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Holmes got off to a bogey-birdie-bogey start. However, the rest of his round was more bogey and double than par or birdie. He ended up with a final round 84.

The last man standing, the man who made three birdies on the front and all pars on the back nine, was Si Woo Kim. Even then it wasn't easy.

He was an escape artist, and he chipped, blasted and clawed his way to victory.

He hit into the right rough on the 4th and crafted a par. He was in the right fairway bunker on the 5th, hit his second shot over the green and still made par.

"It's soooo smooth," Johnny Miller commented on Kim's swing tempo as he hit his second shot to the 6th.

After Kim teed off on the 7th, Dan Hicks reminded everyone that Kim had gone to Sean Foley, former teacher of Tiger Woods, to sharpen up his game. Foley has also been the go-to guy for Justin Rose and formerly worked with Hunter Mahan and Stephen Ames.

Kim made a fist-pumping birdie, sinking a long putt. He then made an indifferent tee shot at the par 3 8th. After a decent chip, using the claw putting style, he rolled in another one. He was one ahead of Lucas Glover, Poulter and Stanley.

However, Kim's second shot at the 9th sailed left into the left bunker just in front of the green. His blast was good, but not great; however, he rolled in another putt for birdie to go

two shots up on the rest of the field. He fist pumped again.

Kim headed to the back nine of the tournament with the biggest prize all year on the PGA Tour, plus a five-year exemption. Everyone expected him to fold under the pressure, and it looked like that was happening when he hit his tee shot into the right pine straw.

"Tough to hit the green from here," Miller said as Kim's ball gained altitude. "Only a third of the players have hit this green in regulation."

Miller was right: Kim landed in a bunker, but he extracted himself brilliantly, to less than two feet.

At the 11th, he got a good and bad break with his tee shot. It hit the edge of the fairway and stayed in short grass, but he was on a slope and had to stand in the bunker to hit his next shot. Then, he had to chip over a pot bunker and onto a green that wasn't holding anything. His ball rolled off the back and down the grassy slope into a bunker that wraps around the green. He escaped with par.

The 12th was routine, and at the 13th, he narrowly missed chipping in from the back fringe. Still, two more pars. He wasn't playing brilliantly, but nobody was gaining on him.

At the 14th, he hit a fabulous drive that stopped just short of the left side bunker. However, his second scooted past the putting surface and left him with another gnarly chip out of Bermuda. As one might expect, with the way his round was going, he chipped up for a lock par.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 46 ■

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Kim wasn't doing anything spectacular; he was hitting the occasional good shot, and when he didn't, he pulled rabbits and dogs and cows out of his hat to save his score. He was still two ahead of Poulter, three ahead of Oosthuizen and four ahead of Holmes, Stanley and Glover.

After his second shot on the 15th, he was short of the green even though his tee shot had been in the fairway — another good chip and a putt for par.

At the 16th, he made a bad mistake, pushing his tee shot right into the rough just past the mound and under the canopy of the tree behind the 17th viewing areas. The grass was so tough, he opted to wedge out and lay up.

Regarding his third, which took a squirrely bounce off a downslope, David Feherty said, "It bites like a police dog." Sure enough, it was birdie distance, a bit farther away from the hole than one of Fred Couples' miracle putts at the 16th. However, Kim's came up short. Another par.

He flirted with the back of the green at the 17th, but it was only a casual wink and nod. He was never in danger of



bouncing off the back. The lag putt was superior, leaving a short one for par.

Through 17 holes, he was 10-under par, with Poulter at 8-under and Oosthuizen at 7-under, neither one able to mount a charge.

"I wasn't nervous at all because I was leading that hole, and I just focused on the middle of the green," he said.

Barring a horrible mistake at the 18th, the title was Kim's. He just needed to finish and stay on dry land.

"That's a pretty bold line," Hicks said about Kim's tee shot at the last.

Kim was left of center, but he wasn't in danger of finding water. Most leaders will go for something closer to the right rough than the left fairway because the one mistake you can't make on that hole is to land in the water.

Once again, Kim was short of the green with his second shot. But he was closing in on it. Using a fairway metal, he rolled the ball up toward the hole, kick-in distance really.

The final par closed the deal for the stealthiest golfer in recent memory, one who managed his game well and had superb control over his short game. His chips and blasts and lag putts were what won him the tournament on Sunday. He never left himself in a bad place.

No one else could create a charge to push him. All he had to do was keep making pars, because no one else was making birdies.

"I still can't believe that I'm the champion, and I'm the youngest champion for this championship," he said after winning. "I'm very honored to be the champion for this amazing fifth major event, and I'm looking forward to working hard from now on."

He didn't think about the score of the challengers, he noted. He thought that helped keep his nerves under control. Kim said he felt good Saturday evening.

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“When I started the final round, I was actually very aggressive in order to get more score and beat them,” he added. “And then the moment that I was leading, I was very confident. There are some strong winds, and I’m actually enjoying that moment, so I think I was very confident that I could win.”

Translation: It was windy for everybody and he was ahead, giving him the advantage.

Before his victory, Kim had missed seven cuts and four WDs due to a bad back. He was hardly on the top of anyone’s “Most Likely to Win THE PLAYERS list.” As though divinely inspired, Kim out-shot, out-chipped, out-blasted and out-lagged the field to rise to the top.

Kim also had a week when his back wasn’t bothering him and when the bounces didn’t hurt him. With a terrific short game at his side, he became the youngest winner of THE PLAYERS Championship. With his victory, he’s no longer stealthy. He’s a threat every time he tees it up.



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Kyle Stanley	69-66-72-75—282 (-6)

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THE PLAYERS

moving to March

by KATHY BISSELL

“It’s the first major of the year now,” Davis Love III said when asked about the move of THE PLAYERS Championship to March. “Yeah, you can quote me. We need to get it to a major.”

Wow, that’s big. Thank you, Davis. He said it definitively.

Love is a two-time champ of THE PLAYERS. He won a PGA. He’s won 21 PGA Tour events. He’s in the Hall of Fame as of last year. He’s been the captain of the Ryder Cup team twice. And he insists THE PLAYERS is as big as it gets in golf.

“Finchem said it, 15 maybe 20 years ago: ‘Whatever you guys say is what it’s going to be. I’m not going to be the guy to say it. But if you guys say it...’” Love continued. “It’s like the PGA [of America] said for a long time, they’re the best field of the four majors. It’s hard to argue with that, but THE PLAYERS is the best field all year.”

In other words, logically, if THE PLAYERS has a better field than all other tournaments, that should make it a major because whoever wins the tournament beats all the best players that season. Love also said he’d be prejudiced in calling it the first major of the year. Although he didn’t say why, it’s definitely because he won two of them!

It’s ok, we’re believers.

So is Billy Horschel, although he was a little less reluctant to insist the way Love did.

“You know when you get done playing golf, the tournaments you want to win, you want to win the four majors and THE PLAYERS,” he said. “So, obviously when you look at it in that light, when you look at how important that tournament is, and the fact that you can be a Hall of Fame golfer [with a victory]. They want it to really be a fifth major. Is it a shame, that moniker? A little bit.”

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ADAM SCOTT

Regardless of which camp you are in, fifth major or not, change is coming.

Everyone already knows the tournament is moving. And still, there are plenty of other questions. Some people want to know why. More people want to know when. And some people want to know what the PGA Tour players think.

WHY IT'S MOVING

The why is simple: The PGA Tour needs to take care of FedEx, which puts a lot of money into the bonus pool for all PGA Tour players in the top 125 in points.

FedEx, as well as the PGA Tour, would like to end the season with the Tour Championship before football eats away at sporting audiences. It's as simple as that.

What's hard is figuring out where to put all the rest of the tournaments. The PGA Tour controls all but four: the Masters, U.S. Open, British Open and the PGA Championship. The first three weren't budging.

To end on Labor Day weekend or thereabouts, to have the Tour Championship be that weekend and to have the playoff tournaments before it, means the PGA Championship needed to move somewhere. So, the PGA Tour questioned: Do we need to be in May or could we go back to March and give up our May date to have the schedule finish on Labor Day? Can we make that work? They decided they could.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52 ■

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Traditionally, as great as the ratings often are for THE PLAYERS, they are historically greater for golf in the January to March period than they are after that, except for The Masters. That's fact. So, it doesn't hurt the tournament from a ratings perspective to be in March. One reason the ratings are higher is that half of the country is snowed and sleeted in, just as they were this past March. The more bad weather there is up north, the more people want to watch golf being played someplace warm. So, March is actually a benefit.

THE PLAYERS' sponsors said they liked March. In fact, many of them preferred it as it gives them a chance to have a spring break outing for business customers. When the Northeast and Midwest have bad weather week after week, going anywhere south where it's above freezing looks good.

What happens to tournaments that will be displaced? We don't know who they are yet because we don't have the full calendar for 2019. One or two will go away. One, two, three or four will move to a date between September and Thanksgiving. So that gets us to when.

WHEN IN MARCH WILL IT BE PLAYED?

For most of us, when is really the big issue. Either you have house guests or a big tournament party, or you are renting your house out and leaving town and need to know whether to go north or south.

While the official PGA Tour schedule for 2019 won't be released until PLAYERS week, one outlet, Morning Read, reported



RICKIE FOWLER

that next year, the Florida Swing will return in one cohesive unit. The order is supposedly Honda Classic, Arnold Palmer Invitational, THE PLAYERS and Valspar Championship.

Here's what that means in terms of timing. If the first tournament of 2019, the Sentry Tournament of Champions, is held the first week of January, finishing on Jan. 6, THE PLAYERS will finish on March 17.

This actually corresponds to a hint the PGA Tour's Jared Rice made last year in a media presentation when he suggested that St. Patrick's Day might be an ideal time on the calendar for THE PLAYERS. I asked him if he had earmuffs and mittens. Yes, I hear you

laughing. I really did ask that. You know I wasn't kidding. Rice did not. He kind of frowned at me like I didn't understand.

I admit, figuring out the date was not brain surgery, and it's a good thing, because my one brain cell is barely blinking today. Here's how it works.

None of the Hawaii or California tournaments are being dropped, and having WGC Mexico in the middle of the Florida events has been awkward, to be polite about it. It will get moved and become a buffer between the West Coast and Florida. That positions THE PLAYERS with a finish date of March 17. Mark it on your calendar or in your electronic DayMinder.

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WHAT PGA TOUR PLAYERS THINK

The move to March will also make the course play differently, but you don't have to take my word for it. I asked several PGA Tour and former PGA Tour players who have played the tournament in both months, as well as some who have only played in May. It's a random sample, but it's an interesting mix.

Regarding the move to March, Davis Love III said: "It can be a little windier. Obviously the grass will be a little different. But I don't think a whole lot different. It just depends on the weather week. You know, we get one of those nor'easters, it can be cold and windy, but I like it because it's away from everything else."

Two-time U.S. Open winner Andy North played TPC Sawgrass in the years when it first opened, when it was, as they say, wilder. What does he think about the move back to March?

"I think it's terrific," he said. "I like the fact that they balanced the schedule a little bit better. We get done earlier in the year, and we're not fighting football which — we've been trying to do that for 40 years, basically — and the fact that TPC is a hard golf course in March and it's not in May, so I think that's going to be great. The wind's going to blow and you stand on the 17th tee with a northwest wind. It's not a lot of fun. There won't be a lot of sand wedges on those days."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54 ■

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Patrick Reed, five-time PGA Tour winner, is too young to have seen both iterations of THE PLAYERS.

“I’ve never played it in March, so I wouldn’t know,” he said. “To me, it doesn’t matter what time they play it, as long as you get to go play.”

About the 17th, he said, “You should be able to hit the green. It’s a 9 iron. If it’s downwind, it’s a pitching wedge. For me, the windier, the better I play.”

Patrick, be careful what you wish for.

Adam Scott won THE PLAYERS as his second victory. It was in 2004, before the move to May. He likes the change back to March.

“I’m excited,” he said. “I think they tried to make it the best in May they could, but I think that course just played better with the grass conditions in March. I know there’s a chance it can be wet, and we suffered quite a few wet years leading up to the change to May, but overall, I think it’s going to be much better in that condition.

“It’s such a huge event,” he continued. “I think it’s going to kind of be the first big event of the year again, so I think that’ll be exciting for that tournament. For the tour, generally, it’s a good move.”

Scott has had good and bad fortune on the 17th.

“Seventeen is tough. ... Actually, the year I was defending I was two back with two to play, and I hit in the water my first time ever. It was blowing like 20 left-to-right. You know,

it’s tough, so that’s going to make it interesting. I think any talk about lengthening the hole will be soon abolished if there is wind next year.”

Aussie Marc Leishman is a three-time PGA Tour winner, with two victories coming last season.

“It’s a good course,” said Leishman. “It’ll play a lot different. Weather will be a lot different, but I think it’s really good though. The big organizations in golf, the PGA Tour, the Masters, you know, have their marquis events, and they’ll all have pretty much their own month. So, I think it’s a really good thing.

“It’ll be hard until the first year of having it in March to see how different it really is, if it’s cold or what it is, the weather, but I think it’s a good thing,” Leishman continued. “Spread ‘em out. Hopefully works.”

Marc, you have no idea how much different, but you could talk to fellow Aussie Greg Norman who still has the tournament record at 24-under par.

Paul Goydos, now on the PGA Tour Champions circuit, was in that memorable playoff with Sergio Garcia in 2008.

“I played both,” he said. “I played better in May, but what they’re trying to do with the game, and they’re trying to grow it a little bit, it’s probably the best move. The PGA to May, and see if we can finish before football. It’s probably a good idea. My impression of the tournament was that it was better attended when it was in March, so probably in the long run, it’s a good move.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 56 ■

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“The course is going to play totally different,” Goydos added. “I never played well when it was in March. It was overseeded and whatnot. It was more like a U.S. Open almost. High rough and whatnot. May was more Bermuda, was much firmer, bouncier.

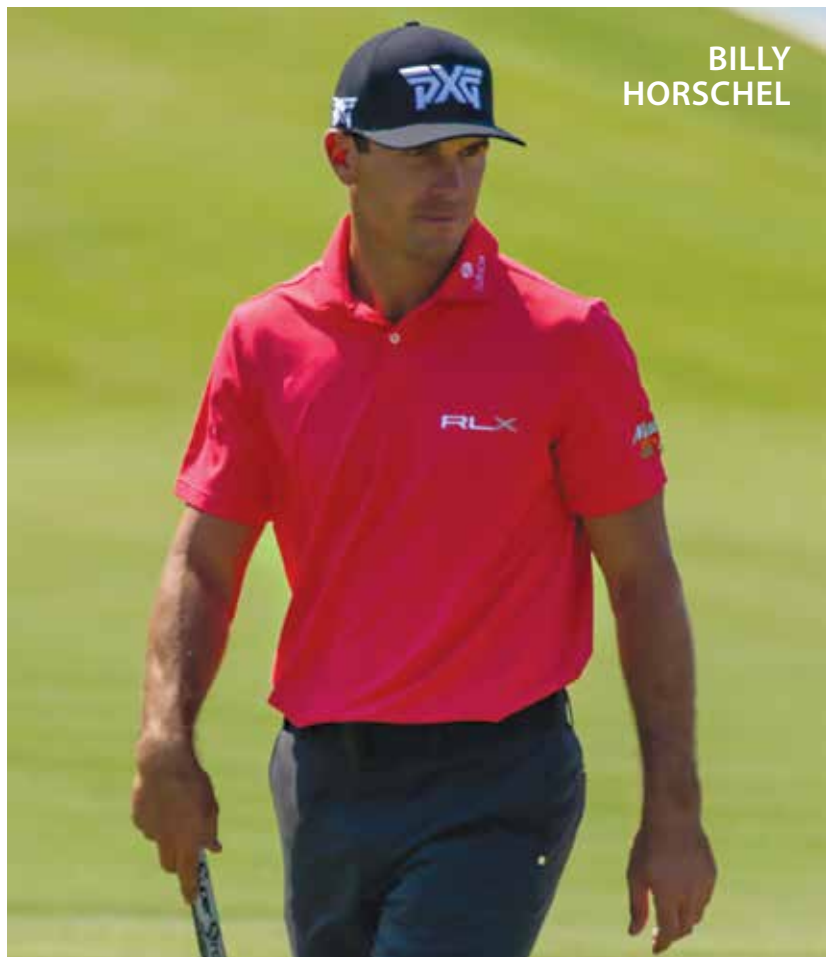
Rickie Fowler, champ in 2015, has only seen the golf course in May.

“I don’t have a very good opinion in a way,” Fowler said. “I’ve never played the course in March, so I wouldn’t know a whole lot about it. I’m looking forward to kind of the flow of the season and seeing how it goes next year with THE PLAYERS in March and Augusta and PGA, and I think it’ll make that a little better, but whether we like that or not, who knows? I’ll kind of wait and see.”

Local guy and Florida alum Billy Horschel knows this part of the world really well. He’s seen the course in all kinds of weather.

“I think it’s great that it’s going back to March,” Horschel said. “I understand why it went to May. They wanted to create a little bit more of its own identity and not have it be a run-up to the Masters.

“With it going back to March, I think the course is going to play tougher,” he continued. “Conditions are going to be tougher. When we play in May, we get a southeast or east breeze or south breeze that makes



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17 and 18 play downwind, 9 play downwind. The course plays easier that way. So, playing in cooler conditions, windier conditions, and we get more wind, I think it's really a good benefit."

Everyone who played it before the move insists that it has played too easy in May, which is mostly lovely. Not much wind. Lots of sun. Beautiful weather.

But March, there's a month that can smack you in the face a couple times. It can be 50 degrees or 85 degrees then. You just don't know. I have been to nearly every PLAYERS since 1988, maybe missing one year in there, and most of the ones in March were cool or even cold. The exception was the year David Duval won. The greens were so baked out that they were brown. Balls didn't stay on them. To say that golfers came off the course ready to bite the first thing that moved is not an understatement.

For those of us who are not playing the tournament but might go to it or certainly watch it, there are other questions, other than where to get earmuffs.

- Does the "pink out" get moved to Saturday?
- Does Sunday become a "green out?"
- Will the 17th lake be dyed green?
- Will there be shamrocks on every tee?
- Will there be a Guinness hospitality area?
- Will there be leprechauns?
- Will the Irish players get to subtract a stroke from their scores every round?
- Will anyone with Irish in their family line get a special price on tickets?

I mean, I have a great-great-great Grandmother Dooling who was from Waterford County. Like millions of people in the U.S., my family heritage did not escape having some Irish in the lineage!

Finally, will the PGA Tour be smart about this and buy somewhere north of 5,000 azaleas – big ones – and cover massive areas of the course and grounds with them? Boy, I hope so. We want the course to look as glorious as TPC Boulevard looks in the middle of March every year. If we are going to be in prime azalea season, then by George, we need to really have tons of azaleas. We need to have more flowering shrubs than that little tournament up the road has in April. Hint. Hint. Hint. Come on, guys. I'll even bring a shovel and help plant.



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by **KATHY BISSELL**

Something happened when the calendar page turned from 2017 to 2018: People decided they wanted to watch golf.

Television ratings have been soaring, and that's music to everyone's ears. The PGA Tour, its sponsors, equipment manufacturers ... everyone in and around the golf business. Finally, golf is on the front burner again.

Part of the reason is Tiger Woods' return to tournament play because, as a lot of people have said, he doesn't just move the needle, he is the needle when it comes to ratings and ticket sales. But in many cases, Woods wasn't even at the events with ratings jumps, so that means people just decided they wanted to watch golf.

Now, strange as it sounds, sometimes the weather can affect golf ratings. If the winters are harsh in the Northeast and Midwest and if people are snowed in from December through March, ratings for golf are higher. That's because millions of people are trapped inside their homes, and it's too cold out to do anything except go from a car to a grocery store or shopping mall.

This year, January started with what was called a bomb cyclone snowstorm the first weekend of the year. And the snowstorms just kept on coming with



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TV ratings THE RISE for PGA Tour



Photo by SAM GREENWOOD/GETTY IMAGES

great regularity. It was a regular “Snowmageddon.” It probably helped improve the ratings, but it wasn’t the only factor.

Regardless of the reason, the recent ratings surge started at the Sentry Tournament of Champions, which Dustin Johnson won going away. He was eight shots ahead of the nearest competitor, so it’s not like it was a nail-biter of a finish. Woods was not at the tournament because it was for winners of the previous season. According to Sports Media Watch, where we found ratings data, ratings were up 8 percent from 2017, yet not as high as the year Jordan Spieth won.

The Sony Open champ, Patton Kizzire, was a relative newcomer who won in a playoff with James Hahn. The ratings were up 94 percent. That’s a huge increase.

All that was before the Farmers Insurance Open when Woods teed it up after a 12-month absence from the event. It was the only regular PGA Tour event he even tried to play in 2017. No one knew what to expect, and as a result, everyone wanted to see all Tiger all the time. Viewers got their wish. Woods finished T23, but he finished. His game was passable, but not as good as we remembered him being. Regardless, ratings were up 30 percent. It was a five-year high. Coincidentally, Woods’ last full season was five years ago.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 62 ■



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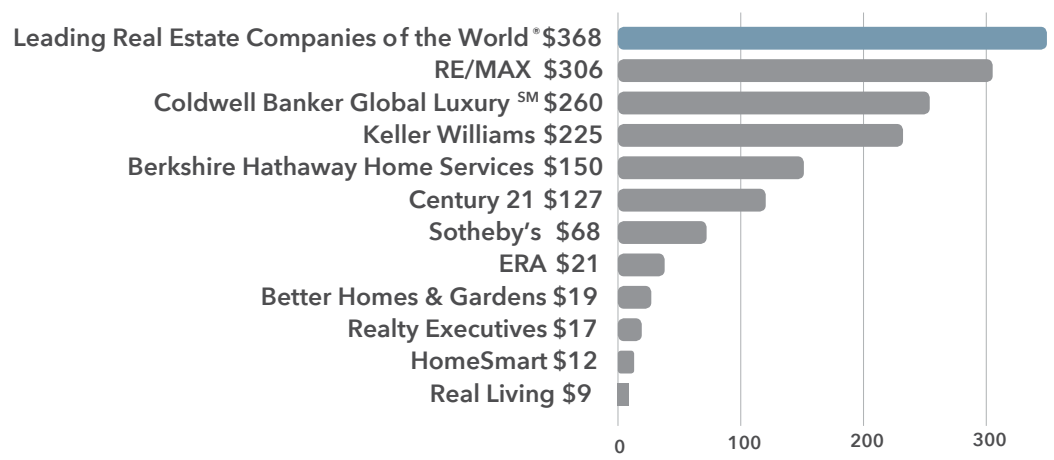
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At the Waste Management Open, the trend continued with ratings on Sunday up 32 percent. Fans were watching Gary Woodland beat Chez Reavie in a playoff. Sometimes the closeness of a tournament will help ratings, and you can't get closer than a playoff.

The AT&T Pebble Beach and Genesis Open were pitted against the Winter Olympics, and both suffered. The AT&T numbers declined. Genesis was flat year-over-year even though Woods played the first two rounds. The Olympics are tough to compete against, apparently, because the Genesis field was filled with quality players. Two-time Masters champ Bubba Watson was the winner, and in addition to Woods, Phil Mickelson, Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas were all in the event. It should have been ratings gold.

Then golf returned to Florida at the Honda Classic where Tiger Woods played all four rounds and had a chance to win on Sunday. However, Justin Thomas won his eighth PGA Tour title in a playoff over Luke List. Sunday's PGA Honda Classic final round had a 44 percent ratings bump compared to the previous year.

The final round of the Honda Classic was the most-watched round of golf opposite the Olympic Games since the 2012 PGA Championship. Technically, that's not a PGA Tour event. It's a PGA of America tournament, but you get the point.

The WGC Mexico event, won by the ageless Mickelson, was up 18 percent in ratings, but still not as high as when the tour-

namment was at Doral. However, its increase meant that seven of the 12 of what they call broadcast windows for golf in 2018 were up double digits already, and that trend continued.

While Honda produced excellent numbers, it was nothing compared to the Valspar Championship where Woods played in his second tournament of the year. It was an event he had never played, on a course he had only seen once when he played in the 1996 JCPenney Mixed Team, which was formerly an LPGA event.

NBC's ratings were up 183 percent from 2017. With Woods in contention and with a chance to win on Sunday, the tournament got the highest rating for a PGA Tour event since THE PLAYERS in 2013, which Woods won. The ratings beat every PGA Championship since 2014, every U.S. Open telecast since 2013 and every British Open since 2000. Valspar: the new darling of sports. It had the highest number of viewers in the 2018 season, at least before the Masters. Woods at Valspar even outdid the NCAA Tournament Selection Show, NASCAR and the NBA. Who knew?

The last Florida tournament was the Arnold Palmer Invitational. Ratings were up 129 percent. Rory McIlroy won, but Woods again had a chance on Sunday. It was the highest rated Arnold Palmer Invitational since Woods won the tournament in 2012. It had the second biggest audience of 2018 at that time, just behind Valspar.

Bubba Watson's victory at the Dell Match Play got a slight bump in ratings, up 7 percent. However, it was up against the NCAA Elite Eight games.



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Tiger Woods

Photo by
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THE WOODS COMEBACK NARRATIVE

Ratings, as everyone knows are the bread and butter, literally, of network executives. At the end of March, Jim Nantz, Sir Nick Faldo and Sean McManus, Chairman of CBS Sports, did a phone conference to preview the Masters telecast. McManus discussed the Woods factor and indicated that Woods is able to have a positive influence on tournaments even when he's not participating.

"We saw that, when Tiger was in his heyday, overall golf ratings were pretty strong whether Tiger was in the event or not, so I think that not only are the ratings going to get really good when Tiger is in contention, but I think there could also be a halo effect and more people could tune into the PGA Tour and like what they see," McManus noted. "And the ratings could continue to be strong even if Tiger is not in the last hour of the telecast. Or not playing in a given week."

Part of what is going on, according to McManus, is the Woods comeback narrative.

"If Tiger can actually continue, start to win some tournaments and maybe even win at the Masters or another major championship, it's one of the epic comebacks in sports history," he added. "I think when people see that unfolding on television, they want to be a part of it, and they want to watch it."

Typically, the Masters is the highest rated golf tournament all season long, with THE PLAYERS and other majors typically having better numbers than regular PGA Tour events. Last year was an aberration in ratings, with many events having lower than usual numbers. In fact, even ratings for the Masters were down 11 percent in 2017, according to Golf World. That's a lot for a marquis tournament. This year, according to CBS Sports, ratings for the Masters' final round increased by 14 percent.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 64 ■

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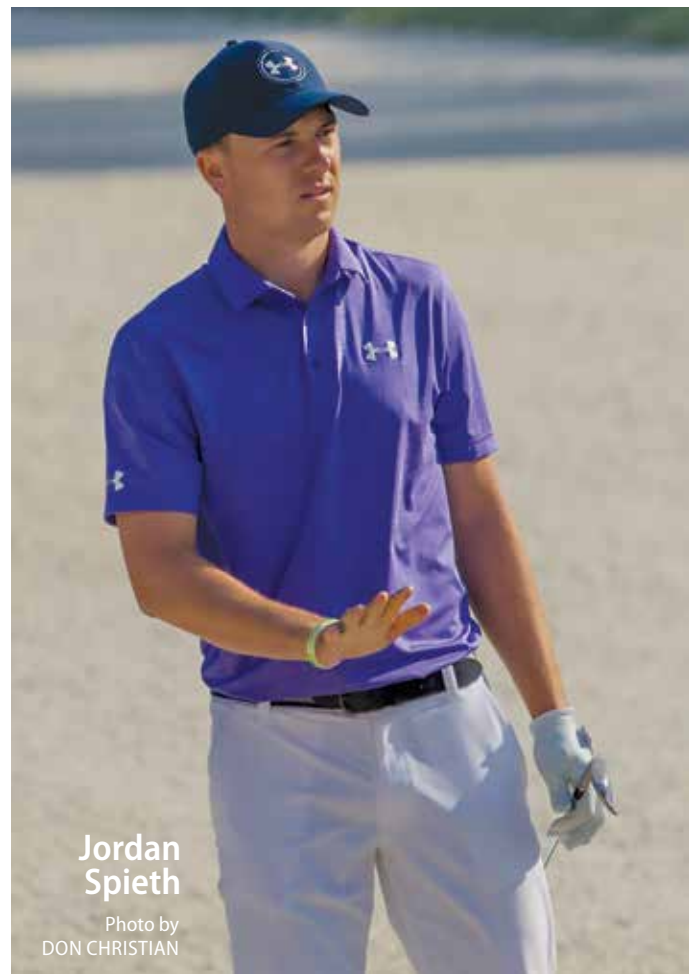
While reviewing percentages, it's important to know what the benchmarks are for ratings. In terms of most-watched, fairly recent golf events that are not the Masters, the 2013 U.S. Open won by Justin Rose (with Phil Mickelson in contention) had the biggest audience, followed by the 2014 PGA won by Rory McIlroy. Third on the list is the 2013 PLAYERS Championship, won by Woods, followed by the 2018 Valspar, won by Paul Casey with Woods in contention. The next two after that are the 2017 British Open, and the 2015 U.S. Open, both won by Jordan Spieth. Spieth's charge at the British Open was the most watched final round for that event since 2009.

When it comes to ratings, there are always a certain number of people who watch golf. They are the core audience ... the unshakable base of golf. They will watch it no matter what. If they don't see the tournament in real time, they will record it and watch later. They are there for golf, week in and week out, year after year. Anybody else is considered a bonus.

This year, in addition to the core audience, golf has received the benefit of the return of Woods. He brings the general sports fans who may not be golfers or golf fans, but love seeing golf played at its highest level by those with superior talent. Then there was the weather: a few bad snowstorms back-to-back, locking people into their homes. Like an old family recipe, the core, plus Tiger, plus weather, was a delicious ratings supercharger, the likes of which we have not seen since 2013 when Woods won five tournaments and was Player of The Year.

What will happen at THE PLAYERS?

If Woods continues his drive for success, the numbers for the 2018 PLAYERS could top everything to date.



Jordan Spieth

Photo by
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By KATHY BISSELL

Picking who will win THE PLAYERS gives me stress and makes me want Publix jelly beans. I should never eat Publix jelly beans, but I got a bag to get me through the last round of the Masters and this prediction.

While thinking about predictions, I thought I'd do a little online research into the subject, you know, as a way of putting off writing about it. In the process, I discovered that a University of Pennsylvania professor, Philip Tetlock, did a 20-year study on whether people can predict the future. After two decades, he concluded that a chimpanzee with a dart board does a better job than people. All I can say about Tetlock is he significantly overcharged the people who were funding his study. There's a guy with a great business plan.

Maybe Tetlock didn't believe in people who foresee events that haven't happened yet. Maybe he didn't even look for them. They are out there. I can even give you examples in golf.

There was that lady who told Johnny Miller that he would win the 1973 U.S. Open at Oakmont the week that he won it. She told him more than once. Even when he was significantly behind the leaders, she told him he was fine and that he would still win. There was also the voice out of the blue that came to Miller and told him to

open his stance before the final round, and he only did it because he was so far behind. Of course, Miller went on to shoot a 63 in the final round and won.

Then, there was the dream that Hale Irwin had about winning the 1990 U.S. Open a couple of weeks before he won it. Even Irwin didn't believe it when he had the dream, but he told media about it after the victory. I heard him say it in the media center. It was extraordinary because Irwin was 45 at the time and had received a special exemption from the USGA to play that week.

Personally, I had a funny thing happen before the 1990 PGA. You could say I was half right. I was producing a television program called "The Golf Show" at PGA Tour Productions at the time, and the staff had a pool going. There were squares, and for five bucks or something you could buy a player's square. So, they said to me, "Who do you think is going to win the PGA?" All of a sudden, the name Wayne came into my head for no reason. Wayne Levi had already won three tournaments, and so I picked his square. Well, it turns out I could have used a little more information because Wayne Grady won the PGA.

So, while a professor thinks it's nuts, I will resolutely go forward, predicting who will win THE PLAYERS because I think I'm smarter than a chimpanzee, although my ex-husband never thought so. (That's why he's my ex-husband, and no, I'm not kidding.)

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Dustin Johnson
Photo by DON CHRISTIAN

TIME FOR SOME SPECULATION

Let's start with who's not going to win.

For sure, Patrick Reed is out. He just won his first major at the Masters, and he's going to be on the green jacket celebrity tour. And he should do it because who knows whether he will ever win another major in his life? I'm not saying he won't. I'm just saying, his mind is going to be on other things for a little while. And he's going to be walking around the house in his green jacket just because he can. He'll probably wear it over his pajamas at breakfast. I think most people would. He just has to be careful not to drop any Lucky Charms or Dunkin' Donuts on a lapel.

I'd pick Davis Love III just because he said that in 2019 THE PLAYERS will be the "first major of the season," but he's not eligible for THE PLAYERS unless he plays and wins a PGA Tour event between this writing and the tournament.

It would be smart to look at the scoring average leader, and that's Dustin Johnson. His golf game has gotten to such a high level in recent seasons that he's nearly run out of things to practice. I mean, he's really, really good. But he doesn't have the advantage of length on this course that he would have at a longer track. He can hardly use driver at THE PLAYERS, and it's one of the best clubs in his bag. So, while Johnson can really win anywhere he sets his mind to, there are plenty of other guys who like having Johnson's distance advantage negated. It gives them an advantage.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 70 ■



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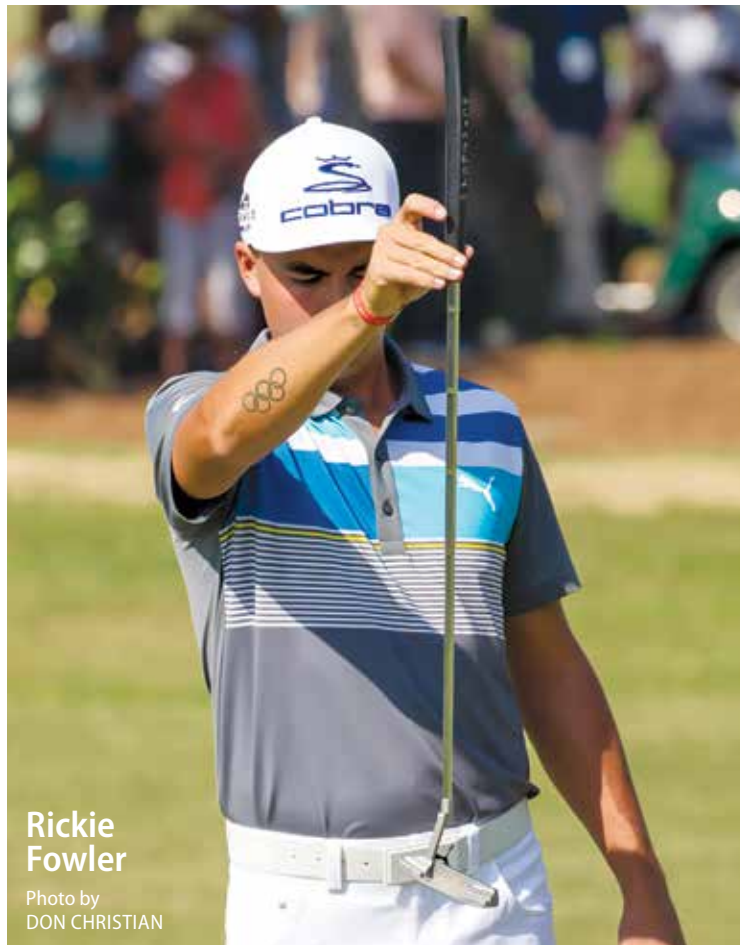
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I mean, he played the 15th hole at Augusta National one day with driver, 9-iron. It's a par 5 for those who don't watch the Masters, and you do NOT play it with a driver, 9-iron, but he did. We would like to see him play the 16th hole here with a driver, 9-iron though. That would be fabulous.

Rickie Fowler, who has won THE PLAYERS once already, has been in good form lately and nearly snagged a green jacket in April. With what he did at the Masters on Sunday, it would be hard to ignore him in any week. He already knows how to beat Pete Dye, so I like him as a contender.

Jon Rahm has shown us a lot already this season. He might follow in Sergio Garcia's footsteps and plant another Spanish flag on the First Coast. Arizona State had a Pete Dye golf course for their team to use in practice, so he's already seen sideways slopes and ridiculous railroad ties and annoying pot bunkers and other interesting hazards. The more I think about Rahm, the more I like his chances. He's gone from amateur golf to the top of golf in less than two years. I would not bet against him.

And speaking of Sergio, why not? He's definitely a one name player. You don't need the last name for people to know who you are talking about because he's the one and only. He's a little annoyed over the severe conditions at Augusta. You have to sympathize. He did hit a good shot to the 15th green, but the powers that be make Augusta National so severe that in some rounds, it's like landing a ball on concrete. Maybe winning THE PLAYERS would take some of the sting out of that. It should, because as



Rickie Fowler

Photo by
DON CHRISTIAN

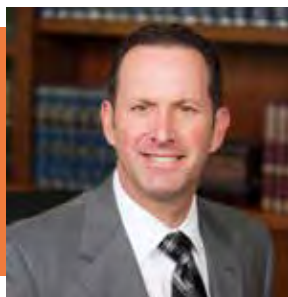
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Ian Poulter

Photo by DON CHRISTIAN

Davis Love said, it's the "first major of the year" next season. (You should keep repeating that phrase to yourself. I know I will.) Winning it probably makes him a Hall of Famer.

Bubba Watson has been rejuvenated since New Year's Day. He has two victories, an excellent attitude and great shoes. (Did you see the pink G4s at the Masters?) Because TPC Sawgrass requires interesting thinking and shot-making, it may appeal to Bubba version 2018. Never rule him out when thinking is involved. People may believe he's an uncomplicated character from Bagdad, Florida, but I think there's a whole lot going on between his ears. If anything, he has too many thoughts. He's played well here, but he just hasn't won here. Yet. He can play shots Pete Dye never imagined. He could out-Pete-Dye Pete Dye.

Ian Poulter has one of those shorter (relatively) and straighter games, and he's a monster putter when he's on. It's a Ryder Cup year, and although he won in Houston, another victory would probably make him a 110 percent lock to make the European team. Poulter eats, sleeps and breathes Ryder Cup. If the shortest line to make the team is through THE PLAYERS, look for him to at least challenge. A victory would not be surprising. He was second to Si Woo Kim last year.

How about someone named Justin? You can't go wrong there, because it's a choice between Justin Thomas and Justin Rose. I picked them for the Masters, and it just didn't work out. But this is the next big event on the calendar, and they will be ready.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72 ■



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Justin Rose is a solid player and putts better, it seems, each season. Again, he will be looking for a victory to get on the Ryder Cup team, and THE PLAYERS would do it. Don't forget, he won the only Olympic gold to be awarded in golf in 100 years. He beat Henrik Stenson and Matt Kuchar to do it.

Justin Thomas ... what can you say? He has burst onto the scene and just grabs courses by the neck and strangles them. He's an amazing talent, and it's hard to believe he can keep his drives in the fairway because, like Bubba Watson, he nearly comes out of his shoes on tee shots. The only issue is the course may be too short for him. However, he won in Hawaii last year, and that's not a long track. Picking Thomas to win any week would have been very good for anyone in the 2016-2017 season. He won five times. We are only part way through 2018. He's only won once in 2018, so he's overdue.

Jordan Spieth? What can you say about him that hasn't been said already? He never looks like he's shooting a million under par, but you add up the score at the end and somehow it's 64, 67 or 68. It looks like he's recovered from mono that had him in bed for a month last December and kept him from practicing in the offseason. If you wondered why he hasn't won yet in 2018, the mono is the reason. It shoved all his offseason practice into 2018 so he wasn't at all sharp when he started in Hawaii and got semi-sharp by the Houston tournament. His final round at the Masters was otherworldly. And he missed a couple of eagle putts that could have given him a 62. I think he's ready to



Justin Thomas

Photo by DON CHRISTIAN

start winning again, and what better place than here? He likes the course.

Phil Mickelson ... maybe. Phil has become a one-name golfer because of his following and his record. You say Phil and people know who you are talking about. These days, he has to be gearing up for Shinnecock where the U.S. Open will be held. It is the site of one of his six second-place finishes in that event, and honestly, the course owes him one. Just this season, at age 47, Phil won a PGA Tour event. If you remember 25 or 30 years ago, only Raymond Floyd and Jack Nicklaus did that kind of thing. Floyd won the Doral Tournament when he was

49. Nicklaus won the Masters when he was 46. I still like Phil's chances, but I think he's focused on the U.S. Open.

Someone from Europe? There have only been four European winners of THE PLAYERS. Sandy Lyle was the first, back in 1987. You recall. Playoff. Jeff Sluman. Idiot diving into the lake at the 17th. The only other winners of THE PLAYERS from Europe have been Henrik Stenson, who is playing well again this year and should never be overlooked, Sergio and former world No. 1 Martin Kaymer, who has been sidelined with a wrist injury.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 74 ■

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It's hard to believe that so few Europeans have won since Pete Dye always says he takes his design ideas from the great old courses in Ireland and Scotland. You even have to look at someone like Alex Noren, who has had close calls this year, and Paul Casey, who has regained his form and apparently his European Tour status and won in Tampa at Valspar. He can always say he beat Tiger Woods there. Casey needs as many points as he can get for the Ryder Cup team.

Stenson has become a winning machine in his late 30s and early 40s. Remember, he won both the FedEx Cup and the Race to Dubai in 2013. He's not far removed from winning the British Open in 2016 and the Race to Dubai for the second time that same year. He already won THE PLAYERS and another victory here would probably lock up a place in the Hall of Fame. Plus, we need to at least have him in contention because he has a really funny sense of humor. His one-liners are lots of fun.



Rory McIlroy

Photo by DON CHRISTIAN

Rory McIlroy, for a few years, was always in contention at THE PLAYERS. Then he wasn't. The last couple of seasons, since he won the Tour Championship and the FedEx Cup in 2016, he's been hampered by injuries. However, after a long offseason rest in 2017, he's back playing

a heavy schedule again in 2018. McIlroy has so much talent that he should be able to fall out of bed and win something. Why not THE PLAYERS? Because, as Davis Love said ... you know the rest.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 76 ■

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Matt Kuchar won THE PLAYERS in 2012. It is, to date, his biggest victory, although you have to love that bronze medal at the Olympics. His last victory was four years ago, coincidentally at another Pete Dye golf course: Harbour Town. Kuch will be 40 this year, so each season a victory has a little more importance. As they say, 40 is the new 30, but any victory over 40, unless you are Vijay Singh, Sam Snead or Henrik Stenson, seems hard to win.

Jason Day is another past PLAYERS champ who is playing well this season with a victory at the Farmers Insurance Open. He would be a really popular second-time winner. With new shafts in his driver and 3-wood (from TPT Golf), we have to watch out for him. He acts like he wants to get back to No.1 in the world, and he knows what it takes to do that. A victory at THE PLAYERS would go a long way. Like for Davis



Tiger Woods

Recorder file photo

Love, it would give him two PLAYERS wins plus a PGA, and that's Hall of Fame stuff.

How about Tiger Woods? He's playing again. He played well before the Masters. He played well in spots at the Masters. Who is

to say that he can't carve out another PLAYERS victory? How fabulous would it be for him to beat the toughest field all year?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 78 ■



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If you want a dark horse, how about Xander Schauffele? Say his name three times fast, I dare you. Schauffele won the Tour Championship last year, but because Justin Thomas captured the FedEx Cup and dominated the 2017 season, Schauffele was mostly overlooked. To tell you how promising Schauffele is, he got a PGA Tour card until the end of 2016 and he won the Greenbrier Classic in his first PGA Tour year, 2017, which got him to the Tour Championship that he won. Anybody who is new and can do that, well, you have to pay attention to that kind of talent.

How about someone who is up-and-coming? Cameron Smith of Australia is someone to watch.

Finally, go with whoever David Duval says on Golf Channel.

Just so you know, I have never actually picked the winner of THE PLAYERS, although I did say one year an Aussie would win, and Adam Scott did. Mostly my suggestions go down in flames, with embers spitting out everywhere. But as we all know, it's really hard to pick the winner of THE PLAYERS or any golf tournament without some sort of divine intervention. I haven't had any Hale Irwin-type dreams, and voices haven't told me to open my stance or that Tiger Woods is going to win. I keep coming back to Xander Schauffele, and not for any good reason.



Xander Schauffele

Photo by DAVID CANNON/GETTY IMAGES



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By **KATHY BISSELL**

In January 2017, Jim Furyk was named captain of the 2018 Ryder Cup for the U.S. team, a great honor for any golfer.

If you're unfamiliar, the Ryder Cup is a team competition between 12 players from the U.S. and 12 from Europe. This September, Furyk will lead the U.S. squad as it takes on the Europeans at Le Golf National outside Paris.

"My wife and I have enjoyed this event," said Furyk in a press conference when he was announced Ryder Cup captain. "It's no secret. It's been my favorite event my entire career. In my opinion, the Ryder Cup embodies everything special about golf."

He noted that the matches were originally about camaraderie. They still are but have grown from a quiet little event to a monumental golf extravaganza.

"It brings fans together from worldwide, and I just — I get chills thinking about all the events that I've been able to participate in and how fortunate I've been," he added.

RYDER CUP HISTORY

The Ryder Cup began in 1927 as a contest between the U.S. and a team from Great Britain and Ireland. In 1979, players from continental Europe were added, changing the names of the teams to the U.S. and Europe.



Photo by **DON CHRISTIAN**

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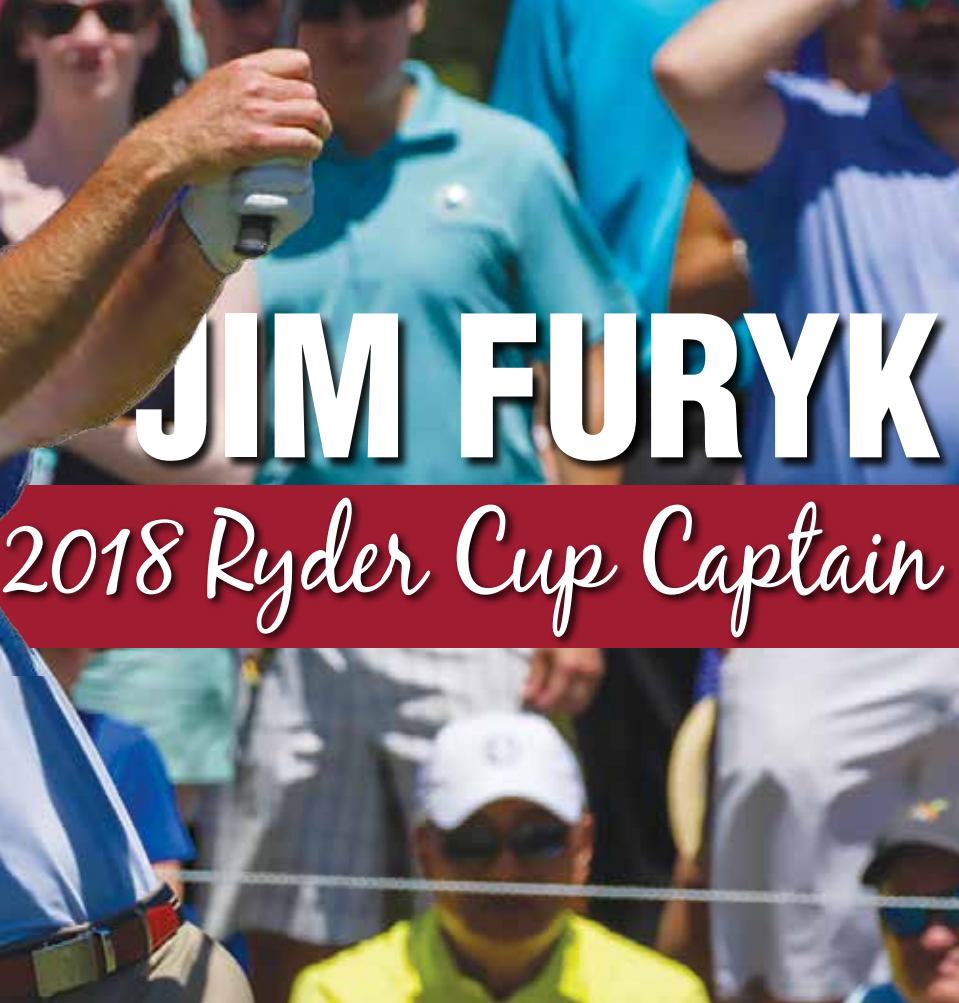


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JIM FURYK

2018 Ryder Cup Captain

The event has been held every two years, with interruptions only for World War II and 9/11. In fact, the 1939 Ryder Cup was slated for Ponte Vedra, but the dangers of travel from Europe with U-boats in the water caused the event to be canceled until after World War!

The teams play for the Ryder Cup, a gold trophy that was donated by seed merchant Samuel Ryder. In the event of a tie in points at the end of the matches, the team that had the cup gets to keep it for another two years.

The best golfers from both sides have participated in the competition over the decades. Arnold Palmer leads the number of match victories for the U.S. with 22. Lanny Wadkins and Billy Casper have 20, while Lee Trevino and Jack Nicklaus have 17. Sir Nick Faldo leads the point-getters from Europe with 25, followed by Bernhard Langer with 24, Colin Montgomerie with 23 ½, Lee Westwood with 23 and Seve Ballesteros with 22½.

Until the mid-1980s, the U.S. dominated the Ryder Cup, winning nearly every contest. Since the 1980s, it's been the other way around. Now Furyk's being tasked with bringing home the first victory on European soil in 25 years.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 82 ■

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MORE ON THE CAPTAIN

The PGA of America, which appointed Furyk, likes their pick.

Julius Mason, head of the PGA's public awareness and external relations, said, "In the history of The Ryder Cup, and that's nearly 90 years we're talking about, there has never been a United States Ryder Cup captain who has played in more Ryder Cups."

That's a pretty strong endorsement, considering some of the past Ryder Cup captains include Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson.

Certainly, it speaks to Furyk's longevity over many excellent seasons on the PGA Tour. He was a Ryder Cupper for Tom Kite, Ben Crenshaw, Curtis Strange, Hal Sutton, Tom Lehman, Paul Azinger, Corey Pavin, Davis Love III and Watson. He played on his first team in 1997, and he was on every team until 2016, when he was a vice captain for Love at Hazeltine. He is third all-time in matches played at 34, tied with Lanny Wadkins, and behind only Phil Mickelson (41) and the late Billy Casper (37).

Furyk is also one of the most successful golfers ever to play on the PGA Tour. He's a major champion, winning the U.S Open in 2003. He's won 26 times around the world, and 17 times on the PGA Tour. He has been able to do this despite several seasons of injuries.



2018 Ryder Cup captains Thomas Bjorn and Jim Furyk hit golf balls from the Eiffel Tower in October 2017.
Photo courtesy of THE PGA OF AMERICA

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One of Furyk's career achievements was shooting 59 for 18 holes in a PGA Tour event, which was otherworldly until he topped it by shooting 58, the only PGA Tour score that low. But his low scores do not explain the character of the man.

In 2015, Furyk was presented with the ASAP Sports/Jim Murray Award by the Golf Writers Association of America. The award, which is named after the legendary Los Angeles Times sportswriter Jim Murray, honors a golfer who is cooperative and accommodating with the media.

In 2016, Furyk received the Payne Stewart Award given by the PGA Tour. The award goes to players who have shown respect for the traditions of the game, are involved in charitable endeavors and present themselves professionally through their conduct. The Furyks have been fortunate enough to be able to create a charity, the Jim and Tabitha Furyk Foundation, which was established to assist organizations that help families and children in need.

Now, becoming Ryder Cup captain adds another layer of responsibility to Furyk's life and may provide him with his biggest career challenge. Since the 1989 Ryder Cup, which was a tie in point totals with Europe retaining the Ryder Cup, the U.S. has won just five of the 13 contests and none in Europe since 1993. That's a quarter of a century.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 84 ■

TOP AGENT MAGAZINE



Robin Rawald
coldwell banker vanguard realty

Robin Rawald's clients would say that any agent should strive to be the kind of agent Robin is. One couple, describing the time that they worked with Robin for a home purchase, remembers that after the closing, even the seller complimented Robin, saying they would refer her to anyone looking for a Realtor. Turns out this is normal for Robin, who is the kind of REALTOR® who continually surprises her clients, even those who have worked with her on multiple transactions. Her buyers say she guides them every step of the way, always making sure they learn of listings immediately and that their needs are met. Her sellers rave about Robin's marketing strategies, tenacity, and eagerness to roll up her sleeves to make deals work.

A leading agent with Coldwell Banker Premier Properties in St. Augustine, FL, Robin sees repeat business from clients who wouldn't go to anyone else. And she's such a genuine individual that it takes prodding to get Robin to tell her own success story. "I think people come back to me because of the service I provide and because I become great friends with most of them," she says of her high rate of repeat and referral business. One client applauds her smart, kind, thorough, knowledgeable and genuine, saying that she started with a REALTOR® and ended up with a "friend for life."

The fact that she truly enjoys her work adds a special dimension to the effort Robin puts forth for each client. "I wake up happy every day because I like what I do," says, adding that another true joy is the fact that her step daughter works as her assistant. Together, they approach their clients' needs with steadfast, hands-on attention, whether guiding first-time buyers seamlessly through what otherwise might seem a confusing time, or getting creative with preparing homes for marketing and sale. Robin explains that to market listings, she takes advantage of the Coldwell Banker resources as well as a strong social media presence and several print publications.

Relationships like the ones Robin forms happen when a REALTOR® keeps clients' interests at heart, makes themselves available for any and every question and communicates proactively every step of the way. Robin entered South Florida's real estate market with the professionalism and people skills that in 2005 led her to the Rookie of the Year Award at a branch of Coldwell Banker. By 2007 she was Top Producer; and for three years, she has won the Diamond Award for Coldwell Banker. But among her greatest honors was being named Woman of the Year by the National Association of Professional Women for 2013-2014, plus a previous nomination in 2011.

These designations speak to her passion for her trade and for her eagerness to help others succeed. She also believes in the importance of giving back to people in need, donating time and effort to Wounded Warriors, K-9 for Warriors, Ronald McDonald Charities, and Children with Disabilities. As she rolls out new branding and develops a larger team, Robin places great emphasis on doing well by others. "Loyalty and are so important today," says Robin, who wants that message to sit at the heart of her growing team and the messaging they convey through their branding. "I love what I do," she says. "As long as you do what you love, every day you wake up and say it's a great day."



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CAN HE DO IT?

Winning in Europe is difficult these days. It's a very partisan environment. Countries that, historically, don't like each other give up any animosity and are vocal in support of their team. It's a little like the Florida/Georgia game on steroids and played for three solid days from sunrise to sunset.

It's not that Furyk isn't strong enough to handle it. He won the season-long FedEx Cup and Tour Championship in spite of being disqualified from one of the playoff events due to a faulty alarm clock that didn't wake him up in time for his pro-am tee time. He spotted 125 players the points for that week in the FedEx Playoffs and was still victorious, moving from the 11th position to the winner's circle at the Tour Championship. But that's as an individual. Now, he's going to head up a team.

Yes, Furyk won a U.S. Open, typically the toughest tournament all year because of the course setup. But this is big. And he won't be the one with golf clubs in his hands. He will be the inspirational leader.



Brooks Koepka
Photos by DON CHRISTIAN



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Phil Mickelson



Matt Kuchar

“We have 25 years of scars to overcome,” he said about the mountain in front of him. “That being said, I will have a lot of young talent on my team. I’m anxious to see how they handle that challenge, and surely, Europe has handled those away matches far better in the last 25 years than we have.”

His team should include Justin Thomas, Dustin Johnson, Jordan Spieth, Bubba Watson, Brooks Koepka, Phil Mickelson, Matt Kuchar and Brian Harman. However, any number of changes to the points list could happen before the top eight are finalized on Aug. 13. After that time, the captain has four picks. Three picks will be made after the Dell Technologies Championship. The final selection will happen after the BMW Championship.

Others on the list are Rickie Fowler in 11th and Patrick Reed in 9th. Tiger Woods is 27th and gaining steam.

Players qualify by earning points based on money won on the PGA Tour, with one point equaling \$1,000. Major championship winners receive two points per \$1,000 for that tournament. All who make the cut at majors get 1.5 points per \$1,000.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 86 ■

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Europe has a different method to select its team because many from Europe spend more than half the year in the U.S. on the PGA Tour. However, their side will likely include Sergio Garcia, Justin Rose, Rory McIlroy, Jon Rahm, Ian Poulter, Henrik Stenson and perhaps Paul Casey and Alex Noren. No matter who is at the top, Europe seems to find players to get the job done every two years. They are geniuses at getting something extra out of every player, including virtual unknowns.

Tiger Woods and Steve Stricker have already been picked to be vice captains for Furyk. They were both vice captains to Love at the 2016 Ryder Cup.

“Steve ... he's not the rah-rah, he's not the cheerleader in the locker room, not the cheerleader in the team room,” Furyk said about his choice. “He has a knack of being able to look through the room and view different players, different situations, and when Steve speaks up and when he's giving advice to our captains, it's been very useful. I think he's that guy that when he speaks, everyone listens because they know it's going to be important.”

Many people have wondered what Woods brings to team rooms as a vice captain. Furyk did not hesitate.

“What Tiger really has brought to the table for our vice captains is a great knowledge of X's and O's,” Furyk said. “I think he's done a really good job of pairing players together in foursomes and fourballs. When you look at



Sergio Garcia
Photos by DON CHRISTIAN



Paul Casey

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Jon Rahm

our team room and you look at a lot of the youth that we have in that team room now with the younger players, a lot of them became golf professionals, fell in love with the game of golf because they wanted to be — they wanted to emulate Tiger Woods.”

Could Woods be a vice captain and play? Both Woods and Furyk said they will cross that bridge when they come to it. Woods, naturally, is hoping to earn enough points to grab a spot on the team. If Woods were in 10th through 20th place in points, any captain would have to take a hard look at him as a captain’s pick.

KEYS TO SUCCESS

What the U.S. must overcome is the European team’s “secret sauce” for winning. Whatever it is, it has worked for them for three decades, and they, naturally, refuse to divulge it.

After the disappointment of the 2014 Ryder Cup loss, several of those who competed during Ryder Cup losses and victories created a task force of players, including Davis Love III, Tom Lehman, Raymond Floyd, Phil Mickelson, Tiger Woods, Steve Stricker, Rickie Fowler, Furyk and PGA of America officers, who wanted to create a U.S. system for success to mimic the one the Europeans have. They were pleased to see that their work brought them a victory as soon as 2016 at Hazeltine.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 88 ■

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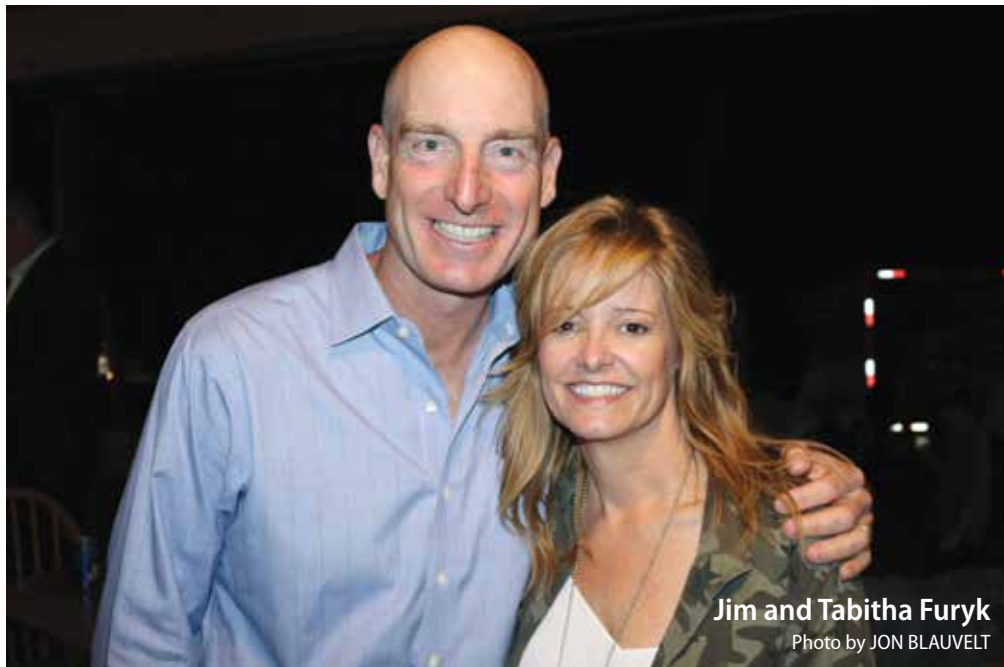
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While there are several aspects of the European “secret sauce,” it’s really not difficult to guess some of it. Part of it is grooming captains by having them be vice captains so each captain doesn’t have to reinvent the wheel and start from scratch. Europe uses the experience of previous captains, standing on the shoulders of those who came before them.

Another aspect is grooming players, whether they are playing in Europe or on the PGA Tour. But there’s much more to it than that. Europe sometimes picks teammates for fourball or foursomes based on countries or other commonalities. For example, Seve Ballesteros and Jose Maria Olazabal, both from Spain, were one of the most successful teams ever in the Ryder Cup.

And finally, they use courses the players in Europe know and play. They have done that since the 1980s. The U.S. doesn’t.

“I think one of the genius moves of all for Ryder Cup Europe is really having that event at a course where their play-



Jim and Tabitha Furyk

Photo by JON BLAUVELT

ers are comfortable,” Furyk mentioned about Le Golf National. “They’ve had the French Open there, I think, over 20 times in 25 years. The players know the golf course well, and they like the golf course, and they are used to the shots that it takes.”

Other courses in the European Ry-

der Cup rotation have been sites of the European Tour tournaments, particularly The Belfry. However, new ones have also been added, like Valderrama in Spain, the K Club in Ireland, Gleneagles in Scotland and now Le Golf National in France, to better represent the different countries that make up the team.



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Jim Furyk and Thomas Bjorn pose with the Ryder Cup during a captain's photo shoot in October 2017.
 Photo courtesy of THE PGA OF AMERICA

All of those factors have contributed to a recipe for success, in addition to leadership style created by Tony Jacklin in the mid-1980s.

Since that time, the Ryder Cup has transformed from a nice little event that only golfers on the team knew about to a monster-happening that Furyk is tasked with winning in Europe.

"It's just a tough, grueling competition," Furyk said. "The stage is no bigger in golf."

The history of the last 30 years of the Ryder Cup is the reason Furyk's task is tougher than it would have been for an Arnold Palmer, Ben Hogan, Byron Nelson, Billy Casper or most of the other U.S. captains in history. The last three decades have made creating a winning Ryder Cup team harder each time. With enough support, the new U.S. "secret sauce," and great putting from the team, he can get it done.



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Martin Wyeth's POWER TEE

Martin Wyeth (right) stands with his wife Clare in front of their home in Ponte Vedra Beach.

Photo by JON BLAUVELT

By **KATHY BISSELL**

Inventors usually don't wake up in the morning and just think about what to invent. Usually they are trying to solve a problem for themselves or for someone else.

Martin Wyeth, for example, was struggling with learning to play golf as an adult.

"There were so many things to remember," he recalls. "Keep your arm straight. Keep your chin up. Bend your knees. All this myriad list, the checklist that you go down."

He's right. Learning golf can be a challenge, particularly for adults. For kids, somehow, it's easier. They grab a club and have at it. They aren't hamstrung by a list of things they have to do. And, honestly, most of them wouldn't stand still long enough to go through what an adult does when learning the game.

What happened to Wyeth was he would go through the requisite checklist and hit a ball and get one result. Then he'd go through the checklist and hit another ball and get a different result. He was trying to figure out what he had done differently between ball one and ball two.

Finally, there was the brainstorm moment when he decided that maybe if he didn't have to break his stance and ball position and retee a ball, he might have a better chance at improving. He decided he would come up with a mechanical solution. Being an engineer, he knew he could design something.

"The idea was that if you automatically replace the ball rather than having to disrupt your setup, then it would allow

me to really understand what I was doing with the golf club and what caused the good shot and what caused the bad shot," he explains.

There are probably plenty of instructors who would question, not his idea, but the thought that someone new to the game would be able to diagnose what was different between two swings. However, most instructors probably would agree that the ability to keep a stance and grip on the club for a second shot has a lot of value. You may have seen the Hank Haney program on Golf Channel where he brings a student to the practice tee and there are a gazillion balls already teed up. Same idea. You hit a ball, then see the result. Then step up to the next ball.

Regardless of which side of that discussion you may be on, Wyeth thought the idea was compelling enough that he went ahead with it. Turns out, he was onto something. After much work and effort, enter Power Tee.

Power Tee is a mat that tees up your golf ball automatically and feels like you are hitting off of grass when you do not use the tee function. But Power Tee also tees the ball up to whatever height — grass, low tee, medium tee, high tee — you want, and it does it right in front of you. There's no leaving your perfectly created setup between shots. You can concentrate on making a good swing, not on non-essentials.

As you can imagine, there was trial and error with making a machine of this kind, but Wyeth did it. Then he showed it to people in driving ranges and showed it to golfers where he lived.



Power Tees are currently installed at the Las Vegas Golf Center, among several other locations.

Photos courtesy of POWER TEE

“The reaction from the golfers was one of absolute excitement,” he says. “They enjoyed seeing the ball come up. They enjoyed multiple tee heights.”

Power Tee created what Wyeth calls an immediate love affair with the golfers that used it.

“The company was extremely successful in the UK and Europe,” he continued. “Power Tee is installed in about 60 percent of the UK’s driving ranges.”

Power Tee is in use at St. Andrews in Scotland, The Belfry in England, Wentworth in England, Celtic Manor in Wales and Le Golf National in France, where this year’s Ryder Cup will be held, to name but a few.

“We’ve teed up about 40 billion golf balls, stretching to the moon and back several times,” Wyeth notes about Power Tee. “We tee up six million a day.”

COMING TO A CROSSROAD

In 2009, Wyeth faced the choice of staying in Europe, where they had already achieved a good level of acceptance and a lot of market penetration, selling their business or expanding to the U.S.

They decided to move to the U.S., more specifically Ponte Vedra.

“We made the decision, given the size of the American market and the cultural tie that America has with golf,” Wyeth notes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 92 ■

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Wyeth notes that even politicians, including many presidents in the U.S., play golf.

“It’s basically woven into the fabric of America; it’s an enormous part of the culture,” he explained as someone who was on the outside looking into the U.S.

Martin and his wife Clare had already vacationed in Florida several times, including to Ponte Vedra. And golf made their relocation decision easy.

They were driving up the coast on A1A and saw a sign for Sawgrass. They recognized the name from a golf game they had played. And, as they said, there’s not much not to like about Ponte Vedra. They cited the golf courses, the beaches and the welcoming attitude of the people. With a first child on the way, the schools here also played a part in the decision.

Having relocated, Wyeth had to carve out a business, and unfortunately, they moved here in 2009, the beginning of the recent recession. It took a while to get things started on the right track



Golfers use Power Tees to practice driving at McGolf in Boston.

because banks were not financing anything. However, they made their way.

Their first sale in the U.S. was to Tommy Barber, the grandson of Jerry Barber, winner of the 1961 PGA Championship. Barber is in the greater Los Angeles area, near Glendale and Burbank.

From there, Power Tee spread to San Francisco, Sacramento, Charlotte and Connecticut. These days, the company has some sizable installations, including the Las Vegas Golf Center, which has 40 Power Tees, and at McGolf in Boston, which has 62 Power Tees.

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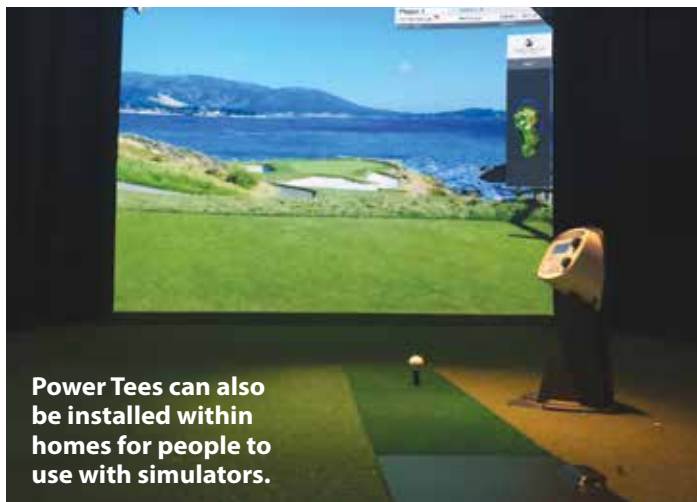
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“The mats feel like hitting off turf,” Wyeth noted. “There’s no tees on the range. The grass is in better condition.”

If you have never been to a range, what happens is that the range has a hitting area of grass that gets used, chewed up and worn out. The course or range owner then moves the hitting area backward or forward to another section of grass while the chewed-up part regrows. In the South, with Bermudagrass, regrowth is fast and easy – as we know you cannot kill Bermudagrass. But in cooler climates, it can take quite a while to regrow bluegrass or rye or fescue. You may have to reseed or resod. Some ranges get so beat up that use declines because no one can find a decent spot to hit a ball.

While the grass savings may be a small benefit to range owners, what was compelling to them was that operators of ranges in the U.K. found business increased between 20 and 50 percent when Power Tee was introduced.



Power Tees can also be installed within homes for people to use with simulators.

“That increase was driven by more people using the range and by the people who do use the range using it more frequently,” Wyeth explained. “Also, when they do use the range, they tend to hit more balls.”

More recently, Wyeth met with Jim and Mike Furyk. Most everyone knows that Mike is a PGA pro and that he taught Jim. They told Wyeth that they loved the product and wanted to see it succeed.

Jim became a product ambassador,

and he has a unit installed in his house and uses it to practice.

“Jim has given us a tremendous amount of time and of his support,” Wyeth said. “He’s spent a lot of time thinking about the product and has actually added to it.”

According to Wyeth, the addition has to do with an alignment aid to help golfers get into the right position. They can be installed in back yards or garages, wherever the golfer has the space to put one.

So, now in the “what to get the dad who has absolutely everything for Father’s Day category,” there’s a new must-have for the very upscale father: Power Tee. They cost \$4,500, plus shipping. But if you can find a friend with a truck, you can save the shipping charge and go out to their office on U.S. 1 and pick one up. The units have five-year warranties. Where are you putting yours?

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Youth on Course continues to grow, encourages kids to play golf

By KATHY BISSELL

Youth on Course, a nonprofit organization headquartered in Pebble Beach, California, is opening the door to provide a way for kids ages 6-18 to play golf.

The concept behind the organization is to sign up golf facilities willing to provide \$5 per round green fees for youngsters, utilizing unsold tee times. The nonprofit will then reimburse the course, up to as much as \$25. However, most reimbursements are less than that, according to Kaitlyn Petrando, marketing director for the group. The average is \$7.

Youngsters ages 6-18 then sign up to become members, and they receive a membership card that they present at the course to receive the \$5 rate (youthoncourse.org/players/).

Considering the roster of courses that are currently participating, it is clear that many of them are involved because they also believe that to grow the game, young people need playing opportunities. For example, Spanish Bay, which is part of the Pebble Beach Company, and Poppy Hills, which is owned by the Northern California Golf Association, take a fraction of the regular green fee to provide youngsters an opportunity to play. Poppy Hills ordinarily charges \$80-100 and Spanish Bay charges \$290 if

you are a resort guest, and more if you are not. Youth on Course reimburses Spanish Bay up to the \$25 limit. It is the highest paid course, and clearly, the courses are not participating for the money.

Because Youth on Course was an extension of the Northern California Golf Association's "grow the game" activities, the organization tries to work through state golf associations to reach course owners. Last fall, for example, the nonprofit reached an agreement with the Carolinas Golf Association, but there are few courses that have joined from that area to date. Youth on Course has not yet partnered with the Florida Golf Association. There is a national map on the Youth on Course website with information on each participating facility.

Youngsters can log on to the Youth on Course web site to find out which courses in their area have available tee times. Currently, there are approximately 30,000 youngsters who have "joined" as members of Youth on Course. All junior golfers have to do to become a "member" is sign up. There is no membership fee, and the green fee is always \$5 (youthoncourse.org/join/).

To have the program in the First Coast, the area first needs to get courses signed up with Youth on Course. Enroll at youthoncourse.org/courses/course-interest-form.

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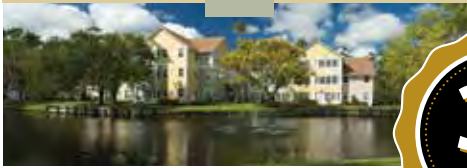
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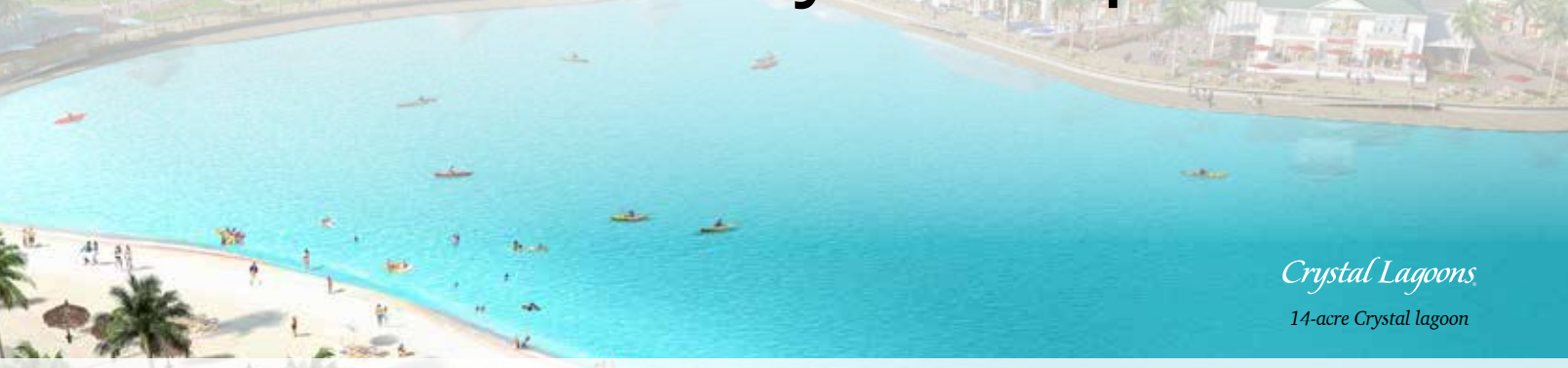


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