



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

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Dear Subscriber:

Frequently the best stories, in golf or elsewhere, turn out to be apocryphal and are ultimately improved once their authenticity is restored. While commentators can be tricked into believing that newly discovered evidence tells the real story, it is the work of accomplished historians to settle details through various sources. The story that appears immediately following arrived in our mail from a subscriber and golf historian in the south of England as a reply to our WHY FOURTEEN CLUBS? piece that appeared in last month's issue. We must stand with its author as someone devoted to accuracy as well as the baffling humor found in the days when people relied on their good sense rather than so many lawyers and bureaucrats.

"... in the Swinley early years ..."

Your piece on how the fourteen club rule came into being was splendid. A collector's piece. It reminded me of a story of how stroke indices were introduced into the most private of private clubs in the London area; Swinley Forest, created by the local Crown Land lease holder, Lord Derby, and designed by [Harry S.] Colt, because Lady Derby was prevented from being a member at local men's clubs like Sunningdale.

Although Harry Colt was Secretary in the Swinley early years, as well as holding the same post at nearby Sunningdale, matches between members at Swinley relied on the more gentlemanly bisque system, where a stroke called a bisque [see O.E.D. definition below] was taken at whichever hole the received thought it was convenient, or even sporting, to claim it.

Less casual golfers from clubs like Sunningdale

began to join and spoil the amateur feel of the place, and an undercurrent for a stroke index system developed. The Harry Colt replacement Secretary [at Swinley] did not like these "new fangled ideas" and wrote to the R and A to say that he did not understand the system and could they explain it. The response from the R and A was reputed to be complicated, and finished by giving the stroke indices of the St. Andrews Old Course.

The [Swinley] Secretary, knowing when his intellectual or numerical capacity was being overstretched, decided that what was right for St. Andrews was right for Swinley Forest, which adopted

the same stroke indices as the Old Course. Who could possibly fault his decision? I would not want to research this story too far as fact can ruin fiction, and the two are not good bedfellows.

However what is undoubtedly fact is that in the fifties the owner of the property bounding the left side of the eighteenth hole at Swinley was a zoologist, who confined a large baboon, one stroke down from a gorilla, in his wire netted garden. This creature [the

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See detailed enclosure.

baboon] would roar aggressively at any golfer who played [right handed] with a draw, and those who did, soon learned to carry a similarly shaped banana to satisfy and quieten the beast. Needless to say, Swinley does not bother at all with dogs accompanying members, though visitors' dogs are not encouraged, possibly because visiting non sophistidogs (or cats?) might misuse the stroke index posts that the members became so pleased with.

With best wishes.

bisque

from the OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY:

Also biscaye, bisk.

[a. F. *bisque*, of same meaning; of unknown origin. Littré compares It. *bisca* a gaming-place, a 'hell.']

1.1 Real Tennis. A term for the odds which one player gives the other in allowing him to score one point once during the 'set' at any time he may elect. Also in Croquet: An extra turn allowed to a weaker player.

[1611 Cotgr., *Biscaye*, a vantage at Tennis. *Bisque*, a fault at Tennis.] 1656 Blount *Glossogr.*, *Bisque* (Fr.), a fault at Tennis. [So in 1678 Phillips.] 1679 Shadwell *True Widow I. Wks.* 1720 III. 124 *We'll play with you at a bisk, and a fault, for twenty pound.* 1721 Bailey, *Bisk, Bisque*, odds at the play of Tennis; a stroke allowed to the weaker player. French. 1872 Prior *Croquet* 56 Mr. Hale made the happy suggestion of adopting the *bisque* as a means of equalizing a strong and a weak player. 1874 Heath *Croquet Pl.* 77 Example of how to take the *Bisque*.

2.2 fig. †to have a bisque in one's sleeve: to have something to fall back upon, another resource, another string to one's bow. to give one fifteen, etc. and a bisque: to give him long odds, to 'leave him nowhere' in a contest or comparison.

Chunking v. Retvetting Bunker Edges Machined to Look Natural

The modern technique of *chunking* bunker edges, although an old application, can be used to explain the current fad for this look at most newly constructed courses. Golf course architect Jaeger Kovich described chunking like this in a recent article that appeared in **GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTURE:**

Chunking is a construction technique for transplanting established grasses and plant varieties, along with the root structure, contained in about six inches of soil, directly onto a golf feature from the bucket of a machine. ... The name comes from the amount of soil that gets scooped into the bucket of the machine with the plant material, normally an excavator.

Chunking instantly provides the rough edges and erosion-like variation in edge height that simulate a more natural look than clean, sharp edges or revetted bunker faces and edges. More Merion than Oakmont; more Kingston Heath than Old Course.

The current fad of chunking might be explained as an effort to create golf escapades with the illusion of a more natural setting. The use of hydraulic excavators needed for proper modern chunking dispel the idea of a naturally occurring feature. It's more about appearances. We do not disdain chunking. It should, however, be seen for what it is: a different technique for edging bunkers that can be appealing, but is just as artificial as the firm clean edges of Augusta National.

COMMENTARY:

Give Mr. Price a Chance One Among Fifteen

What Does the U.S.G.A.'s Gracelessness Portend?

On October 30, the United States Golf Association via press release announced the 2018 executive committee nominations in a style that we have never before seen. While the format, typography, and dateline all appear as usual, the content of the sub-headline and the third paragraph are concerning. The top of the release appears below.



USGA Announces 2018 Executive Committee Nominations

*Mark Newell nominated as 65th president
Other nominees for the volunteer group include World Golf Hall of Fame member Nick Price*

FAR HILLS, N.J. (Oct. 30, 2017) – Mark Newell, of McLean, Va., has been nominated to serve a one-year term as the 65th president of the United States Golf Association (USGA) by the USGA Nominating Committee. He would replace Diana Murphy, who is completing her second and final one-year term.

Newell, a five-year member of the USGA Executive Committee, has chaired the Rules of Golf Committee since 2012. During that time, he has co-led the joint USGA/R&A Rules modernization project, which will result in major Rules changes in 2019. He also chaired the USGA Handicap Committee and spent four years as co-chair of the World Handicap Initiative, which developed the proposed USGA/R&A World Handicap System that is scheduled to debut in 2020.

Newell's nomination comes alongside those of four new nominees to the Executive Committee, including three-time major champion and former World No. 1 player Nick Price, and a new general counsel.

The other new nominees to the 15-member Executive Committee, a volunteer group that serves as the Association's executive policy-making board, are Paul G. Brown, Kendra Graham and Sharon Ritchey. Richard A. Shortz has been nominated as general counsel.

If elected at the USGA's Annual Meeting on Feb. 3, 2018, in Miami, Fla., the nominees would replace departing Committee members Murphy, Sheila Johnson, George Still and Thomas Hough. Robert Weber will also retire as general counsel.

We cannot remember ever having seen one nominee to the 15-member executive committee singled out in a subhead immediately below the announcement of the incoming president:

Other nominees for the volunteer group include World Golf Hall of Fame member Nick Price.

For those who look at such nuances like the C.I.A. used to look at the seating charts of the Supreme Soviet, the announcement appears to herald a new U.S.G.A. pecking order: president, hall of famer, and others. The thread continues with the third paragraph:

Newell's nomination comes alongside those of four new nominees to the Executive Committee, including three-time major champion and former World No. 1 player Nick Price, and a new general counsel.

So what's afoot? Is this a.) just another rather rude error by the U.S.G.A. public relations department; b.) a giddy, we-just-couldn't-wait-to-tell-you need of the association's staff leadership; c.) an announcement intended to improve relations between the association and the tour players even before Mr. Price is elected; or d.) a nod to something wider and more impactful just over the horizon?

What it all might mean be will be addressed in a moment. What needs to be written before speculating about its potential meaning is that Mr. Price has been dealt a disservice by being treated differently than the other nominees. We suspect he is probably mortified and, therefore, deserves an private apology if that has not already been extended.

Twelve days after the U.S.G.A. press release, a GOLF DIGEST piece by Tim Rosaforte (incorrectly dated online as January 2014) reported how Mr. Price's nomination came to pass, as described by Mike Davis, U.S.G.A. executive director and chief executive officer. The story gives an insider's view, which is Mr. Rosaforte's forte, of the Davis-Price relationship at dinners with spouses,

their mutual membership at Seminole, and ultimately Mr. Price's offer to help.

While Mr. Rosaforte gives a nod to the U.S.G.A. nominating committee for accepting Mr. Davis's suggestion of including Mr. Price in the 2018 nominations, those familiar with the nominating process know that the executive director/ceo may suggest, but the nominating committee decides, which they did.

Following the U.S.G.A. press release, the GOLF DIGEST story became a second source for applauding Mr. Price separately from the other executive committee members. Mr. Davis referred to how it would improve relations with the tours. "It's just different playing on the tour," Mr. Davis is quoted, "that's your mind set, so it will be a welcome addition."

Mr. Price is quoted in the same piece, "I have my thoughts, and I know what I think, but I don't know what they think. I'm looking forward to working with the tech guys, and I have spent a little time with them. All I'm saying, this is an opportunity for us as professional golfers to do something with the U.S.G.A. that's unique."

In another GOLF DIGEST piece three days later, Mr. Price was quoted, "I asked Mike [Davis] if this would be a PR role. And he was adamant that it was not. He wants to take the U.S.G.A. down a more player-friendly path."

Leaving behind the U.S.G.A.'s poor judgment in its post-nomination workings with the press, what could be the strategic reason for their operating in this extraordinary way? The majority of inside opinion is that a major change to the ball and clubs is in the offing and the high regard with which Mr. Price is held by all those who know him will be valuable in dealing with the professional tours and the public.

The ball's performance will most likely be dialed back, as will club performance, in order to remove the vulnerability of older, shorter courses to equipment science.

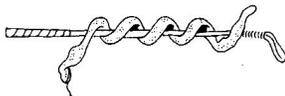


Golf's ruling bodies missed baseball's lesson in disallowing the aluminum bat. In order to accomplish a reset or reversal, golf ball and club regulations must be re-adjusted to disallow what has been allowed for too long.

Will this mean the dreaded bifurcation of the Rules i.e. one set of Rules for the best players and another for the rest of us? Not necessarily. The R&A may simply decide that making such an equipment change is how all players will play - full stop. Simple. The U.S.G.A. may do the same. However, if the U.S.G.A. fears public reaction to such a decision, they may make the changes a Condition of Competition that could be adopted for specific competitions just as the One-Ball Rule or the Embedded Ball Rule *through the green* is adopted for specific qualifiers and championships.

If, when, and to whatever extent this all takes place, what do we all do with our \$500 drivers, composite fairway woods, foam-injected irons, &c? Disallowed equipment could be grandfathered for a period of time just as Ping irons and sharply grooved wedges were grandfathered in the past.

Everyone playing the same game - using the same equipment and under the same Rules - has always been valued by the majority of players. We see no advantage to implementing a Condition of Competition caveat as a long term solution. Have the nerve to make the changes, grandfather everyday players' old clubs for a period of time (most players will eventually switch over as they



For W.H.T.B.:

Admirer: *Herr Mozart, I am thinking of writing symphonies. Can you give me any suggestions as to how to get started?*

Mozart: *A symphony is a very complex musical form. Perhaps you should begin with some simple lieder and work your way up to a symphony.*

Admirer: *But Herr Mozart, you were writing symphonies when you were 8 years old.*

Mozart: *Yes, but I never asked anybody how.*

always have), give the equipment manufacturers the time - but not too much - to make the changes needed for tour and college players, and have a Condition of Competition local rule that can be adopted if needed during the interim.

All of this should be accomplished before the 150th Open Championship, which will be played over the Old Course in St. Andrews in 2021.

GOLF AROUND THE WORLD 2017 The R&A's Statistical Snapshot

Earlier this year The R&A published a succinct accounting of some large-scale statistics that offer an intriguing view of golf around the world. A digital copy of the report can be downloaded at www.randa.org.

GLOBAL GOLF SCORE CARD

Land area	56,970,000 miles
Countries	245
Golfing Countries	208
Golf facilities	33,161
Golf holes	567,111
18-hole equivalents	31,506
18-hole equivalents ...	
... under development	556
Population	7,422,606,586
Private clubs	8,204
Public clubs	24,957
Population per golf hole	13,088

Yours vry truly,

Gary A. Galyean
Editor & Publisher

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