



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

Without fear of contumacy nor regard for decorum, several, not all but several, of the leading professional tour players plodded their way through the 2019 season generally oblivious or unembarrassed by what was left in the wake of their behavior. Rules infractions, slow play, excellent play, petulance, easier setups, and a touch of nudity stand out when the 46+ tournament weeks are reviewed as a body of work.

Constructed here is a season-long time line that offers a semi-concise picture of what we were all treated to by golf's professionals during the past year. There is a danger of bowdlerizing [modifying by abridging, distorting or omitting] which we have attempted to avoid, but which may be unavoidable in such a short article. We readily acknowledge that the players' selection of news items would differ significantly from our own.

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The 2019 tour begins in the fall of 2018, which we rather despise because of the calendar awkwardness it invokes simply for purposes of public relations and marketing. While we will begin our overview in earnest with January 2019, we would be remiss not to mention the most memorable news item from the autumn tour that takes place in Mexico at the Mayakoba Golf Classic.

Nov. 11, 2018 - Matt Kuchar's regular caddie could not work the Mayakoba event, so Mr. Kuchar hires David Ortiz from El Camaleon G.C. For the first time in four years, Mr. Kuchar wins, which earns him \$1,296,000. Normally tour caddies receive 10 per cent of the prize money when working for the winner. Instead, Mr. Kuchar pays Mr. Ortiz \$5,000 based on an agreement the two had

come to at the beginning of the week. "For a guy who makes \$200 a day," observes Mr. Kuchar, "a \$5,000 week is a really good week." After being publicly criticized for his parsimonious patronizing, Mr. Kuchar pays Mr. Ortiz an additional \$45,000 nearly four months later.

JANUARY

1.01 As the New Year drifts in at midnight, so too do the vastly revised, modern RULES OF GOLF. Years in the making and months in public review prior to implementation, many players are nonetheless caught dazed and confused. Even many tour leaders do not get it and will suffer embarrassment and penalties for

weeks as they infract, complain and mock The R&A and the U.S.G.A. for changes that attempt to simplify and speed play.

Those most confused are officials and aficionados who spent years before 2019 learning and applying the more-precise previous rules. Putting with the flag in the hole, moving loose implements in bunkers, tapping down spike marks before putting, grounding clubs in penalty areas, lining up with your caddie behind you as you address the ball, and a new dropping procedure all prove,

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2019 SEASON REVIEW

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in the weeks ahead, to be recurring counter intuitive culprits of infractions.

1.03 U.S.G.A. C.E.O. Mike Davis announces that he will step away from his course setup responsibilities beginning at the 2019 U.S. Open.

1.27 Haotong Li is penalized two strokes when his caddie lines him up for a putt. Sentiment grows among players and commentators that such a penalty should not apply if the player steps out and restarts the address procedure.

1.29 "Competition supersedes morality" according to Eddie Pepperell, defending his decision to enter the Saudi International.

1.29 Brooks Koepka comments on Bryson DeChambeau and others' slow play: "I just don't understand how it takes a minute and 20 seconds, a minute and 15 to hit a golf ball; it's not that hard. ... Guys are already so slow it's kind of embarrassing. I just don't get why you enforce some things and don't enforce others."

F E B R U A R Y

2.04 Sergio Garcia is disqualified from the Saudi International for serious misconduct when he purposefully damages as many as five greens as well as melting down in a fit of bunker rage. Mr. Koepka says Mr. Garcia acted like a child; Tony Jacklin comments that Mr. Garcia's behavior was "worthy of more than disqualification. I'd have banned him. Damaging greens on a golf course is an offence that deserves a suspension."

2.06 Mr. Koepka reiterates his view that tour officials do not have the nerve to enforce penalties for slow play.

2.06 The R&A and U.S.G.A. issue two clarifications of Rule 10.2b(4) RESTRICTION ON CADDIE STANDING BEHIND PLAYER. A player is now permitted to back away from their stance and avoid a breach of the Rule; and there is no violation if a caddie is not "deliberately" standing behind the ball when a player begins to take a stance.

2.07 Tony Finau criticizes Rickie Fowler's penalty when Mr. Fowler's ball rolls into a water hazard (sic) after it is placed, and at rest, on a slope. Not a new Rule. "I think there's (sic) too many rules in golf," says Mr. Finau.

2.13 Adam Scott says the new rule changes have resulted in golf "becoming the laughingstock". In particu-

lar he says that putting with the flag in the hole changes the point of putting from holing the putt to hitting the flag. Mr. Scott also offers to take a slow play penalty in order to show his colleagues that the tour is serious about enforcement. "Make me the victim," he says.

2.22 Mr. DeChambeau apologies for intentionally damaging the practice green with his putter at the WGC-Mexico.

2.22 Mr. Fowler violates the new dropping procedure when he drops from shoulder height after shanking a ball out of bounds at the WGC-Mexico and then plays his next stroke before invoking the correct procedure. Later he comments that dropping from knee height "just looks funny ... I get to drop from my knee and look stupid. I think it's a terrible change."

It seems fair to assume, however, that he does not feel it looks funny or stupid to walk around in all orange outfits.

2.27 Justin Thomas criticizes all the Rules changes. "Pretty much all of them seem like they didn't better the game, to me. I mean, the ball-dropping thing is weird, it doesn't make sense. The tapping spike marks thing down, I understand that, but I think it's a great amateur rule. I just think as a whole they just (don't) make a lot of sense."

2.28 Keeping it classy, Mr. Fowler, during the first round of the Honda Classic, mocks the new dropping procedure by assuming a pose as though he is defecating his ball while asking the Rules official if such a drop is permissible.

2.28 Mr. Thomas' nine iron bends when it strikes a tree during a stroke. Under the new rules, he may use it, repair it, but not replace it. "You can just add that one to the list of rules that don't make any sense," he comments. Earlier in the day Alex Cejka became the first player to be disqualified for violating the new rule about "green-reading" books.

M A R C H

3.05 Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan issues a memo to tour players suggesting patience for the collaborative rules process. He urges the players to "use your voice constructively during this process."

3.06 Mr. McIlroy suggests giving the ruling bodies "a bit of leeway" as they adjust the new changes. "I think that the governing bodies are a very easy target right



now ... but they're not trying to do anything bad for the game. They are trying to help ..."

3.14 Countering speculation in the press, Mr. Monahan states unequivocally that the PGA Tour has no interest in creating rules of their own.

3.15 Mr. McIlroy comments on slow play at The Players Championship. "Because they don't do anything about it, it's become somewhat of an epidemic on tour." Two days later he wins the championship.

A P R I L

4.14 Tiger Woods wins the Masters Tournament for the fifth time. His 13-under par score is one better than three others who tie for second.

The media's *Woods Worship* portrays the win as the greatest comeback in golf history, maybe even sports history, which is quickly debunked. It is certainly a fine moment, diminished by the media's rush to exaggerate it. Always remember that the media have a financial stake in this too.

M A Y

5.17 After 36 holes at Bethpage [Black], Mr. Koepka sets a 36-hole scoring record (-12) for any major championship and takes a seven-stroke lead.

5.19 Mr. Koepka (-8) wins the PGA Championship by two strokes over Dustin Johnson (-6) and three tied for third (-2).

5.29 Mr. McIlroy suggests allowing the U.S.G.A. to redeem itself at [the U.S. Open at] Pebble Beach. "... I think they'll admit they've made a couple of mistakes over the last couple of years. Everyone does. And I think we should give them the chance to redeem themselves. If they can't redeem themselves at Pebble Beach, then there could be a problem."

5.30 Phil Mickelson criticizes U.S. Open setups. "One-hundred per cent of the time they have messed it up if it doesn't rain. Rain is the governor. That's the only governor they have, they don't know how to control themselves." This from the player who has never won the championship and who intentionally broke the Rules at the 2018 U.S. Open.

J U N E

6.1 Mr. Woods criticizes the evolution of U.S. Open setups (graduated rough, chipping areas, moving tees

drastically) as "kind of tricky". "I just like it when there's high rough and narrow fairways, and go get it boys."

6.10 John Bodenhamer, U.S.G.A. senior managing director - championships, in his first year taking over the U.S. Open setup from Mr. Davis, describes a more traditional approach that will allow Pebble Beach to be what it was meant to be - with full attention to weather conditions that may demand his quick response.



6.13 Justin Rose takes the first day lead with 65, which ties Mr. Woods' record in 2000 for the lowest U.S. Open round at Pebble Beach.

6.14 Gary Woodland's record-matching second round 65 gives him a two shot lead over Mr. Rose, who

shot 70 for the second round.

6.16 Mr. Woodland (-13) wins by three over Mr. Koepka, and six over four tied for third place.

6.16 The players generally applaud the Pebble Beach U.S. Open set up.

6.27 The Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers invites 12 women to membership after 275 years as a men's only club.

6.12 The R&A on Twitter - a strange combination of words - announces that in the event of a tie after 72 holes, the Open will have a three-hole playoff at Royal Portrush.

6.15 With sublime simplicity, The R&A eliminates any advantage to "grandstopping", which is when a player intentionally hits their ball into a grandstand in order to achieve an advantage from the resulting free drop. At Portrush's final hole, players selecting this approach will be rewarded with a free drop zone that is delineated in a patch of the worst rough on the course.

6.17 Royal Portrush sets an attendance record - 237,750 - for any Open Championship played outside of St. Andrews.

6.18 Mr. McIlroy's first stroke from Royal Portrush's first tee finishes out of bounds and results in a quadruple bogey. He finishes with 79, eight over par for the day.

6.19 After achieving a course record 65 in the second round, Mr. McIlroy misses the cut (+1) by one stroke.

6.20 In the third round, Shane Lowry sets a new course record of 63; leads by four (-16).

6.21 Mr. Lowry (-15) wins by six over Tommy Fleetwood (-9) and eight over Tony Finau (-7).

6.29 The PGA Tour announces a 49 event schedule for 2019-20 that includes a week off to accommodate the 2020 Men's Olympic Golf competition in Tokyo (July 30 - Aug 2).

J U L Y

7.28 Mr. Koepka beats Mr. McIlroy by five strokes at Memphis to win \$4.7 million and become the favorite for the upcoming Tour Championship.

7.29 Thorbjorn Oleson, five-time European Tour winner, is arrested for both sexually assaulting a sleeping woman, and urinating in the aisle during a British Airways flight traveling from Memphis to London.

A U G U S T

8.01 In an attempt to avoid the confusion of one player winning the Tour Championship and a different player simultaneously winning the Fed-Ex Cup, the P.G.A. Tour, prior to the Tour Championship at East Lake, awards a sliding scale of stroke advantages to the contenders.

8.18 Mr. Woods expresses his concern about tournament setups: "When I first came out on Tour and before me, especially, there's (sic) a lot of 1 irons and stuff off the tees. Just kind of get it in play," Woods said. "Now, you just pull out driver, bomb it down there and you're



For J.P.H.:

"Your Highness, my loyalty is absolute to my country and my Commander in Chief... I will not agree by silence when they are criticized. I'm here to help ensure the security of your kingdom. I carry out the last 60 meters of American policy. Believe me, I know how to do that, and I will do that. Where our interests overlap, your problems are my problems. And I'm here looking for the overlap so I can help."

GEN. JAMES MATTIS
Speaking to a Middle Eastern monarch
who was criticizing U.S. policy.

looking for three to four good weeks a year. That's how you play. It's not the consistency, it's not about making a bunch of cuts. It's about having three, four good weeks a year. That's the difference. The guys understand that. [With] today's equipment you can maximize a driver and just absolutely bomb it and some of the guys sacrifice stuff around the greens or short irons for the driver. The driver is the most important club in the bag now just because of the way the game is played."

8.22 Mr. Koepka becomes the second tour player to release nude photographs of himself playing various golf shots. Greg Norman was first with his naked asseveration in June 2018.

8.25 Mr. McIlroy wins the tour championship by four strokes over Xander Schuffele, six strokes over Mr. Thomas and Mr. Koepka. His approach to the 8th is saved by a sprinkler head from rolling into the water.

S E P T E M B E R

9.03 Jack Nicklaus: "I don't like the new major schedule, from the standpoint that if you have an injury, or if you're struggling with one tournament, all of a sudden the other one follows too closely, to get it back. I'm not sure that that's really a good thing for the game of golf, to have all your [major] tournaments in about 3½ months. And I don't think it's good for the other tournaments on the tour. The guys have got to skip a lot of tournaments ... guys weren't playing in between majors, and I think that's a shame for the tour."

9.11 Mr. McIlroy wins Player of the Year honors.

9.29 The Korean PGA suspends their leading money winner, Bio Kim, for three years after he makes an obscene hand gesture to spectators.

Yours vly truly,

Gary A. Galyean
Editor & Publisher

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