



# GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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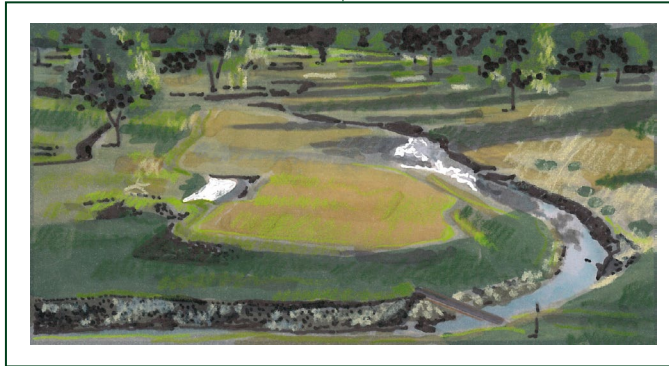
OUR 34<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

MAY 2023

Dear Subscriber:

## Steel Inertia

THE SIMULTANEOUS RETURNS of Oak Hill and Brooks Koepka—both restructured and restored—produced a P.G.A. Championship reflective of the excellence of the golf course and the champion it demanded. Both were implacable in their respective abilities to relentlessly accomplish exactly what the year's second major championship required. It was inertia, as the term is used in the study of physics: *a property of matter by which it continues in its existing state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line, unless that state is changed by an external force.*



TAG GALYEAN, *DOUBLE TROUBLE, OAK HILL No. 6*

Compared to the P.G.A. Championship competitive field, Mr. Koepka drove well and putted better, made more birdies (particularly on the back nine), played the par 4s better (and the 3s and 5s worse), did not make a double bogey, and won by two strokes even though his first round score was five shots higher than Scottie Scheffler's and four more than Viktor Hovland's.

There was never a discernible anxious moment in Mr. Koepka's performance. Never an instance when there was fear that the time to act was running out ... the gate closing. The German language has an exact word—of course they do—for this sort of fear which is *torschlusspanik*.

Thursday morning's start began with delay. Nearly a two-hour frost delay moved the first starting time from 7 a.m. to 8:50. The day saw three under rounds from two well known names, Mr. Scheffler and Dustin Johnson, as

well as Corey Connors and Eric Cole. Bryson DeChambeau posted the low round of 66 (four under), but that was not enough to raise him higher than third in the overnight betting odds.

More striking were the players not rising to the occasion. Jon Rahm, Matt Fitzpatrick, Talor Gooch, and Jason Day were each six over on Thursday. Rory McIlroy and Jordan Spieth finished 1-over, Tony Finau and Mr. Koepka were two over, and Patrick Cantlay four over.

Friday's ambient temperature climbed into the 70s, the wind rose into the teens, no rain was expected, and scores generally improved.

A 66 from Mr. Koepka equaled the low round of the championship. However, with his first round 72 he was still three strokes behind Mr. Scheffler. The uneven quality of this first two rounds left him out of the leaders in the betting odds.

Two notable rules incidents occurred during the second round. Cameron Young was penalized two strokes for playing from a wrong place. He had moved his marker to the side so it would not impede his fellow

### Thursday Morning LADBROKE Odds

9:50*	Scheffler	13/2
10:23*	Rahm	7/1
10:01*	McIlroy	11/1
3:37*	Schauffele	12/1
3:48*	Cantlay	14/1
9:50*	Koepka	16/1
3:26*	Finau	16/1

\* 10<sup>th</sup> tee start  
1:50 hour frost delay

### 8 a.m. Weather

42° Sunny - 64° High  
Wind from SW 5 mph  
Humidity: 59%  
No rain forecasted

**Friday Morning  
Start, LADBROKE Odds & Results**

18 holes		36 holes	
1:25 -3	Scheffler	13/2	-5
8:22 -3	D. Johnson	7/1	+1
2:31 -4	DeChambeau	12/1	-3
1:47 -5	Hovland	12/1	-5
1:36 +1	McIlroy	16/1	E
8:22 +2	Schauffele	33/1	+4
9:12 -3	Cole	50/1	+1

**8 a.m. Weather**

60° Cloudy - 77° High  
Wind from SW 13 mph  
Humidity: 61%  
No rain expected

competitor's putting line, and then failed to return his ball to its original place before striking his putt. The penalty took place on the 16<sup>th</sup> green (his seventh hole of the day,

as he started play from the 10<sup>th</sup> tee). The resulting double bogey was followed by a second double bogey on the 6<sup>th</sup> hole and a round of

75. Together with a first round 74, Mr. Young's nine over failed to make the cut.

The second notable ruling of the second round took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole when Philip Mickelson took a drop from a penalty area. Before he played, the Rules Official assigned to that hole told Mr. Mickelson he had dropped in a wrong place. Mr. Mickelson disagreed. Discussion followed. The Rules Official cited dropping requirements under Rule 17. Because Mr. Mickelson had not yet struck his ball that was dropped in a wrong place, he was allowed to re-drop in the correct place without penalty. The correction by the Rules Official saved Mr. Mickelson two penalty strokes and ultimately meant that he made the cut at five over par, which was Mr. Mickelson's 100<sup>th</sup> made cut in a major championship (out of 119 starts). Jack Nicklaus made the cut in 131 major championships.

Only nine players were under par after 36 holes. Seventy-six players made the cut at five over. Mr. Rahm, the top ranked player in the world at the time, scrambled to a second round 68 after a first round 76 to make the cut by just one stroke.

The P.G.A. of America announced on Friday that the purse for the current championship was raised by \$2.5 million to a total of \$17.5 million. This is \$6.5 million higher than 2020 and \$3 million higher than 2022. The winner's share this year is \$3.15 million.

Throughout the majority of Saturday's third round the temperature dropped back into the 60s and a steady drizzle created casual water [temporary water] situations even in the fairways. Many players found the wet conditions tedious, but softer greens were welcomed. Through

the rain, Mr. Koepka stuck to his knitting to produce his second 66 in a row and give him a one shot lead going into the final round. Mr. Conners, playing with Mr. Keopka, and Mr. Hovland, in the group behind, could only manage even-par 70s. Mr. Scheffler, who began the day three strokes ahead of Mr. Keopka, finished the third round four shots behind the new leader.

In addition to the rain and cool air, 15 of the 18 hole locations were cut five yards from the edge of their respective greens. This helped to mitigate the advantage of the softer conditions created by the rain.

Michael Block, 46, a club professional from Mission Viejo, California, posted his third consecutive 70 to have a reasonable chance of winning an exemption into the 2024 P.G.A. Championship. Mr. Block ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in putting and 15<sup>th</sup> overall in shots gained over the competitive field.

At the 16<sup>th</sup> hole on Saturday, Mr. Conners, using a nine iron to play from the first of two fairway bunkers in the right rough, buried his second shot into the grass mound at the front of the bunker. Although

allowed embedded ball relief without penalty, he was forced to drop on the steeply-sloping, thickly-roughed mound bordering the bunker, which made recovery difficult and resulted in a double bogey. Hence, he fell from two under to even par and, therefore, out of contention. He had begun the round three ahead of Mr. Koepka but finished the day one behind.

Sunday's sunshine, soft conditions from the previous day's rain, and 70 degree temperatures produced intense competition among the three players who eventually finished in first and second places. Mr. Koepka's and Mr. Hovland's rounds both had distinct beginnings, middle holes, and endings.

Mr. Koepka played the first five holes in three under par with consecutive birdies at the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Hovland birdied the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> to remain the sole player in second place - two strokes behind.

During the middle holes



**2 p.m. Weather**

60° Rain  
Wind from SW 6 mph  
Humidity: 94%  
.6 in day's rain expected

**Saturday Afternoon  
Start, LADBROKE Odds & Results**

36 holes		54 holes	
2:50 -5	Scheffler	13/8	-2
2:40 -5	Hovland	4/1	-5
2:50 -5	Conners	7/1	-5
2:30 -2	Koepka	12/1	-6
2:30 -3	DeChambeau	14/1	-3
1:40 E	McIlroy	20/1	-1

(6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>), Mr. Koepka carded three bogeys and two birdies; Mr. Hovland one bogey. They walked to the 13<sup>th</sup> tee still separated by two strokes. At the 13<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Hovland birdied to pull within one of tying the lead. Just ahead, Mr. Scheffler birdied the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> reaching six under and firmly in third position.

Answering with birdies at the 14<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Koepka (-9) and Mr. Hovland (-8) remained separated from each other by one stroke, and from Mr. Scheffler (-6) by two.

At the 16th, which was pivotal to many players throughout the championship, Mr. Hovland repeated, almost identically, the same mistake Mr. Connors made at the same hole

**Sunday Afternoon  
Start, LADBROKE Odds & Results**

54 holes		72 holes	
2:30 -6	Koepka	5/4	<b>-9</b>
2:30 -5	Hovland	3/1	-7
2:20 -5	Connors	5/1	E
2:10 -2	Scheffler	8/1	-7
2:20 -3	DeChambeau	12/1	-3
2:00 -1	McIlroy	20/1	-2

**2 p.m. Weather**

74° Sunny  
Wind from W 9 mph  
Humidity: 77%  
No rain expected

ship. On both occasions the cheering from the spectators was deafening and must have given the leaders something to ponder.

Mr. Koepka's victory at Oak Hill was his fifth major championship, as follows:

- 2017 U.S. Open - Erin Hills
- 2018 U.S. Open - Shinnecock Hills
- 2018 P.G.A. Championship - Bellerive
- 2019 P.G.A. Championship - Bethpage
- 2023 P.G.A. Championship - Oak Hill

Only 19 players in the history of golf have won five or more major championships. Others with just five include Seve Ballesteros, James Braid, Byron Nelson, J.H. Taylor, and Peter Thomson.

**2023 P.G.A. Championship - Top Three Finishers' Statistics  
72 HOLES**

	SCORE	BIRDIES FRONT/BACK		BOGEYS FRONT/BACK		DOUBLE BOGEYS	GREENS IN REG.	PUTTING	AVERAGE DRIVING DISTANCE
Koepka	271	18	5/ <b>13</b>	9	5/4	0	61% T29	11 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>
Hovland	273	17	7/10	8	5/3	<b>1</b>	71% T3	25 <sup>th</sup>	T31
Scheffler	273	14	6/8	7	6/1	0	71% T3	35 <sup>th</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>

the day before. The Norwegian's drive found a good lie in one of the two right side fairway bunkers.

From 172 yards, using a 9 iron, and with the ball slightly below his feet, he thinned the shot a bit more than was required to carry the bunker lip, and his ball buried in the grassed lip. He was took embedded ball relief (without penalty) but the drop area demanded a play that would not allow reaching the green. He laid up, pitched to eight feet, and two-putted. The result was a double bogey that dropped him to six under. Mr. Koepka approached from the right rough to two feet from the hole and made the birdie putt. In that instant, his lead became four over Messrs. Hovland and Scheffler.

The lead dropped to three as Mr. Koepka bogeyed the 17<sup>th</sup>, and then to two as both Mr. Hovland and Mr. Scheffler birdied the 72<sup>nd</sup>.

During this spectacular play, Mr. Block, three groups ahead of the final group, stole the show twice on the back nine — first with a carry-into-the-hole hole in one at the 15<sup>th</sup>; and then with a miraculous par save at the 72<sup>nd</sup> hole to secure his exemption into next year's champion-

Oak Hill has hosted 10 historic competitions, 7 of which were major championships:

Four P.G.A. Championships:

- 1980 - Jack Nicklaus
- 2003 - Shaun Micheel
- 2013 - Jason Dufner
- 2023 - Brooks Koepka

Three U.S. Open Championships:

- 1956 - Cary Middlecoff
- 1968 - Lee Trevino
- 1989 - Curtis Strange

Two U.S. Amateurs Championships:

- 1949 - Charlie Coe
- 1998 - Hank Kuehne

One Ryder Cup:

- 1995 - Europe

Mr. Koepka and Oak Hill's competitive achievements comprise the steel inertia with which they "continue in a state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line". 🏌️

**“Qualified and Eligible For”  
USGA Leads Alteration to Major Exemptions**

Quietly, with no extraordinary notice, but openly and publicly, the United States Golf Association this past February issued their criteria for exemptions into next month's U.S. Open that will be played at Los Angeles C.C. [June 15 - 18]. The first criterion that pertained to the U.S. Open was pivotal for Talor Gooch, who won two of the first five LIV events this year, and who finished tied for 34th in the Masters this past April.

Seemingly nagacious, although bluntly poignant, the U.S.G.A. was the only one of the major championship governing bodies to include the words *and were eligible for* in awarding 2023 U.S. Open exemptions to those who qualified for the 2022 Tour Championship. The 2023 U.S.G.A. exemption reads:

*\* F-11. Those players who qualified and were eligible for the season-ending 2022 Tour Championship.*

*[Asterisk reference:] \* For Exemptions F-11, F-13 and F-14 [all of which pertain to PGA Tour event results] players must be considered eligible per PGA Tour regulations at the time the exemption is determined to qualify for the exemption.*

Mr. Gooch *qualified* for the 2022 Tour Championship last fall but due to his having played in LIV Golf's first tournament last year was suspended by the PGA Tour—which meant he was not *eligible* to play in the 2022 Tour Championship. The other LIV players who competed in the 2022 Tour Championship were not LIV players at the time of the event.

Following this revelation, Mr. Gooch said the U.S.G.A. issued the change ex post facto - retroactively - but that is not the case. The change was made last Febru-



For B.K.:

*Never confuse energy with strength.*

German Chancellor [1949-63] Konrad Adenauer  
to Henry Kissinger

ary with the association's annual announcement of their exemption criteria for all U.S.G.A. tournaments in 2023.

Philip Mickelson, LIV Golfer extraordinaire, considered by some to be the Socratic voice of our time, published his scornful response to U.S.G.A. C.E.O. Mike Whan on Twitter:

*Hey Mike, what about changing a rule and making it retroactive to exclude someone who has already qualified? How can Talor Gooch not take that personal (sic)? It's a direct attack on him and his career. How does it benefit the usga (sic) or US open? It doesn't. Just a d!\*k move.* TWITTER 7:38 AM · May 5, 2023

Mr. Mickelson has proven, yet again, to be an expert judge of at least one part of his comment.

As noted, Mr. Gooch did play in this year's Masters. where the exemptions did not include the *eligible for* wording. However, one day before the start of this year's tournament, Augusta National issued their exemption list for their 2024 tournament, including the following:

*Those qualifying and eligible for the previous year's season-ending Tour Championship.*

As we saw last week, Mr. Gooch was entered in the P.G.A. Championship field through a special invitation that may have been based upon his then world ranking at 60th. The first 100 in the world ranking are traditionally exempted into the P.G.A. Championship.

With regard to the Open Championship, played this July at Royal Liverpool, Mr. Gooch is exempt as the current Open exemption language is written, including:

*Top 30 players from the final 2022 FedExCup Points List.*

Mr. Gooch finished 29th on that list.

Yours vly truly,

Gary A. Galyean  
Editor & Publisher

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