



# GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

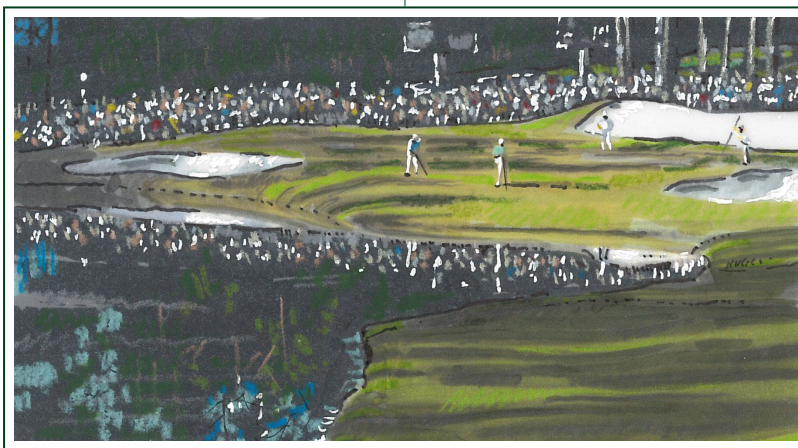
THE POINT IS PROPERLY MADE that devising statistical explanations about the past to fit the already known result can be dangerously misleading. Second guessing to explain a known result is an exercise that stock brokers, doctors, handymen, those in car crashes, and those who write about the Masters engage in regularly. However, the you-know-what-it-could-be syndrome is not so much in play at Augusta because of the enormity of 88 years of scoring data gleaned from a nearly-identical colosseum. That being written, there is always a measure of strategic ambiguity, or ambagiousness, that allows for various interpretations. Scottie Scheffler's performance, however, allowed for the simple, undisturbed pursuit and execution of excellence. Before getting to that, a little stage setting.

### 88th Masters Tournament Preflight Chatter & Housekeeping

• Viktor Hovland - commenting on his preparation for the tournament: *I feel like I've kind of done different things every single year. I still don't really know what exactly I need to do. I think it's something that I just kind of do off the cuff. Some years I feel like I might have to play the golf course a little bit more. Other years it's more maybe practicing.* Mr. Hovland posted 71, 81 and missed the six-over cut by two shots.

• Jon Rahm - responding to the suggestion that his

motivation to play for the Saudi-backed LIV Tour was to bring the game together: *I understood my position, yes. And I understood that it could be, what I hoped, a step towards some kind of agreement, yes. Or more of an agreement or expedited agreement.* The \$450 million paid-to-play was once again affirmed as not being a factor.



TAG GALYEAN, REDBUD, AUGUSTA NATIONAL No. 16

After barely making the cut, Mr. Rahm, the defending champion, tied for 45th place at 9-over par.

• Greg Norman, LIV's CEO and primary

hyperbolist, for the second

year, was not invited to the Masters — although it is usually the custom for those directing the major professional world tours. Last year, Fred Ridley, Masters Tournament and Augusta National chairman explained, *We did not extend an invitation to Mr. Norman. The primary issue ... I want the focus this week [2023] to be on the Masters competition, on the great players that are participating, the greatest players in the world, which, by our decision in December, we ensured that we were going to honor and be consistent with our invitation criteria.* The same reasoning was apparently relied upon for 2024.

So, it was a bit of mystery when Mr. Norman was on the grounds for the 2024 Masters. His son explained via social media — the venue of all erudite communication — that after being denied tickets by the Club, his father purchased them on the secondary market. Mr. Norman commented that his hand was fatigued from shaking hands with his well wishers around the course.

• The height of cut of grass on the golf course:

Tees: 5/16" Collars: 1/4"  
Fairways: 3/8" Green surrounds: 5/16"  
Second cut: 1 3/8" Greens: 1/8"

• Fred Ridley - appearing at the traditional pre-tournament press conference -

Question: Not having Official World Golf Ranking points now and having withdrawn their application, the LIV Tour and some of their players have suggested that the majors need to directly give them spots?

Mr. Ridley: *I think it would be difficult to establish any type of point system that had any connection to the rest of the world of golf because they're basically, not totally, but for the most part, a closed shop ... [that does not prevent] us from giving subjective consideration based on talent. Our goal is to have, to the greatest extent possible, the best field in golf, the best players in the world. Having said that, we never have had all the best players in the world because of the structure of our tournament. It's an invitational. It's a limited field, it's a small field.*

Question: You reiterated your support for the USGA and the R&A, but you also did not sound as if they went far enough [with reducing the performance of the ball]. Is that a correct reading of your comments mentioning 8,000 yards, and how did the decision on changing testing or how will it impact your plans for the golf course in the future?

Mr. Ridley: *Well, assuming that these regulations are adopted by the P.G.A. Tour and the other tours, and I certainly hope they will be, I think were they not adopted it would cause a great deal of stress in the game, which it doesn't need right now ... So I think we have some time to look and see what's going to happen. We have some more room, but not a lot. So I'm holding to that 8,000-yard red line, and I just hope we never get there.*

### Scheffler's Path of Totality

Thursday morning's start was delayed 2½ hours due to weather. The delay meant that those starting late in the starting time matrix would not finish on Thursday and, hence, would play more than 18 holes on Friday.

Bryson DeChambeau, starting at 11:18, posted a score of 65 - the low score of the first round. Mr. Scheffler, starting at 1:12, posted 66. With the exception of Max Homa who started at 3:54 and posted (the following morning) a 67, the other eventual contenders all posted between 71 and 73.

Mr. Scheffler's total for the back nine was just 32

strokes and included a five-hole stretch from the 12<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup> — birdie, birdie, par, birdie, birdie.

Play was suspended Thursday evening at 7:51 due to darkness. The first round play resumed on Friday morning at 7:50.

Round Two began at 8:00 Friday with sunny but windy conditions. Gusts were measured at 43 m.p.h. and sand was blown from some of the greenside bunkers. At the more acute places where sand was blown onto the putting

### Friday Odds

-6	Scheffler	+140
-7	DeChambeau	+550
-5	Homa	+1400
-1	McIlroy	+1800
+1	Koepka	+2500

green, blowers were used between groups to eliminate the irregularity of the sand on the putting surface. This resulted in some discomfort and, in some cases, six hour rounds, as well as a very high cut at 6-over.

When Friday's play was finished, Tiger Woods had made his 24th consecutive cut — a Masters record.

In 2023, Mr. Rahm, who survived intense rain and the slow play resulting from it, was very happy as the eventual champion.

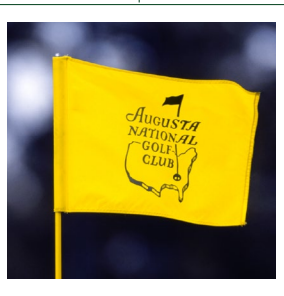
This year, however, Friday's wind gusts and the slow play resulting from them, coupled with Mr. Rahm's poor play (76), resulted in an embarrassingly profane and childish strop.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> tee he opined, *Go f\*\*\* yourself. Every drive on the back nine to the f\*\*\*ing right. G.D. F\*\*\*\*.* After the round he commented, *A couple times, [I found myself] questioning why we were out there, especially when I got to 18 and saw the whole front of the green just full of sand. It's rolling a little bit different. I understand they want us to finish ... Yeah, you just put the ball down, and it's very close to moving. Not only that, how long did it take us to play? Over six hours to play just because they had to blow the greens in between groups, and then when you get to a group, people stepping back and back in. It's just, again, borderline. It was very, very close. It's about as hard a golf course as I've seen in a very long time.*

Saturday and Sunday's weather was beautiful and the pre-

### Saturday Odds 3rd Round

2:35	-6	Scheffler	+110
2:45	-6	DeChambeau	+400
2:45	-6	Homa	+500
2:35	-4	Højgaard	+2800
2:25	-3	Morikawa	+1600



vious day's wind resulted in less receptive putting greens, meaning smaller targets and more exaggerated speeds.

### Sat. & Sun. Weather

2:30 p.m. 75-78° Sunny  
Wind from west 9-11 mph

The third round produced extraordinary performances by Collin Morikawa (69) and Ludvig Åberg (70). It was, however, Mr. Scheffler's fall and recovery on the back nine that produced the most impressive play.

After both Mr. Morikawa and Mr. Åberg turned with 33s on the front, the CBS broadcast was interrupted at 4:34 p.m. by news that Iran had launched their attack on Israel. CBS resumed from Augusta shortly thereafter.

Mr. Scheffler turned in 35 (-7, leader). However, a double bogey at the 10<sup>th</sup> and bogey at the 11<sup>th</sup> moved Mr. Scheffler to 5-under, as Nicolai Højgaard birdied the 10<sup>th</sup> and took the lead at 7-under. With the exception of Mr. Morikawa and Mr. Homa, the contenders all bogeyed the 11th, moving Mr. Scheffler tied for sixth place two back at 4-under. On the 12<sup>th</sup> tee his resilience rose to

the demands of the occasion. Par, eagle, par, birdie, par, bogey, birdie to complete the third round back nine at even par, and the round at 1-under.

He took the outright lead at 7-under, and would start Sunday's round at 2:35 with Mr. Morikawa, in sole second place at 6-under. Las Vegas odds pegged Mr. Scheffler the odds on favorite (-120)! Mr. Morikawa's odds to win were +350. Mr. Scheffler's strength and focus after the 11<sup>th</sup> hole on Saturday and his birdie at the 18<sup>th</sup> — the most difficult hole of the third round — left no doubt, even in Las Vegas.

On Sunday at 5 p.m., Mr. Scheffler birdied the 10<sup>th</sup> hole - the one he double bogeyed the day before - to go 9-under par and take a two stroke lead into the final eight holes.

Mr. Åberg double bogeyed the 11<sup>th</sup> with a ball in the water; Mr. Morikawa bogeyed with a ball in the water; and Mr. Homa parred. At 8-under, Mr. Scheffler took a three stroke lead to the 12<sup>th</sup>, which he parred.

Birdies followed at the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. Only

### Par 3s ALL ROUNDS

	4 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>	12 <sup>th</sup>	16 <sup>th</sup>	TOTAL
Scheffler	+2	-1	-1	-2	-2
Åberg	E	+1	-1	-1	-1
Homa	-1	E	+4	-1	+2
Morikawa	E	+1	E	-1	E
C. Smith	E	-1	+1	E	E
DeChambeau	E	E	-1	E	-1

### Par 5s ALL ROUNDS

	2 <sup>nd</sup>	8 <sup>th</sup>	13 <sup>th</sup>	15 <sup>th</sup>	TOTAL
Scheffler	-2	-2	-3	-2	-9
Åberg	-4	-2	-3	+3	-6
Homa	-2	-2	-1	E	-5
Morikawa	-2	-2	-3	-1	-8
C. Smith	-4	E	+1	-1	-4
DeChambeau	-1	-1	-2	+1	-3

### Most Difficult Holes of Each Round

	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	TOTAL
<i>Hole</i>	18 <sup>th</sup>	11 <sup>th</sup>	18 <sup>th</sup>	17 <sup>th</sup>	
Scheffler	Par	Par	Birdie	Par	-1
Åberg	Par	Par	Par	Par	E
Homa	Bogey	Bogey	Par	Bogey	+3
Morikawa	Birdie	Par	Par	Par	-1
C. Smith	Par	Par	Bogey	Par	+1
DeChambeau	Par	Bogey	Birdie	Bogey	+2

### 2024 Masters Top Finishers' Statistics 72 HOLES

	EAGLES	BIRDIES	BOGEYS	DOUBLE BOGEYS+	FAIRWAYS HIT	GREENS IN REG.	SAND SAVES	PUTTS PER HOLE
Scheffler	1(16)	20	9	1(10)	79%	64%	38%	1.51
Åberg	0	17	6	2	79%	61%	100%	1.53
Homa	0	12	6	1	80%	71%	60%	1.67
Morikawa	0	15	7	2	82%	69%	57%	1.60
C. Smith	1(2)	7	5	1	70%	60%	80%	1.5
DeChambeau	0	17	13	1	75%	61%	100%(2)	1.60

Mr. Åberg rose slightly to do what was needed to contend with his own birdies at the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. They were, however, simply what it took to reclaim the ground he lost with the double at the 11<sup>th</sup>. He parred in as Mr. Scheffler held and then gained another at the 16<sup>th</sup>.

Sunday Odds 4th Round		
2:35	-7 Scheffler	-120
2:35	-6 Morikawa	+350
2:25	-5 Homa	+750
2:25	-4 Åberg	+900
2:15	-3 DeChambeau	+2200
2:15	-2 Schauffele	+2500

The worn, but accurate, observation that the Masters really comes down to the back nine on Sunday was only partially true this year.

Mr. Scheffler's second victory came from his performances on *the back nine of each of his rounds*: Thirty-two on Thursday, even par on Friday and Saturday despite tough conditions and his only double bogey of the tournament; and 33 on Sunday comprised of one bogey and four birdies.

All but three (Cameron Smith, Mr. Scheffler, and Mr. Åberg) of the various contenders over the four rounds, produced one round in the 60s. Mr. Smith produced none. Mr. Åberg and Mr. Scheffler each produced two. Of those four rounds, Mr. Scheffler out scored Mr. Åberg by four strokes — which was the winning margin.

Scottie Scheffler won because of his greater talent, faith, nerve, tenacity, and experience. It was a dominating performance—unambiguous in every category—for all of his 277 (11 under par) strokes.

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**This GOLF LETTER is the last month that it will be delivered in the format you see here. The May issue, and beyond, will be delivered exclusively via Substack: [thegolffletter.substack.com](https://thegolffletter.substack.com)**



For J.R.R.:

*“Like King Lear on one of his bad mornings.”*

P.G. Wodehouse  
RING FOR JEEVES

## 13 LIV Players in Masters Field 8 Make Cut; 2 Finish Under Par

The debate about which professional tour has the better players, largely the point made repeatedly by the LIV Tour presumably to keep themselves relevant and in our faces, ran into a little bad luck at Augusta last week.



Of the 13 LIV players who began play on Thursday morning, only eight made the 6-over cut. Of those eight, only two finished below par, tied for sixth place. Brooks Koepka and Mr. Rahm finished at the bottom of the LIV ranking tied for 45<sup>th</sup> at 9 over par.

Mr. Rahm's performance led to this assessment by DAILY MAIL reporter Oliver Holt:

*He played his final round wearing the air of a man who is beginning to realise he has made a horrible mistake. He was the king of the world and all of golf stretched out before him, waiting to be conquered. And then he sabotaged it all.*

*He ruined his legacy by turning his back on mainstream golf at the height of his powers and joining a tour with a 54-hole format, where the lack of intensity seems to have left Rahm singularly unprepared for a return to the demands of more competitive golf.*

### LIV Players 2024 Masters

DeChambeau	-2
C. Smith	-2
Hatton	E
Reed	+1
Niemann	+4
Mickelson	+8
Koepka	+9
Rahm	+9
— cut	+6 —
Garcia	MC
Watson, B.	MC
Schwartzel	MC
Johnson, D.	MC
Meronk	MC

Yours vly truly,

Gary A. Galyean  
Editor & Publisher

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