



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER[®]

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

While the weight of the world's 2019 professional competition will predictably and perfunctorily remain in the United States, controversy and confusion will be owned by Great Britain and Europe due to tournament scheduling changes that have rendered the European Tour calendar, at some intervals, less than appealing to the world's best players.

Obviously, winning money and collecting endorsements are the players' professional goals. Just like the rest of most secular and political pursuits these days, it's all about the dough. So the best players will follow the money wherever it may lead.

The scheduling mismatch was caused by the reversal of dates for the American and European P.G.A. Championships. The [U.S.] P.G.A. Championship moved to May 16-19 from its traditional August date; and therefore by necessity, the BMW P.G.A. Championship at Wentworth, the European Tour's flagship tournament, moved from its customary May date to September 11-22.

While this may seem simple enough, the primary opportunities worldwide for those seeking prize money and fame appear between the Masters Tournament in April and the U.S. Open in June. Following the Masters, there is little reason for the top players to return to the European Tour for the Hassan Trophée in Morocco, the China Open, back to England for the British Masters and then to Bethpage for the P.G.A. Championship. Between March and June, professional tournaments of any significance only take place in the U.S. [see table on next page].

"We know the challenges with the global calendar," European Tour C.E.O. Keith Pelley said recently. "We've

studied it forensically and, yes, the P.G.A. Championship moving changed things. We have a very strong schedule early [in 2019] and then we have a number of really good events during the strength of the American majors. But when you look at those and three World Golf Championships (W.G.C.), it is difficult for the top players to come back for one week [for the British Masters]. So I'm

not sure competing in that period is a wise way for [the European tour] to spend our money and our efforts. I am not sure we would get top player participation."

P.G.A. [2010], U.S. Open [2014] and Players Champion [2014] Martin Kaymer assessed the situation with this comment.

"The new P.G.A. Tour schedule is going to have a huge influence on the European Tour from February until June. The tournaments [in Europe] are very low on world ranking points and prize money. So, if you have the chance to play on the P.G.A. Tour, why would you play in Europe? I can spend three or four months in the States. Then I can play in the Rolex Series events [in Europe] after the U.S. Open in the run up to the Open Championship.

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“That will mean much less crossing the Atlantic. It just makes sense to stay in America until the end of the U.S. Open when there is (sic) only three or four weeks between the biggest events from the Players [Championship] all the way through the majors. It would make no sense to go back to Europe, which is a shame for the events there.”

During the weeks to which Mr. Kaymer refers, the following notable tournaments will be played in North America:

- W.G.C.-Mexico Championship
- The Players Championship
- W.G.C.-Dell Championship
- Masters Tournament
- P.G.A. Championship
- Canadian Open
- U.S. Open

Mr. Pelley said that the European Tour considered moving one of their eight Rolex series events [\$7 million purse] into that time frame but after receiving players’ reaction decided against the move. “So, we have to look at the four areas of our schedule that are strong,” Mr. Pelley said. “That is (sic) the beginning of the year, the period prior to the Open Championship, immediately after the FedEx Cup and at the end of our season.”

Mr. Kaymer’s take was simple, “There will be American players who will think, ‘Why should we come over [to Europe] when we play for \$7 million every week anyway?’”

No player makes the dilemma more obvious than Rory McIlroy, whose primary 2019 goal is winning the

Masters. “Right now, [my European participation] is all sort of up in the air, but if it were to be that I don’t fulfill my membership next year [four European tour appearances], it’s not a Ryder Cup year, so it’s not the end of the world. I am always going to want to play the Ryder Cup, so if [losing my European Tour membership] does happen [in 2019] so be it, and I will try and make the Ryder Cup team the year after.”

Mr. McIlroy’s decision is further complicated by a rule passed by the European Tour last year. In an effort to keep their better players playing on the European Tour, they stipulated that any player failing to play the minimum number of tournaments or declining European Tour membership in any year can *never* be a Ryder Cup captain or vice captain. Obviously the rule can be reversed as easily as it was implemented. Mr. McIlroy’s turn at the captaincy is roughly 20 years in the future.

A further example of money running the show is that eight of the fourteen 2019 notable European Tour championships [see the table to the left] have non-European names and locations: Abu Dhabi, Dubai x 2, Saudi, Oman, Qatar, Morocco and China.

Equally rummy, the Australian Open is now the *Emirates* Australian Open and this year was played at the same time as the World Tour Championship in Dubai. Geoff Ogilvy, who won the U.S. Open in 2006 and the Australian Open in 2010, made this comment about his home championship. “I hate to say this, but the Australian Open feels like a second-rate tournament now,” he said. “I’m sure it is run in the same way it was 30

2019 North American & European Tour Men’s Foremost Tour Stops

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|---------------------|--|
| Jan 16-19 | Abu Dhabi Championship |
| Jan 24-27 | Dubai Desert Classic |
| Jan 31-Feb 3 | Saudi International |
| Feb 7-10 | Pebble Beach Pro-Am |
| Feb 21-24 | WGC Mexico Championship |
| Feb 28 Mar 3 | Oman Open |
| Mar 7-10 | Bay Hill |
| Mar 7-10 | Qatar Masters |
| Mar 14-17 | The Players Championship |
| Mar 27-30 | WGC Dell Match Play |
| <u>Apr 11-14</u> | <u>Masters Tournament</u> |
| Apr 18-21 | Harbor Town |
| Apr 25-28 | Trophee Hassan II [Morocco] |
| May 2-5 | China Open |
| May 9-12 | British Masters |
| <u>May 16-19</u> | <u>P.G.A. Championship</u> |
| May 30-Jun 2 | The Memorial |
| Jun 6-9 | Canadian Open |
| <u>Jun 13-16</u> | <u>U.S. Open</u> |
| July 4-7 | Irish Open |
| July 11-14 | Scottish Open |
| Jul 18-21 | Open Championship |
| Aug 22-25 | Tour Championship |
| Sept 19-22 | P.G.A. [Europe] Championship |
| Sept 26-29 | Dunhill |
| Nov 21-24 | World Tour Championship [Road to Dubai] |

years ago, but tournaments elsewhere have progressed so much, and the differences show.” It must be said that his interests and aesthetics as a professional golfer are probably different from yours.

Further aside but not too far, it has been reported that Tiger Woods has declined to play in January’s Saudi International despite a \$3 million appearance fee.

Further still aside but in the same pecuniary and ethical arena is the reimbursement to U.S.G.A. Executive Committee (XCom) members of their expenses as related to their work on behalf of the U.S.G.A. For more than a century, XCom members paid their own expenses as a way of acknowledging the amateur foundation of the association. Everything - air travel, room, board, and a lengthy amount of time at championship sites - was absorbed by XCom members. It was an honor to serve.

The reimbursement scale began to tip about 15 years ago when private jet travel was offered and paid by the U.S.G.A. for XCom members. Now all expenses are paid by the U.S.G.A. This appears to be an effort to attract talented business people to the XCom - with or without a foundation in the game. Prospective nominees to the XCom are now told they can expect to spend only about 20 days a year in dispensing their responsibilities if elected to the XCom.

What has happened and continues to happen to golf, many of its great clubs, championships and those who administer it worldwide was metaphorically illustrated by the \$9 million in Plexiglas boxes placed on the red carpet at the closing of the cheesy Woods-Michelson match last month.

The certainty that a large measure of the spirit and core of the game has been impignorated in order to build up these professional opportunities, both playing and non-playing, is shameful and sad. Enow.

Rules

Distance is the name of the elephant in the room at The R&A and U.S.G.A. Rules Committee meetings. Our opinion, as reported in the February 2018 GOLF LETTER, is that the 150th Open Championship, which will be played over the Old Course in July 2021, provides the pivotal opportunity to reverse decades of

sanctioned increase in golf’s ball and implement performances that have allowed the demeaning of the many great courses.

While The R&A and the U.S.G.A. hold their cards, ponderings and opinions close to their vests, there is some opinion, among those who *may* have an inkling, that there is agreement that at least the ball should be dialed back. There is a difference, however, in how that decision should be implemented.

The R&A, it is suspected, is in favor of reducing how far the ball travels for all golfers without equivocation. The U.S.G.A., wary of their authority should it be challenged in court, favors restricting the ball under a local rule that can or cannot be invoked depending on circumstances. Your club can decide because the U.S.G.A. may not want to.

The resolution of this question is the game’s greatest secret and this report is based solely upon supposition.

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Those who have attended Rules workshops in order to prepare for the January implementation of the modern RULES OF GOLF report that the teaching is effective, the changes relatively easy to absorb, and the after-seminar test easier. Additionally, the minimum threshold test score, necessary for those officiating at the highest level, has been lowered.

Most of those attending believe the new approach will make the Rules easier to understand for those who care, but will not attract new interest. Most precarious will be new Rule 10.2.4 that no longer allows your caddie to stand behind you when you are taking your stance. “If you take a stance in breach of this rule you cannot avoid penalty by backing away”. There is, however, an exception on the putting green if you back away from your putting stance and do not retake your stance until your caddie has moved away.

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Brutal and *Cruel* were the words misused in headlines describing a Rules infraction by a player in the second stage of the European Tour qualifying school. Playing his last hole of the day, Gian-Marco Petrozzi walked off the yardage for his approach. To do that he walked through



a bunker and then raked the bunker before playing his ball over the bunker and onto the green. He did not know that by raking the bunker, before he played, he was improving his line of play [Rule 13-2]. He was penalized two strokes resulting in his losing his place in the final stage of qualifying.

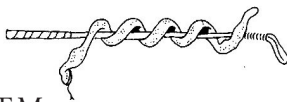
“I wasn’t aware that I was making this mistake,” Mr. Petrozzi posted online. It is continually baffling that those who wish to compete for millions of dollars or Euros in prize money do not know the Rules. Is there any other profession where this is so prevalent?

From the memories of those who know these things, it is thought that the only world ranked professional golfer to have ever attended a Rules workshop is Annika Sorenstam.

Architecture

Dumbarrie Links, 15 miles south of St. Andrews with 14 holes allowing views of the Firth of Forth, is scheduled to open a year from this coming spring, as reported by the journal GOLF COURSE ARCHITECTURE. It is anticipated to be the next notable Scotch course. The architect is Clive Clark with Paul Kimber as project manager. The Dumbarrie site is not undisturbed linksland, but it does immediately adjoin such. The new course is referred to as a “constructed links”, much like Castle Stuart or Kingsbarns.

The particular attractiveness of the Dumbarrie site is that it is generally higher than the coastal linksland it borders, thus allowing for stunning views. “The coastal level is the larger part of the site, but the dunes there are fairly low, which allows us to see over them,” Mr. Clark told the journal. “Up the escarpment and when you are high above the coastal plain, we have three or four holes where the view is getting on for 180 degrees, which is quite spectacular.”



For E.J.-M.F.M.:

*“Some cause happiness wherever they go;
others whenever they go.”*

Oscar Wilde

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Merion’s \$20 million course rebuild has many worried that the historically important and beguiling course will be grimthorped in the process. Gil Hanse is overseeing the work at Merion and has pitched the members of Baltusrol for a similar rebuild just as he did at Oakland Hills. What is the point? Who is making these decisions? What is their background in the game? What is the fate of the notable architecture that was created and/or perfected at these masterpieces?

Helmets for Golfers

A British health and safety risk assessment agency named Protecting.co.uk is proposing that those playing golf be required to wear crash helmets.

“If you look at a selection of other sports played in the U.K., both contact and non-contact, there are measures in place to reduce injury,” a spokesman for the agency told GOLF PUNK magazine. “For example, many amateur and lower-league rugby clubs insist on protective helmets; martial arts classes provide pads for their students - and this is not just to prevent injury. It’s because financially it makes sense for clubs (and their insurers) to prove they’ve reduced harm wherever possible.”

The report maintains that between 16 and 41 per cent of amateur golfers are injured by golf balls each year, and some of the injuries have caused golfers to miss work. Golf, the magazine reports, had an injury rate of 1.8 per 1,000, which is greater than rugby’s injury rate of 1.5 per 1,000.

Ryder Cup 2022 Opening Ceremonies

As preparations are made for the Ryder Cup to descend upon the Eternal City in 2022, it is being strongly rumored that the Colosseum will be the site for the opening ceremonies!

Yours vy truly,

Gary A. Galyean

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