



# GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

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Dear Subscriber:

It would be a barely sentient soul who does not ponder the major championships of 2019 with some impatience due to the simple magnificence of the courses where they will be played and the speed with which they will be presented to us. For the first time, the four major championships will be decided in four *consecutive* months:

- April - The Masters
- May - The P.G.A. Championship
- June - The U.S. Open
- July - The Open

Because the P.G.A. Championship moved this year from August to May, all three U.S. majors will be decided by Father's Day; all majors by July 21.

For only the second time in the 148 meetings of the Open Championship, golf's oldest and most revered contest will be played in Ireland - Northern Ireland, County Antrim, to be exact. Royal Portrush, formed in 1888 in the far northwest corner 60 miles from Belfast, hosts; and it was Royal Portrush that hosted the first time the Open crossed the Irish Sea in 1951.

Pebble Beach, the icon of American golf, will be the setting for the 119<sup>th</sup> playing of the U.S. Open. Despite a P.G.A. Tour schedule that began feebly last October, the golf season does not start for many traditionalists until the Pebble Beach "clam bake".

It can be logically anticipated that many of the world contenders for the 2019 majors will enter to play in the Pebble Beach Pro-Am [Feb. 7-10] in order to get the latest, competitive look at the course where the U.S. Open will be played four months later. Such a field will give us better insight as to how the course will be presented and how the contenders are preparing to play it. Those who

chose not to play in February may feel it is simply too early to be stalking the June major. Whoever the player, whatever their strategic approach, all eyes will be looking for clues at Pebble Beach in February for what will unfold in June and before.

Bethpage's Black Course, an excruciating and stunningly beautiful A.W. Tillinghast masterpiece, will be the venue for 101<sup>st</sup> P.G.A. Championship that for 2019 is sandwiched between the Masters and the U.S. Open. A compelling question that will be answered in May is how the P.G.A. of America's setup will differ from what we saw at Bethpage in 2002 and 2009 for those U.S. Opens. Will

birdies flow more frequently; will the rough be less penal; will the scores be lower; will the audience be strong?

The Masters Tournament will exert more than its normal serving of agony and torment. Rory McIlroy will be in search of his first victory at Augusta National, which would complete his personal major grand slam. Although he has said that winning the Open at Royal Portrush is his greatest goal for 2019, he has also commented that the Masters is the greatest major of all. It can be reasonably surmised that Mr. McIlroy will be rising most attentively to the Masters and the Open. His performances at each of these will be affected by how he views the other.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Excellence and Rapidity  
of  
2019's Major Championships

As we begin our 30<sup>th</sup> year,  
we thank you for your loyalty  
and welcome those  
who have just joined us.

DAVIS LOVE III,  
"THE GOLF LETTER ... the only  
golf publication I really  
look forward to reading."

In order of their appearance on the major championship schedule, here are some lesser known stories and insights on the 2019 major championship venues which promise so much:

**Augusta National**  
**THE MASTERS TOURNAMENT**  
**April 11 - 14**

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Masters Tournament will be played, as always, over the beguiling grounds and through the murky history of Augusta National.

Will this be the first year that one player will record four rounds in the 60s? While this has happened 40 times in the other majors, it has never been accomplished at the Masters.

There are some who find the Masters experience too routine and predictable, but most thrive on the traditional scenes, the holes we have all memorized, and the syrupy music that CBS continually overlays throughout their broadcast. Dick Taylor, the late writer best known for his work at GOLF WORLD from 1965 to 1989, commented that there is never a sameness at the Masters.

**IMPORTANT 2019 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Latin America Am	Caso de Campo	Jan 17-20
<b>THE MASTERS</b>	<b>AUGUSTA NATIONAL</b>	<b>APR 11-14</b>
<b>PGA CHAMPIONSHIP</b>	<b>BETHPAGE</b>	<b>MAY 16-19</b>
U.S. Women's Open	Charleston	May 30-Jun 2
<b>U.S. OPEN</b>	<b>PEBBLE BEACH</b>	<b>JUN 13-16</b>
[British] Amateur	Portmarnock	Jun 17-22
U.S. Senior Open	Notre Dame	Jun 27-30
U.S. Jr. Amateur	Inverness	July 15-20
<b>THE OPEN</b>	<b>ROYAL PORTRUSH</b>	<b>JULY 18-21</b>
U.S. Girl's Junior	SentryWorld, WI	July 22-27
[British] Senior Open	Royal Lytham	July 25-28
[British] Seniors Am	North Berwick	Jul 31-Aug 2
U.S. Women's Am	Old Waverly	Aug 5-11
U.S. Amateur	Pinehurst	Aug 12-18
U.S. Senior Am	Old Chatham	Aug 24-29
U.S. Sr. Women's Am	Cedar Rapids	Aug 24-29
Jacques Léglise	Aldeburgh, Eng.	Aug 30-31
The Walker Cup	Royal Liverpool	Sep 7-8
U.S. Mid-Am	Colorado GC	Sep 14-19
U.S. Women's Mid-Am	Forest Highlands	Sep 14-19
Asia-Pacific Am	Sheshan, China	Oct 1-4
Presidents Cup	Royal Melbourne	Dec 9-15

“There is a ‘high’ experienced entering the gates each spring like no other in golf,” he wrote in 1993. “It’s anticipation of something great that is bound to happen.”

The creation of Augusta National was set in motion quietly at the 1929 U.S. Amateur Championship that was played at Pebble Beach, the first U.S.G.A. championship played west of the Mississippi Basin. Bobby Jones was the defending champion, the reigning U.S. Open champion, and the medalist after his 36-hole qualifying with a score of 145.

Johnny Goodman, from Omaha, who could only afford to travel to California from Nebraska as a steer tender on a cattle train, was the highest scoring qualifier and, therefore, the 64<sup>th</sup> seed. He qualified at 158; 13 strokes higher than Mr. Jones. The two faced off in the first round as stipulated by the Rules of match play.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> tee, Mr. Goodman was dormie one. Mr. Jones had to win the 18<sup>th</sup> in order to take the match to extra holes. That did not happen. The two tied the final hole, and Mr. Goodman won the match. The miraculous result left the greatest player in the world, the U.S. Amateur field and U.S.G.A. officials dazed. In 14 years of competition, Mr. Jones had never before been defeated in the first round. [NOTE: No one ever beat Mr. Jones twice in match play.]

In 1933, Mr. Goodman would win the U.S. Open as an amateur. This provoked Mr. Jones to comment that perhaps now people would stop asking him [Mr. Jones] how he could have lost to Mr. Goodman in 1929. In 1937, Mr. Goodman finally won the National Amateur.

Having traveled to California expecting to compete for several days, Mr. Jones was not inclined to return to Atlanta quickly. He also had agreed to join Marion Hollins, the eventual founder of Cypress Point, for the ceremonial opening round at Pasatiempo, which was to be played immediately following the U.S. Amateur final.

Pivotaly impacting the future of Augusta National [Mr. Jones's idea for how the Club would be named], he had time during the intervening days to become re-acquainted with Alister Mackenzie and the Scotsman's work in the Pebble Beach/Santa Cruz area. The result was that Dr. MacKenzie became Mr. Jones's designer for Augusta National rather than Donald Ross, who was expected by most to get the job.

Mr. Jones won the Grand Slam the following year; then retired from competitive golf. By late November 1931, construction was underway at Augusta National and completed 124 days having required just 76 working

days! Mr. Jones played the first round with some friends on August 26, 1932. He scored even par.

Rumors and suggestions circulated that Augusta National could host the U.S. Open. That idea was quickly rejected because the Club was to be closed during the summer months. Clifford Roberts and Mr. Jones let it be known that the Club intended to start a tournament of its own.

**Bethpage [Black]**  
**THE P.G.A. CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**MAY 16-19**

In his FIELD NOTES from the restoration of Bethpage Black prior to the 2002 U.S. Open, Rees Jones makes crucial points as to how A.W. Tillinghast came to produce this sublime and searing championship examination.

First, because the Black Course is one of five golf courses operating out of the same clubhouse by the State of New York, there are easier alternatives. "If the Black had been a stand-alone public course, A.W. Tillinghast, who had designed three of the four original layouts at the site by 1936, would never have been allowed to make it as demanding as he did."

Mr. Tillinghast was charged at Baltusrol (1922) and Winged Foot (1923) with the production of "man-sized" courses. Their respective U.S. Open histories reflect that this was clearly accomplished at both.

Mr. Tillinghast wrote shortly after the Black Course opened, "Without a doubt were the other courses at Bethpage as severe as the Black, the place would not have enjoyed the great popularity it has known since it was thrown open to the public. Yet thousands of 'weak sisters' undoubtedly will flock there insisting on at least one tussle with the Black Leopard, just to show that they can take it."

Similar to Pine Valley, in which Mr. Tillinghast had a design hand at the 7<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, the Bethpage site presented "ideal, sandy, naturally rolling terrain". This allowed notably more penal bunkers than were his norm; and narrower or non-existent ramps into the greens.

A decade before the Black Leopard emerged, Mr. Tillinghast wrote of the necessity of *elasticity* in golf course design in these days of long flying balls. "We are forced

to insure the future values of the various holes against even more lively balls at than those of the present."

Mr. Jones makes the additional point that the Black's putting greens are more puzzling than many Open greens because "they have never been rebuilt with precision grading in the modern style". To save money during Depression-era construction, several stumps were left under the greens. "Over the years," Mr. Jones wrote, "when the stumps decayed, the greens settled, creating some subtle little pockets and concavities that are often indiscernible and will baffle even the world's best putters."



Tiger Woods was the 2002 champion and the only player under par. His score was 277 (3 under). Lucas Glover was the 2009 champion with 276 (4 under).

**Pebble Beach**  
**THE U.S. OPEN**  
**JUNE 13-16**

*America's Course*, as it is often called, Pebble Beach requires us to thank God for His creation of golf ground

unequaled; for the absence of government intervention in 1919 that allowed it to be built; and to Sam Morse for having the foresight to a.) see the possibilities and b.) to make the most critical decision of all, which was to place the golf course on the shore and the houses behind it rather than vice versa - with the exception of the 5<sup>th</sup> hole, which has now been rectified.

While this will be Pebble Beach's sixth hosting of the U.S. Open, it will be the first since the renovation of the 14<sup>th</sup> green. Nearly three years ago the green was expanded by 800 square feet in order to restore it to its original size (4,000 sq. ft.) and permitting a hole location in the back right portion. During the 2010 U.S. Open, the hole was cut upper left on all four days.

Mike Davis, U.S.G.A. Executive Director/CEO, ranks Pebble Beach's 14<sup>th</sup> and Oakmont's 12<sup>th</sup> as the two most difficult par 5s in the U.S. Open rotation. Mr. Davis announced earlier this month that he will not be in charge of course setup at this year's championship but will act more "as an overseeing consultant".

A friendly and perhaps obvious reminder: Openly expressed acrimony has become as much a part of the U.S. Open experience as green jackets, the Jug, or unexpressed outrage by disingenuous professionals afraid of losing their invitations. That doesn't make it true or respectable.

**Royal Portrush**  
**THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP**  
**JULY 18-21**

The County Club was founded in 1888, 14 years before Bobby Jones's birth, 31 years before Pebble Beach was built, and 48 years before Bethpage.

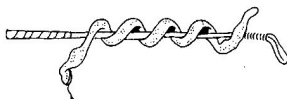
From the Club's handbook:

*When the club was formed in May 1888, it was known as the County Club. It became the Royal County Club in 1892, when H.R.H. The Duke of York was its patron and the name was changed to "The Royal Portrush Golf Club" in 1895, with H.R.H. The Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) as patron.*

The Club is 131 years old this May. It is considered a H.S. Colt masterpiece and one of the finest golf links in the world. Bernard Darwin's description of the setting:

*Portrush stands on a rocky promontory that juts out into the Atlantic, and if I may allude to such trivialities, the scenery of the coast is wonderfully striking. On the east are the White Rocks, tall limestone cliffs that lead to Dunluce Castle and the headlands of the Giant's Causeway. On the west are the hills of Inishowen, beyond which lie Portsalon and Buncrana and the links of Donegal.*

There are 38 golf courses in Great Britain with the Royal designation plus another 20 throughout the Commonwealth. The first was the Perth Golfing Society (1833); the youngest is Royal Troon (1978). Royal North Devon is the oldest (1868) still in operation. A club royal is so designated only by the reigning monarch and does



For F.F.L.:

*"Flattery is like chewing tobacco. It tastes sweet, is very satisfying, and does no harm. Unless you swallow it."*

Robert Winship Woodruff  
President of the Coca-Cola Company 1923-1954

not indicate that the monarch plays there or is a member. King George V held that the designation should be afforded only to preeminent bodies and institutions.

The Open was last played at Royal Portrush in 1951, which was also the only time, previous to this year, that it was played outside of Scotland or England. Max Faulkner won by two strokes over Argentinian Antonio Cerdá with a score of 285 (3 under par). Mr. Faulkner won £300 (roughly \$350 at that time) of the £1,700 (roughly \$2,000 at that time) purse.

Only 148 players attempted to qualify. There were very few Americans entered. One conflict was that the P.G.A. Championship at Oakmont that year did not finish until 3 July, which was the second day of the Open qualifying rounds. Thus, travel requirements made it impossible to play in both championships. This was also the reason Ben Hogan did not have a chance to win the professional grand slam in 1953, when he won all but the P.G.A. Championship due to his inability to be in two places at the same time.

[Note: Sam Snead won the 1951 P.G.A. Championship and \$3,500. It was his third victory in this event, which was a match play championship. Mr. Snead, as the saying goes, won by "a dog's license" (7 & 6) over Walter Burkemo.]

A dubbing unique to Portrush also comes from Bernard Darwin:

*The air is so fine that the temptation to play three rounds is very hard to overcome, while I may quote, solely on the authority of a friend, this further testimonial to it, that it has the unique property of enabling one to drink a bottle of champagne every night and feel the better for it.*

Yours vry truly,

Gary A. Galyean  
Editor & Publisher

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