



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

THE 20TH CENTURY'S most important golf and neighborhood restorations took place simultaneously five miles east of downtown Atlanta in the mid 1990s. That fact becomes clearer and more prominent with time. We are reminded of it each year as the golf world's focus returns to East Lake Golf Club for the season-ending Tour Championship. East Lake's distinction in hosting that tournament for the nineteenth year - 15 consecutively - gives it unique standing. The fact that Rory McIlroy won \$15 million last Sunday understandably captured the golf news cycle.

Well prior to last week's championship, East Lake's competitive legacy accumulated for more than a century. That legacy is but one of the three truly significant elements that have raised East Lake to such prominence in the world of golf.

Sixty years before the establishment of the P.G.A. Tour, East Lake was where Robert Tyre (Bobby) Jones learned to play, and where he played his first and last rounds.

Thirdly, and arguably the element of greatest importance at East Lake, is the breathtaking success of *Golf With a Purpose* that transformed the neighborhood that surrounds the golf club "from a war zone to a national model".

The Tour Championship, Bobby Jones' history, and *Golf with a Purpose* have each contributed to the frequent and truly extraordinary events that have taken place here - on and off the course.

"When there is really a force for good ..."



EAST LAKE G.C.

The home club of Bobby Jones, Golf with a Purpose, and the Tour Championship.

The East Lake neighborhood was within the Crim Cluster, one of 20 comprising the Atlanta Project. By the early 1990s, it was made up of 650 public housing units and was so ravaged by poverty, drugs and violence that it was nicknamed "Little Vietnam". Taxi drivers sometimes refused to drop newcomers there in broad daylight because of the danger. Even Atlanta's mayor said it was the only part of the city where she would not go alone, without police protection. The Atlanta Project was attempting to pay special attention to the education of inner city

youths and the revitalization of the city's major crime and poverty areas, but at East Lake it was not working.

In 1994, Thomas G. Cousins, a widely-respected Atlanta real estate developer whose family had been East Lake members for many years, was blessed with the idea of re-generating the entire East Lake community by razing the public housing and replacing it with single family townhouses and apartments while also providing schools, a grocery store, a YMCA, playing fields, limiting tenants to those with a job and no criminal record, and then us-

ing the golf club as a central hub in the vocational and recreational rebuilding of the community's youth. "I knew that [just] housing would not be the answer," he has said. The entire community needed to be rebuilt - education, services, recreation and safety provided.

To begin the work, Mr. Cousins and his wife Ann created the East Lake Foundation and then convinced 100 corporate donors to contribute \$200,000 each toward that goal. They referred to their work as *Golf with a Purpose*, it was work that the community and the city could not afford to be without.

The result was Villages at East Lake. Their website describes itself in this way:

Our homes are nestled among the conveniences of a perfectly planned community; including a grocery store, bank, Drew Charter School, East Lake Family YMCA, as well as the East Lake and Charlie Yates Golf Courses. Residents are drawn to The Villages of East Lake because of its recreational amenities, superior educational opportunities, and largely to become part of a vibrant supportive community.

Their charter school provides cradle to college classes and guidance. The results in reading levels, high school graduations, and college admittance rates are stunning.

Mr. Cousins now works to apply this same approach in other communities around the United States. After 40 years of failed government attempts (our words, not his) to break the cycle of poverty in America, it is reassuring to hear Mr. Cousins reflect on what was learned at East Lake.

"We learned that we can change neighborhoods," he has said. "There are so many serious problems in our country that don't have to be there. When there is really a force for good - something good happening -miracles will happen."

Only once from the same Club

THE ASCENT OF GOLF as a widely popular sport is inextricably woven within the fabric of its great clubs, and the notoriety of such clubs is founded on the competitive performances that have taken place on their courses and/or been achieved by their members.

With regard to members' competitive achievements, East Lake is without peer. Its members dominated competitive golf more than those from any other membership in the history of the game. They won more than 50 regional, national and international championships within a 31 year span - including 17 national championships.

Only two clubs in golf's long history, East Lake in 1930 and Victoria G.C., Melbourne, Australia, in 1954, have simultaneously housed both the [British] Open and the [British] Amateur trophies. Only once (1925) have the two finalists for the U.S. Amateur hailed from the same club - East Lake. In that year, Bobby Jones defeated his childhood friend, Watts Gunn, 8 and 7, at Oakmont.

All of these competitive accomplishments are made more astounding by the fact that East Lake's champions were drawn from the neighborhood children who either grew up near the Club or spent their summers there: Bobby Jones, Alexa Stirling, Watts Gunn, Charles and Dan Yates.

Bobby Jones was born in Atlanta on St. Patrick's Day, 1902. At the age of five he was stricken in succession with whooping cough and measles so his parents moved him for the summer to East Lake. The East Lake G.C., a branch of the greater Atlanta Athletic Club, had

opened that same year (1907). By the following summer at East Lake, six-year-old Bobby competed for and won his first tournament. He defeated Alexa Stirling, who would go on to win three U.S. Women's Amateur titles, finish as runner-up three times, and win the Canadian Women's Amateur title twice. Mr. Jones later recounted that among all his golf trophies he was proudest of the one he won in his victory over Miss Stirling, and it was the only trophy with which he ever slept.

East Lake was the foundational home for Mr. Jones' competitive training. It was at East Lake that he watched Ted Ray play "the greatest shot" he ever saw; and where, as a child, he relentlessly followed East Lake's professional, Stewart Maiden, the Scotsman from Carnoustie after whom Mr. Jones patterned his seemingly effortless and relentless swing, around the course watching closely but never taking a lesson proper.

From East Lake, at the age of 14, Mr. Jones entered



Robert Tyre Jones, Jr.

the world of national competition making the third round of match play in his first U.S. Amateur Championship (Merion, 1916). From this time, until his retirement from competitive golf at age 28, Mr. Jones played in 52 tournaments, of which he won 23.

During these 14 years, he was either a high school or college student for nine years. He graduated from high school at age 16; won his first college degree (Georgia Tech, Engineering) at 20, his second (Harvard, English Literature) at 22; and passed the Georgia Bar examination after just two years of law school at Emory.

In 1923, ineligible to play collegiate sports because he had already graduated from college for the first time, he volunteered to manage Harvard's golf team. He was told the team already had a manager. He then volunteered to be assistant manager, which was accepted rather grudgingly. At the time he was the reigning U.S. Open champion.

In his first ten attempts, Mr. Jones did not win a national championship. Then came 1923. From that year until his retirement, he won 21 of the national championships he entered. He held one or more major titles in each of those years. He won five of the eight U.S. Amateur Championships he entered. Of eight U.S. Opens in which he played, he won four times and finished second four times. In 1925, he called a penalty on himself costing him that year's U.S. Open victory.

Mr. Jones entered three (British) Open Championships winning them all. He entered two (British) Amateur Championships and won one.

No amateur ever beat him twice in match play. Professionals Walter Hagen and Gene Sarazen never won a U.S. Open or (British) Open in which Mr. Jones competed.

In 1926, he became the first person to win the U.S. Open and the (British) Open in the same year for which he received his first New York City ticker tape parade. In 1930, Mr. Jones became the first and remains the only person to win, in the same year, the U.S. Open, (British) Open, (British) Amateur and U.S. Amateur for which he received his second New York City ticker tape parade. He is the only person to ever be honored with *two* ticker tape parades in New York.

In his Grand Slam year, Mr. Jones was nearly killed at East Lake during the time between his U.S. Open victory (July) and his U.S. Amateur victory (September). A lightning bolt struck 40 yards away while Mr. Jones was putting on East Lakes' 12th green. A second bolt struck the 13th tee as Mr. Jones and his group ran for shelter in



the Clubhouse. As the group reached the locker room door, a third bolt struck the Clubhouse's big double chimney showering bricks and mortar as far as 300 feet away. Once the players were safely inside, it was discovered that the back of Mr. Jones' shirt had been torn to the waist and a six-inch scratch inflicted by falling chimney debris.

Following his 1930 U.S. Amateur victory and the completion of the Grand Slam at Merion, a line of 50 Marines was needed to escort him through the 18,000 spectators - a jaunt described by THE NEW YORK TIMES as "the most triumphant journey any man ever travelled in sport".

Mr. Jones retired from competitive golf immediately following his 1930 Grand Slam victories. He contracted with Warner Brothers for instructional films which were viewed by millions the following year.

In 1931, with Alister Mackenzie at his side, he began the design and construction of Augusta National Golf Club. In 1932, he designed the first matched set of flanged irons.

Two years later, he inaugurated the first Augusta National Invitational Tournament - later renamed, at Clifford Robert's insistence and with Mr. Jones' disdain (he considered it too boastful), the Masters Tournament.

In 1958, he was awarded the Freedom of St. Andrews. Benjamin Franklin is the only other American to be so honored. Mr. Jones died in his sleep on December 18, 1971.

While there is no record of when the original course at East Lake was laid or constructed, it was opened by 1907 when Mr. Jones' parents brought him there for the summer. The designer was Tom Bendelow. At that point, golf was second in importance to the Club's swimming and fishing activities. However, by 1913, the tide had changed in favor of golf and Donald Ross was commissioned to re-design the course to an appropriate standard. In 1959-60, George Cobb was charged with lengthening and expanding the course to a fitting championship caliber for the Club's hosting of the 1963 Ryder Cup Matches.

Thirty-one years later, Rees Jones was commissioned by Mr. Cousins to return East Lake to the style Donald

Ross envisioned while simultaneously updating it within the context of the abilities of the modern player.

“East Lake is one of those natural sites,” Mr. Jones told THE GOLF LETTER in 1994 before the restoration. “It was selected because it so ideally fits the shape of the holes. This is unusual these days. The style of golf course on which Bob Jones learned to play was largely obliterated in the 1959-60 work that was done for the Ryder Cup. When we are finished, East Lake will once again reflect the style of golf course where Bob Jones learned to play.”

The first two clubhouses at East Lake were lost to fire. The third, constructed in 1926, was designed by noted Atlanta architects, Neel Reid and Philip Schutze, whose designs included most of the noteworthy Atlanta residences built between the 1920s and the 1950s, such as Calhoun House. The original plans for East Lake were found at the Atlanta History Center.



For O.D.I.:

“Golf is a game of balance. A thinker who gauges the true value of his shots, and is able to play them well, nearly always defeats an opponent who neglects to consider and properly discount his shortcomings.”

George C. Thomas
Architectural genius behind
Bel-Air, Los Angeles-North, and Ojai

The 2019 Tour Championship

EAST LAKE IS NOW THE PERMANENT HOME of the P.G.A. Tour Championship and where it was first played in 1998. It returned there in 2000 and 2002; and now consecutively since 2005.

The P.G.A. Tour is one of the key partners of the East Lake Foundation and East Lake’s First Tee program. All proceeds from the tournament, \$1.9 million last year, go directly to that work. The two other key partners are Coca-Cola and the Southern Company.

The last time we saw Mr. McIlroy in such tense and demanding circumstances was at Royal Portrush when his failure to keep his drive in bounds at the 1st eventually resulted in his missing the cut in the most poignant competitive setting he has or will ever find himself. It was good to see him triumph at East Lake.

While the \$15 million first prize was an effective ploy by the P.G.A. Tour to capture greater end-of-the-season attention, and while their modeling of the playoffs and the final generally drew compliments, the reverse-handicapping of the Tour Championship seemed too affected. We understand the need to remove the confusion of 2018 when Tiger Woods and Justin Rose stood beside one another with two different trophies - Mr. Woods having won for the week and Mr. Rose for the season. However, seeding the 30 leading players by giving them a 10 to 0 stroke headstart needs more fine tuning which will undoubtedly be applied.

Far more contorted was Brooks Koepka’s naked asseveration of his swing and swagger that was released during Tour Championship week by the player and will appear shortly in a sports magazine. Conduct unbecoming a P.G.A. professional? There was certainly nothing becoming about it. Move over Greg Norman.

Yours vry truly,

Gary A. Galyean
Editor & Publisher

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