



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

NUMBER 331

OUR 30th YEAR

NOVEMBER 2019

Dear Subscriber:

THE OCEAN COURSE DEBUT Built for the 1991 Ryder Cup

The 29th playing of the Ryder Cup was held at Kiawah, South Carolina, on the Ocean Course, which was specifically built by Pete Dye for that event. The United States team won by 14½ to 13½ points. It was the first win for the U.S. since 1983, after consecutive losses to Europe in 1985 and 1987 and a tie in 1989.

We returned to play the Ocean Course the week following the Ryder Cup Matches expecting to be abused but insatiably curious to see how it really plays.

The two teams have been described as having undergone “three days of physical and mental abuse” from the course. Opinions we have heard range from “the worst course I have ever seen” to “it’s my favorite. I love it.”

Frankly, we have been at a loss to assess our own feelings, but have reached the conclusion that this may not be a golf course as we traditionally perceive such places. It is a mixture of many pleasing and simultaneously offending elements.

Pete Dye is clearly a well-studied student of linksland golf but, at Kiawah, he appears to have taken those elements of linksland golf courses, which he feels are important, and exaggerated them to an extent so that the world will never have any question but that Mr. Dye knows what they are. However, in the process, the course has become a visual exaggeration not dissimilar to Pablo Picasso’s analytical cubism.

Taken as individual cameos, the holes are enticingly scenic with gorgeous mounding, wide, lush landing ar-

reas, intriguing bunker shapes and long ocean vistas with shrimp boat silhouettes bobbing beyond the sea oats and breaking waves. However, it can be unfulfilling when, for the fourth or fifth time on the front nine, you strike the ball well and on line with a mid-iron only to be penalized. Landing in the relative center of the green, the ball then runs over the green, gathering speed down the

shaved Bermuda grass plateau collar, and comes to rest in a sand area from whence you are asked to play, at times with a tuft of grass behind your ball, back up the hill into the grain of the Bermuda grass collar and onto the undulating green. At first, it occurs to you that this golf is too difficult. But gradually the thought seeps in that perhaps there is

no reason to be angry at the golf course because this may not be golf at all. It may be a different sort of game - like Australian football or Irish curling.

Determining whether or not the Ocean Course is a golf course is perhaps that best reason to play it. Whatever it is, it is intriguing, perplexing, scenic and awkward - either a chimera or a new frontier where no one has dared go before. Mr. Dye, like Pablo Picasso, should be praised for his technical virtuosity, dazzling originality

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and prolificacy, but that does not mean this is necessarily a golf course.

Some snapshots from the Ryder Cup:

- Sunday morning's fly-over by the Concorde, which was returning to Charleston to take the European team home, was a stirring and impressive bit of gamesmanship. The unmistakable, supersonic silhouette banking slowly above the course at what appeared to be about 1,500 feet forced all eyes skyward on a dazzling symbol of pride for the European side and their supporters.

- Bernhard Langer's hole in one on the 17th during Thursday's practice round demonstrated the effects of competition and pressure. By Saturday most players were happy just to stay out of the water.

- The pressure was indeed formidable: Mark Calcavecchia (1989 Open Champion) halved his match after being dormie 4. He finished triple-bogey, bogey, triple-bogey, bogey. Hale Irwin (three time U.S. Open champion) three-putted the 17th, chunked his chip on the 18th and then watched Mr. Langer (1985 Masters champion) miss a five footer for the match.

- A European tour official gave us his opinion that the venue provided no focus: The gala party was an hour away in Charleston, the clubhouse too small to hold anyone but the officials and players, and the course was miles away from the nearest accommodations.

- In addition to competitive pressure there was financial pressure following the matches. Landmark Land Co., Kiawah and the Ocean Course's owner, decided to place the companies that oversee their golf communities under the protection of Chapter 11 of the bankruptcy laws. The Office of Thrift Supervision then seized Oak Tree Savings (Landmark's owner) charging that Landmark's Chapter 11 move would "have a deteriorating impact on the stability" of the thrift.

1991 WALKER CUP MATCH Portmarnock G.C., Dublin, Ireland

This was the 33rd playing of the match and the first time to be played in Ireland. The United States won 14 to 11.

Last month's [September] Walker Cup Match, the first to be held in Ireland, was a collection of crisp summer weather, a multitude of expertly executed shots, and extraordinary organization and hospitality by the Irish people.

In order to present the course in its optimum condition, for six weeks previous to the competition, the members of Portmarnock G.C. used a tee for any ball

which found its way onto the fairway; and for the six weeks previous to that, balls were taken from the fairway and played from the rough. The resulting conditions were outstanding particularly in light of the absence of an irrigation system and the lack of rainfall for six weeks before the match began. The greens, watered during the drought, were sometimes lightly criticized for not being harder, but provided as fine a putting surface as we have experienced anywhere. [Playing the first day following]

The most unusual shot played was Bob May's nine iron from a 2½ ft. deep drainage ditch running along the left of the par-5 13th. The ditch was no more than 10 inches wide at the bottom and cut at a severely steep angle. Standing on the angled bank with the ball 18 inches below his feet and the ditch marked as a lateral water hazard, Mr. May played his ball down the ditch line and onto the fairway. He later told us that his caddie had paced the length at 145 yards. When pressed about the difficulty of the shot, Mr. May, a recent graduate of Oklahoma State University, said he had contemplated hitting a 3-wood since the ball was below his feet and it would, therefore, cut nicely back to the green. The reason he did not try the shot was because the length of the 3-wood would probably have meant he would have touched the bank of the hazard on his back swing and, thereby, incurred a penalty shot. A civilian tried the shot after the matches ended and barely succeeded in getting the ball out of the ditch.

The most tenacious performance was David Eger's during the singles on the second day. Making the turn 3 down, Mr. Eger, age 39, won six holes in succession from Padraig Harrington, age 20, to take the match 3 and 2.

Mitch Voges, the U.S. Amateur champion who played in the last singles match on the second day, said when he made the turn the U.S. was leading in only one of the eight matches. He told us that he knew "it was time to start hitting some shots". Eventually, the U.S. won five of those eight matches including his.

Phil Mickelson was a focal point for several reasons and, as one British spectator put it, in order for the Great Britain and Irish team to win they would have "to topple the big man". Mr. Mickelson's play was strong and nervy. His use of the lob wedge from places where others would putt or chip continually baffled and exhilarated those watching and those competing.

There was general sentiment about the course on Friday afternoon that if Mr. Mickelson lost (his was the first singles match of the afternoon) that would be the crack needed to topple the U.S. team. Needing a tie on the 18th to win by one hole, Mr. Mickelson lob wedged from

a tight lie behind the plateau green to make par and secure his win. After that the other matches fell into place for the U.S. and, with five victories Friday afternoon, gave the U.S. a 14 to 10 victory.

Most Irishmen thought Mr. Mickelson's treatment by the press was absurd. In an ESPN interview, he said it wasn't worth hitting his ball into the rough because Irish girls just aren't that pretty. He meant to imply that hitting into the rough wasn't worth any price, even that of seeing a pretty girl. While the broadcast of his remarks was not shown in Ireland, the Irish ambassador to the U.S. called Golf House in New Jersey demanding an apology which was taped that same evening and played the next day.



The British and Irish press then went to work on the story blowing it into a major tabloid piece so bizarre that it took on comedic qualities. Mr. Mickelson privately regretted any embarrassment he caused the U.S.G.A. He was given a hard lesson in the woes of stardom but remained unrattled during the following day's play.

Portmarnock G.C.

"What a wonderful place to play the best of games."

Of the more than 25 courses located within 15 miles of Dublin's town center, there are none better than Portmarnock, which was formed in 1894. The discovery of the linksland was made during a train ride - not unlike George Crump's discovery of Pine Valley's site.

"... as the train on the main line from Belfast to Dublin draws near the junction station of the Howth branch, the traveller today gets a brief glimpse of the Portmarnock links and the clubhouse. Such an accidental glimpse given, over 12 years ago, to the eyes of Mr. W.C. Pickeman led to the discovery of the Portmarnock course and the formation of the golf club ... Mr. Pickeman first visited the ground on September 10th, 1894, and at once called a meeting of his Scottish and Irish friends ..." GOLF ILLUSTRATED, 1906

Just north of Dublin, the links are located on a small peninsula which extends itself just briefly southward toward the Irish Sea. Surrounded by water on three sides and laid out in a serpentine fashion, no two successive holes play in the same direction. Unlike many links

courses which play nine out and nine in, Portmarnock demands a continual discernment of wind direction. Another advantage of its peninsular location is the absence of humanity. Only open space and long views of the distant scenery meet the eye and such should always be the case. The profanity of mobile homes (caravans), which have inserted themselves into the scenic backdrops

at such wonderful places as Royal Dornoch and Royal County Down, is made physically impossible at Portmarnock due to the peninsula, which also provides a panorama of the Irish coastline. To the south rises the Hill of Howth, to the east the sandhills above the sea and out to Ireland's Eye and the Lambay Islands, to the west the sheltered inlet of the sea, and to the north the Mountains of Mourne reaching down to the sea.

Sir Peter Allen gleefully describes the colors:

"... white water to the west, blue sea and sky, the rough a pale khaki colour, the fairways the light green of an olive, the watered greens the colour of emeralds, picked out by black and white posts topped by scarlet flags. What a wonderful place to play the best of games."

In its early days Portmarnock was not served by a road and could be reached only by boat or, at low tide, horse drawn carriage. The bell which signalled the last boat of the day still hangs at the caddy master's pavilion near the first tee.

The course has a variety of holes including the 14th which Henry Cotton regarded as the best hole in golf; the 15th which Arnold Palmer regards (sic) as the best par-3 in the world; and the 5th regarded as the best on the course by the late Harry Bradshaw, for 40 years Portmarnock's golf professional and runner-up to A.D. Locke in the 1949 Open [Sandwich] after playing his ball from a paper bag.

Perhaps most characteristic of the course are the plateau greens which send slightly-less-than-accurate approach shots running off the sides and require solid chipping or putting to get the ball near the hole.

Anderson on the U.S. Open Playoff

Dave Anderson, writing for THE NEW YORK TIMES in

1990, weighed the attributes of the U.S. Open's 18-hole playoff versus sudden death:

In recent years each of those other three major tournaments surrendered to the microwave mentality that golf tournaments should end Sunday on television. As guardians of the United State Open's reputation as the world's most prestigious tournament, the blue blazers of the U.S.G.A. have maintained the most prestigious playoff format. And the most fair. In golf, major titles are too precious to be decided by one putt or one freakish shot or one bad shot or one losing gamble ...

1993 Open Championship Snapshots from Sandwich

Termed the "Norman Conquest", the 1993 Open Championship was won by Greg Norman at Royal St. George's by two strokes over Nick Faldo. It was Mr. Norman's second Open victory; the first coming in 1986 at Turnberry. The following are vignettes from the championship:

• At 7:21 Friday evening, the U.S. Amateur Championship, Justin Leonard, having played his second to the 18th, crossed within the perimeter of the massively empty grandstands and was greeted with enthusiastic applause and whistling from the 100 or so spectators still present. They knew exactly who he was and it did not matter that he was eight over par, that he would miss the cut or that it was getting dark.

• At 8:16 Friday evening, Craig Cassells was also acknowledged by the remaining spectators as he walked up the 18th and crossed the grandstand perimeter. His second had missed the green to the right, and he walked



For R.T.C.:

"No. I have a chauffeur."

SIR JACKIE STEWART

Three-time World Drivers' Champion
when asked if, at age 80, he ever feels the
need to step on the gas again.

with his putter across his shoulders and a hand on each end. Slowly walking, Mr. Cassells raised a hand to acknowledge the applause and as he replaced his hand on the end of the putter the shaft snapped just behind his neck. Clearly he had intended to putt the ball from just off the green. Without hesitation, he walked on to his ball, exchanged his broken putter for a chipping club, played a chip shot to within four inches of the hole, and then used the chipping club to tap in for par.

• On Saturday afternoon, jockeying began early at the practice ground for a place from which to watch John Daly warm up. Mr. Daly took his place at one end of the tee which meant necks were stretched all the way from the opposite end to catch a glimpse. Mr. Daly lingered with wedges and mid-irons and then spent what seemed an eternity talking to Fuzzy Zoeller. As bored eyes drifted away from Mr. Daly to such ordinary sights as the meticulous Nick Price or Kento Mizumaki's velvet touch, they were swiftly brought back into line by a mass, sweeping groan which was produced by the simple act of Mr. Daly placing his hand on the headcover of his driver.

• Also on Saturday, Gil Morgan, who was 2 under par through Friday, came to the practice tee to warm in his meticulous way. Having selected a wedge from his BUSINESS WEEK logo'd golf bag, Mr. Morgan made a couple swings and then addressed his first shot of the day. He cold topped the ball which ran to about 20 yards in front of him. There could not have been more than probably 600 people watching but all were respectfully silent, maybe in shock. Without changing pace or registering any surprise whatsoever, Mr. Morgan addressed another ball which he then struck perfectly, turned to the crowd, raised his hands, shrugged as if to say "who knows", and went back to work. There was polite laughter and a rare moment of equality between spectators and player.

Yours vy truly,

Gary A. Galyean
Editor & Publisher

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Back issues are available to subscribers only at \$10 each. Inquiries: Gary GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®, 11718 Southeast Federal Highway, No. 210, Hobe Sound, Florida 33455. Tel (772) 559.3382
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