



# GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

NUMBER 340

OUR 31<sup>ST</sup> YEAR

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

Dear Subscriber:

C. GRANT SPAETH, 88, past president of the United States Golf Association (1990-91)—the most beloved by that organization's staff, volunteers, and competitors of anyone to hold that position, and the most articulate and entertaining extemporaneous speaker of anyone to hold that position—died at home in Los Altos, California, July 28, from complications of Parkinson's disease.

In 1990 at Medinah, while serving the first of his two years as the 51<sup>st</sup> U.S.G.A. president, Mr. Spaeth presided over the most perspicacious U.S. Open Rules incident administered by a sitting president also working as the lead Rules Official with the final pairing.

A tie at 280 (-8) after 72 holes left Mike Donald and Hale Irwin headed into a playoff. The playoff rules at that time called for an additional 18 holes of stroke play the following day and, for the first time in U.S.G.A. history, if the competition was still tied at the end of the 18 hole playoff, sudden death to begin at the 91<sup>st</sup> hole.

Mr. Spaeth was the lead, fully qualified Rules official with the final pair. "After a long week, I was tired," Mr. Spaeth told us later. "Walking off the 17<sup>th</sup> green, I was tempted not to go down a hill to the 18<sup>th</sup> tee, which sits out on a peninsula that stretches into the lake. I thought I might cut over to the 18<sup>th</sup> fairway, contrary to the strictures of the [Rules manual]. Thank God I resisted and trudged back to the tee."

From U.S.G.A.'s GOLF RULES ILLUSTRATED (2007):

*The drama and competitive tension at Medinah Country Club had been intense all week. Irwin, 45,*

*had summoned a wave of talent reflective of his 33 professional victories, which included two U.S. Open victories in 1974 and 1979. Indeed, he had holed a 45-foot birdie putt on the 72<sup>nd</sup> hole of regulation play to force the Monday playoff. Donald, 34, was the journeyman hopeful whose only PGA Tour victory had come the previous year at Williamsburg, VA.*

*After hours of athletic and psychological endurance, the players walked off the 17<sup>th</sup> green of the playoff round with Donald leading by one. As is sometimes the case in the waning hours of a long, intense contest, fatigue and lack of focus are cause for mistakes and lack of judgment. So it was on the 18<sup>th</sup> tee.*

*"If you look carefully at the films," Spaeth continued, "you will note that Mike Donald actually teed up in front of the markers, which I caught, whereupon he re-teed the ball. What an awful ending that could have been."*

Rule 11, at that time, called for a two-stroke penalty for playing outside the teeing ground. Had Mr. Donald's mistake not been corrected before he played, the resulting penalty would have given Mr. Irwin an almost insurmountable lead and the championship victory.

Mr. Spaeth's correction to Mr. Donald prevented the penalty. Even so, Mr. Donald subsequently bogeyed the 90<sup>th</sup> hole and the game was again tied. For the first time in its history, the U.S. Open moved into sudden death. At the 91<sup>st</sup> hole, Mr. Irwin holed an eight-foot putt for birdie to become the U.S. Open's oldest winner.

Six months later in Minneapolis, Mr. Spaeth ad-

C. Grant Spaeth  
June 27, 1932 - July 28, 2020



usga.com

dressed the 1991 U.S.G.A. Annual Meeting referencing important issues of the day such as segregation at Shoal Creek, the recently settled lawsuit with Ping, ball distance, the relatively new Mid-Amateur Championships, and establishment of the U.S.G.A.'s Regional Affairs Department. Insightfully and with a smile, he ended his remarks saying, "Always remember ... it's just a game."

Mr. Spaeth, known as Grant, was born in 1932 in Oxford, England, while his father was earning his degree as a Rhodes Scholar. Grant spent part of his childhood and was first exposed to golf in Uruguay, where his father was later posted while working for the State Department. In 1946, Grant's father, age 39, was appointed dean of the Stanford University Law School, and the family moved to Palo Alto. Young Grant was enrolled in public school.

Three years later, Grant entered the 2<sup>nd</sup> U.S. Junior Amateur Championship that was played at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland. A month after his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was defeated in the first match play round in 19 holes by R. Aubrey Miller, Jr., from Selma, Alabama. At that time, it is recounted, those who lost in the first round were invited to compete amongst themselves at stroke play for a medal. Mr. Spaeth won that medal. As an indication of the quality of the competitive field, the junior champion that year was Gay Brewer Jr., who defeated Mason Rudolph 6 and 4.

Also in 1949, Mr. Spaeth won the San Francisco Junior Championship. Mr. Spaeth completed his high school education at Phillips Exeter in New Hampshire, where his roommate was the late Stuart F. Bloch, of Wheeling, West Virginia. Mr. Bloch followed Mr. Spaeth as the 52<sup>nd</sup> president of the U.S.G.A. (1992-93).

After Exeter, Mr. Spaeth attended Stanford as an undergraduate and was a member of the university's golf team that won the 1953 N.C.A.A. championship. That team competed often against San Jose State, where Ken Venturi was a team member.

After graduating from Stanford, Mr. Spaeth entered Harvard Law. With his law degree in hand, he returned to Palo Alto and founded the firm of Spaeth, Blase, Valentine & Klein.

What a time to be young, living in the Bay Area, and playing great golf. In 1956, Harvie Ward and Ken Venturi played their famous match against Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson at Cypress Point; that same year Mr. Venturi won the San Francisco city championship defeating Mr. Ward 5 and 4 before 10,000 spectators at Harding Park. Two years later VERTIGO came to the city in Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece; in 1963 Mr. Hitchcock returned with THE BIRDS; and in 1968 it was Peter Yates' BULLITT starring Steve McQueen. By this time Mr. Spaeth was still just 36 years old. From 1978 to 80 Mr. Spaeth served the Carter Administration as deputy secretary for the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. His work for the U.S.G.A. began when he was chosen to follow William J. Williams, Jr. as general counsel. That led to his being elevated to the Executive Committee and, shortly thereafter, through the officer chairs to the U.S.G.A. presidency following William C. Battle. This was a time occupied mostly by the intricacies of the lawsuit regarding Ping irons.

Mr. Spaeth was preceded in death by Judy Spaeth, who died of pancreatic cancer in 1965. He is survived by his wife Lori; his sister Laurie; two children, Charlie and Shelly; and his stepson Travis.

## 102<sup>nd</sup> PGA CHAMPIONSHIP Harding Park, San Francisco

UNTIL PLAY ACTUALLY BEGAN, it was understandably unclear if a spectator-less major championship at a less-than-dazzling course could be compelling.

Once it was all decided, we had been treated to one of the great, tension-filled competitions in memory—with seven players tied for the lead and only an hour left to play. Ultimately Collin Morikawa emerged as the dazzling, well-spoken champion who posted the lowest closing 36-hole score in major championship history (65 + 64 = 129); and joined Jack Nicklaus, Tiger Woods, and Rory McIlroy as the only players to have won their first major at age 23.



[NOTE: John D. McDermott won the U.S. Open at age 19. See last month's GOLF LETTER.]

Although 95 of the 100 leading players in the world were at Harding Park to compete, the frayed pre-game story lines defaulted to the possibility of Brooks Koepka winning for the third consecutive year—Walter Hagen was the last to do that a century before—and the possibility of Tiger Woods winning for a fifth time, which would tie Mr. Hagen and Mr. Nicklaus. *William Hill*, the bookmakers, had Mr. Koepka as the 10/1 favorite; Mr. Woods 30/1.

Dottie Pepper, the CBS on course reporter, commented perceptively two days before the start that San Francisco's weather was 30 or 40 degrees cooler than

where the tour had played for the previous several weeks. (The week prior they were in Memphis.) The temperature difference resulted in nearly a 15 per cent difference in the distance balls would travel through the denser air. She characterized Harding Park as “mean” with long, wet rough that would severely penalize missed greens. What she described were more similar to Open Championship conditions — with less wind.

Harding Park, built in 1925, has never been considered a stunning test—not unlike the U.S. President for whom it is named following his death in San Francisco from a heart attack while in office. A municipal course on a wanting piece of golf land in a city that loves the game, it has hosted many amateur events, including two U.S. Public Links Championships, and the 2009 Presidents Cup. It is slated to host the 2026 Presidents Cup.

The setup it received for this year’s PGA Championship was enlightened, as was the architectural placement of a short 295-yard par-4 at a pivotal position (16<sup>th</sup>) in the order of play. The 16<sup>th</sup> provided the tipping point that resolved the log jam of leaders as they came to the 70<sup>th</sup> of their 72 holes.

The absence of spectators during the previous eight weeks of CBS tour event broadcasting had real and imaginary impacts. Nick Faldo commented, “[Without fans] we have lost our peripheral vision ... [now] we stay focused on the players.”

Jim Nantz reflected that “it feels very normal to me when we are on the air ... and the audio is at a new level.” The absence of crowd noise makes it easier to listen in on player/caddie conversations.

Ms. Pepper made the practical point that her presence as an on-course commentator can be more disruptive to the players because she cannot hide herself or her narration amongst crowds of spectators.

During the third round, the absence of spectators may have accounted for Haotong Li’s lost ball at the 13<sup>th</sup>. His tee shot went into the trees on the right and was never found. Had there been spectators in the area the ball might have been found. The result was a double

bogey that took him from -9 to -7; two more bogies followed for a Saturday round of 73 (+3). His lead never returned. He finished the tournament tied for 17<sup>th</sup> (-6).

NOTE: Mr. Li is the first Chinese player to lead a men’s major championship after 36 holes. The CBS commentator misspoke commenting that Mr. Li “is trying to become the first *male* man from China to win a major championship.” Shanshan Feng, from Guangzhou, won the Women’s PGA Championship in 2012. Point made that Mr. Li would be the first male to do so. Nonetheless, we were sent scurrying to the files to

investigate if Mr. Li had ever been a *mail* man. We found no record that he ever has.



HARDING PARK BY TAG GALYEAN

During the final three hours, the championship lead changed nearly 20 times. With about two hours to play, Mr. Morikawa’s birdie at the 10<sup>th</sup> brought him into the group that 30 minutes later would be seven leading at 10-under. Nearly an hour later, his chip-in birdie at the 14<sup>th</sup> moved him into the

lead at 11-under, which Paul

Casey equaled 10 minutes later with a breathtaking bunker shot at the 16<sup>th</sup> that resulted in a birdie.

Mr. Morikawa drove the 16<sup>th</sup> green and made his putt for eagle. This drive was later mentioned by various pundits as perhaps the greatest shot in major championship history. To be considered, before reaching such an opinion, is Bobby Jones’ approach at Royal Lytham & St Annes’ 17<sup>th</sup> hole during the final round of the 1926 Open Championship. Mr. Jones had played his way back into a tie for the lead that was held by Al Watrous, with whom he was playing. From the 17<sup>th</sup> tee, Mr. Jones’ drive finished in the left rough that was comprised of sandy dunes and high fescue. His 175-yard approach finished on the green and closer to the hole than Mr. Watrous’ approach from the fairway. Mr. Watrous three-putted; Mr. Jones parred and held on to win the first of his three Open Championships.

Back at Harding Park, Mr. Morikawa’s 13-under with two holes to play, sent those in the clubhouse at 10-under to pack their bags, while Mr. Casey at 11-under watched Mr. Morikawa par out to win by two. Mr. Casey

was gentlemanly with a smiling response that praised the quality of Mr. Morikawa's golf.

Mr. Morikawa led with three notable statistics: Proximity to the Hole, Strokes Gained Putting, and Driving Accuracy. No further explanation needed.

It was fitting, but not ironic, that Harding Park was the competitive site for the first major championship since C. Grant Spaeth's death.

### Mickleson's Backward Vulgarity

Not particularly surprising, Phil Mickelson provided the most tasteless moment of the PGA Championship broadcast. He was invited into the CBS booth on Saturday, after completing his round, to provide color commentary. The opening dialogue went as follows:

Nantz: (to Faldo) *Ready for a little fireside chat with Phil?*

Faldo: (laughing) *Yeah.*

Nantz: *Phil, great to have you.*

Mickelson: *Thank you, it's nice to be here. There's (sic) three things I do well: play golf and talk golf.*

Faldo: *What's the third thing?*

dead air - blank stare from Mickelson

Faldo: *You said three things.*

Nantz: (to Faldo) *Yep, yep. You're setting him up.*  
short silence

Mickelson: *Anyway.*

Faldo: *Oh, that went right over my head.*

Mr. Mickelson's comment was pre-packaged to be lewd, cute, and humorous. It turned out to be lewd, stupid, and may signal an end to his broadcast career.



For Grant:

*"If you're riding ahead of the herd, take a look back every now and then to make sure it's still there."*

Will Rogers

Mr. Mickleson's open ended statement about the things he does well begs alternative answers to what the third thing might be:

- insider securities trading
- disregard and disdain for the Rules of Golf; or
- narcissistic insecurity.

A bit later, Mr. Mickelson used Bryson DeChambeau's driving prowess to needle Mr. Faldo again. Mr. Mickelson said that when one looks at Mr. DeChambeau "you know he hits bombs", and that Mr. Mickelson had the same observation when he first saw Mr. Faldo. "You're big, strong, and [hitting bombs] was the furthest thing that happened."

Mr. Faldo countered, "When you've won seven majors, you can rip me as much as you like."

### Only Professional Rules Officials at Winged Foot U.S. Open

"The Rules Committee at the U.S. Open [Winged Foot, Sept. 17-20] will be limited to U.S.G.A. staff and professional tour referees." - U.S.G.A. E-MAIL TO RULES OFFICIALS, JUN. 5.

This will be the first time qualified volunteer officials have not been invited to work at the U.S. Open since 1895. Some see this as the association using the Wuhan virus to advance their plan to eliminate volunteer officials at major U.S.G.A. championships.

### The Masters to be Patron-less

Augusta National confirmed in mid-August that the Masters Tournament will take place (Nov. 9-15) without patrons or guests on the grounds.

Yours vry truly,

Gary A. Galyean  
Editor & Publisher

Destinations included in GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER® are chosen at the discretion of the editors. All expenses related to the gathering of this information are paid by the publication. Rates quoted are subject to change without notice. Subscription rate is \$88 US per year (\$98US overseas); renewal rate from \$82US.



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  
Copyright 2020 Gary Galyean. Tag Galyean, Art Director.  
Quotation, reproduction or transmission is prohibited.