



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

AS THE NEW YEAR unfurls there are a few things we would like to clear up, expand, and reflect upon with a view from past to future horizons.

Why Fourteen Clubs? Two Guys are Sitting on the Running Board of a Rolls-Royce ...

In the film *MONTY PYTHON AND THE HOLY GRAIL*, the Constitutional Peasant points out that, "strange women lying in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government."

Contrary to this comedic logic, Arthurian legend did impact British government. Similarly, the logic of science has not always governed our golf governors' decisions about how to enjoy our golf. Sometimes it's just how we prefer the game to be played, or it's more fun this way, or it doesn't look right, or it's not croquet. It is the swords-from-strange-women-lying-in-ponds syndrome that is far more entertaining, and usually more effective, than endlessly flawed bureaucracy, as the following story illustrates:

Hickory shafted clubs in the hands of a skilled player could produce a variety of different shots. Rigid, steel-shafted clubs were limited in the type of shots they could produce—they were, however, less expensive and could propel the ball longer distances. So when steel became fashionable, players carried a greater number of steel-shafted clubs in order to satisfy the need for the various shots that might be asked for during a round of golf.

Lawson Little carried as many as 31 clubs in winning two consecutive British and two consecutive U.S. Amateur Championships in the mid 1930s.

In 1936, the chairman of the Royal and Ancient's equipment committee introduced a motion to limit the number of clubs a player could carry to 14.

Why 14? The story is told by Bobby Furber, past chairman of the R&A Rules of Golf Committee, on the DVD *ALL A-ROUND GOLF*, which was created, written, and produced by Gordon G. Simmonds, the noted Walker Cup historian.

Mr. Furber states that Bobby Jones and Tony Torrance, a five-time Walker Cup player, addressed the issue in the car park at Pine Valley during the 1936 Walker Cup. Their conversation was provoked by the fact that one of the American competitors was carrying 32 clubs,

including seven niblicks!

Mr. Jones and Mr. Torrance were sitting on the running board of a Rolls-Royce when Mr. Torrance asked Mr. Jones how many clubs were in his bag when he won the Grand Slam in 1930. Sixteen was Mr. Jones's answer. Mr. Torrance said he never used more than 12.

"Let's make it 14 then," was Mr. Jones's reply. Mr. Torrance then found Robert Harris, the sitting R&A Rules of Golf chairman and suggested the number.

In 1938, the U.S.G.A. adopted the limit of 14 clubs; the R&A did the same the following year.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Why 14 Clubs?
Swinley's Stroke Index System
Percentage of P.G.A. Prize Money
U.S.G.A. Moves & Ponderings

As we begin our 32nd year, we thank you for your loyalty and welcome those who have just joined us.

PETER ALLISS

"Long may you continue your independent voice, bringing golfing points of view to our notice, praising many but also, on occasion, 'slapping a wrist' that needs to be slapped."

The value of this story is the unscientific and appealing approach that was taken to this vexing Rules situation by those familiar with and accomplished in the game. More art than science. Decisions were often made by those who *knew* how the game *should* be played e.g. with 14 clubs rather than 30. Of course, in less intuitive men's hands the outcome could have been disastrous.



Frequently the best stories in golf, or elsewhere, turn out to be apocryphal and are ultimately improved, or ruined, once their accuracy is authenticated. While commentators can be tricked into believing that newly discovered evidence tells the real story, it is the work of accomplished historians to settle details through various sources. The story that next appears arrived in our mail from a subscriber and golf historian in the south of England as a reply to our WHY FOURTEEN CLUBS? piece when it appeared previously.

We stand with its author as someone devoted to accuracy as well as the baffling humor found in the days when people relied on their discernment rather than the judgement of so many lawyers and bureaucrats.

“... in the Swinley early years ...”

Your piece on how the fourteen club rule came into being was splendid. A collector's piece. It reminded me of a story of how stroke indices were introduced into the most private of private clubs in the London area; Swinley Forest, created by the local Crown Land lease holder, Lord Derby, and designed by [Harry S.] Colt, because Lady Derby was prevented from being a member at local men's clubs like Sunningdale.

Although Harry Colt was Secretary in the Swinley early years, as well as holding the same post at nearby Sunningdale, matches between members at Swinley relied on the more gentlemanly bisque system, where a stroke called a *bisque* [see O.E.D. definition opposite] was taken at whichever hole the received thought it was convenient, or even sporting, to claim it.

Less casual golfers from clubs like Sunningdale began to join [Swinley] and spoil the amateur feel of the place, and an undercurrent for a stroke index system developed. The Harry Colt replacement Secretary [at Swinley] did not like these “new fangled ideas” and wrote to the R and A to say that he did not understand the system and could they explain it. The response from the R and A was reputed to be complicated, and finished by giving the stroke indices of the St. Andrews Old Course.

The [Swinley] Secretary, knowing when his intellectual or numerical capacity was being overstretched,

decided that what was right for St. Andrews was right for Swinley Forest, which adopted the same stroke indices as the Old Course. Who could possibly fault his decision? I would not want to research this story too far as fact can ruin fiction, and the two are not good bedfellows.

However what is undoubtedly fact is that in the fifties the owner of the property bounding the left side of the 18th hole at Swinley was a zoologist, who confined a large baboon, one stroke down from a gorilla, in his wire netted garden. This creature [the baboon] would roar aggressively at any golfer who played [right handed] with a draw, and those who did, soon learned to carry a similarly shaped banana to satisfy and quieten the beast. Needless to say, Swinley does not bother at all with dogs accompanying members, though visitors' dogs are not encouraged, possibly because visiting non sophisticated (or cats?) might misuse the stroke index posts that the members became so pleased with.

With best wishes.

bisque

from the OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY:

Also biscaye, bisk.

[*a. F. bisque, of same meaning; of unknown origin. Littré compares It. bisca a gaming-place, a 'hell.'*]

1.1 Real Tennis. A term for the odds which one player gives the other in allowing him to score one point once during the 'set' at any time he may elect. Also in Croquet: An extra turn allowed to a weaker player.

[1611 Cotgr., *Biscaye, a vantage at Tennis. Bisque, a fault at Tennis.*] 1656 Blount *Glossogr.*, *Bisque (Fr.), a fault at Tennis.* [So in 1678 Phillips.] 1679 *Shadwell True Widow I. Wks.* 1720 III. 124 *We'll play with you at a bisk, and a fault, for twenty pound.* 1721 Bailey, *Bisk, Bisque, odds at the play of Tennis; a stroke allowed to the weaker player. French.* 1872 Prior *Croquet* 56 Mr. Hale made the happy suggestion of adopting the bisque as a means of equalizing a strong and a weak player. 1874 Heath *Croquet Pl.* 77 *Example of how to take the Bisque.*

2.2 fig. †to have a bisque in one's sleeve: to have something to fall back upon, another resource, another string to one's bow. to give one fifteen, etc. and a bisque: to give him long odds, to 'leave him nowhere' in a contest or comparison.

Thirty Percent of P.G.A. Tour Prize Money Since 1980: 11 Players on 25 Occasions

Dustin Johnson won 34.63 percent of the total prize money that was available to win on the P.G.A. Tour in 2020—\$8.95 million of the possible \$25.86 million—an astounding accomplishment.

The tour began tracking this statistic in 1980. During the past 40 years, only 11 players on 25 occasions have won 30 percent or more of the annual prize money—sometimes more than one did so in the same year. Six have accomplished this once; four have done so twice; and one 11 times:

Tiger Woods:

1999 (50.54%)	2000 (63.0)
2001 (38.57)	2002 (44.11)
2003 (38.95)	2005 (46.73)
2006 (58.63)	2007 (54.23)
2008 (78.25)	2009 (47.96)
2013 (38.57)	

--- Twice accomplished ---

Nick Price:

1993 (31.47)	1994 (30.03)
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Greg Norman:

1993 (33.02)	1995 (33.99)
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Vijay Singh:

2003 (30.58)	2004 (38.44)
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Rory McIlroy:

2012 (37.05)	2014 (33.33)
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--- Once accomplished ---

Lee Trevino:

1980 (31.75)

Tom Watson:

1980 (41.68)

Ernie Els:

2004 (33.63)

Jason Day:

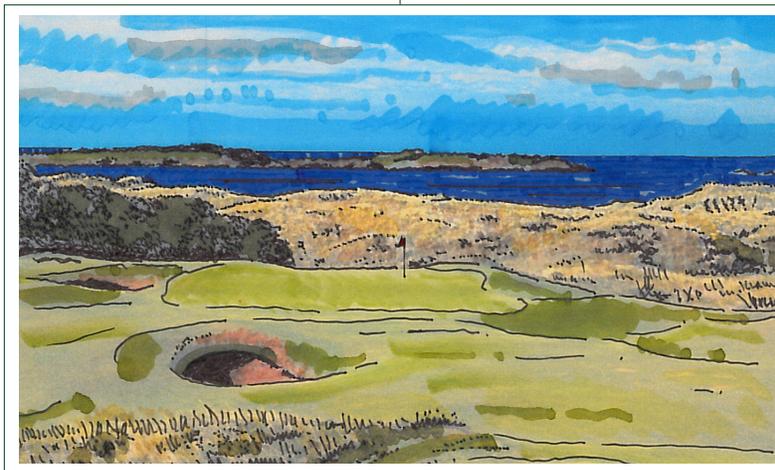
2015 (34.79)

Jordan Spieth:

2015 (32.78)

Dustin Johnson:

2020 (34.63)



TAG GALYEAN, *THE 15TH AT ROYAL PORTRUSH*

Far Hills to the Sand Hills Will the U.S.G.A. Headquarters Move to Pinehurst? Is a U.S. Open Rota in the Works? Who Will Replace Mike Davis?

Change is in the wind at U.S.G.A. headquarters. Analyzing news from Far Hills has always been an intricately dark exercise akin to predicting policy at the Kremlin based on the seating charts for important Supreme Soviet dinner parties.

Recent announcements have U.S.G.A. watchers pondering a.) if the association's

headquarters will ultimate-

ly move to Pinehurst; b.) if an identifiable U.S. Open course rotation (à la the Open Championship) may be coming together during the next ten years; and c.) who will be chosen to lead and formulate the U.S.G.A. as C.E.O./Executive Director Mike Davis retires later this year? That's a lot to ponder.

- Last September, the U.S.G.A. issued the following:

In an effort to expand its impact in golf and extend its mission to champion and advance the game, the USGA will establish "Golf House Pinehurst" in North Carolina, to include a new equipment-testing facility, innovation hub, museum/visitor center and offices by 2023, and host five U.S. Open Championships in the golf-rich state by 2047.

The use of the *Golf House* name, the \$25 million investment to build the new facilities—including the equipment standards test center and a museum—and posting of 50 full-time U.S.G.A. staff members, leaves those in the pondering business asking, what will be left in New Jersey? Once in operation, Golf House Pinehurst will be U.S.G.A. Headquarters with little left to do in the Garden State except to make the drive over to play Somerset Hills or Baltusrol.

- Beginning in 2024 the U.S. Open future sites calendar takes on an air of certainty reaching 23 years into the future. Again, Pinehurst is given the central role with championships announced to be played on Course No. 2 in 2024, 2029, 2035, 2041, and 2047. "[This] decision," the U.S.G.A. has stated, "accelerates the USGA's strategy

to stage its premier golf championship at America's most iconic venues with greater frequency. [Pinehurst] will serve as the USGA's first anchor site for the U.S. Open."

Oakmont is booked for 2025; Shinnecock for 2026; and Pebble Beach in 2027. That leaves one date (2028) during the next eight years available for Oakland Hills, Winged Foot, Baltusrol, Olympic, Brookline, or Merion. The future schedule confers St. Andrews-like status upon Pinehurst, which also plays to the move of U.S.G.A. headquarters from Far Hills to the Sand Hills.

The list of those notable clubs (above) un-booked from 2024 through 2028—and then the return to Pinehurst in 2029— suggests a move to a predictable rotation of U.S. Open venues, as does the U.S.G.A. reference to "America's most iconic venues". We do not expect the national championship to return to Chambers Bay or Erin Hills. Where does this leave Bethpage, Hazeltine, Medinah, Oak Hill ..? Perhaps a stop there every 20 years?

- Mike Davis, 55, U.S.G.A. C.E.O./Executive Director, following Winged Foot's recent U.S. Open, announced that he will leave the association by the end of 2021.

Mr. Davis joined the U.S.G.A. in 1990, rose through many chairs including accomplished handling of championship preparation, became the seventh executive director in 2011, and the first chief executive officer in 2016. His experience in the game can be unchallenged. When assuming the executive director post he retained responsibility for the U.S. Open set-up during which time he innovated the technique of varying the length of rough depending upon its distance from the fairway.

Truly knowledgeable of the game and gentle in his demeanor, Mr. Davis will be difficult to replace for those searching the current pool of employable golf adminis-

trators. He is steeped in U.S.G.A. history, golf history, the Rules, and championship logistics. What is likely is that the association's top position will go to a lawyer or investment banker—a worldwide trend in sport—who understands money better than they do golf.

IMPORTANT 2021 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Latin America Am	Lima, Peru	cancelled
THE 85TH MASTERS	AUGUSTA NATIONAL	APR 8-11
Walker Cup	Seminole	May 8-9
103TH PGA CHMPNSHP	KLAWAH IS (OCEAN)	MAY 20-23
U.S. Women's Open	Olympic	Jun 3-6
[British] Amateur	Nairn	Jun 14-19
121ST U.S. OPEN	TORREY PINES (SOUTH)	JUN 17-20
[British] Senior Am	Ganton	Jul 6-9
U.S. Senior Open	Omaha C.C.	Jul 8-11
U.S. Girl's Junior	Columbia C.C.	Jul 12-17
THE 149TH OPEN	ROYAL ST. GEORGE'S	JULY 15-18
U.S. Jr. Amateur	C.C. of N. Carolina	Jul 19-24
[British] Senior Open	Sunningdale	July 22-25
Olympic Men's Golf	Kasumigaseki	Jul TBD
Olympic Women's Golf	Kasumigaseki	Aug TBD
U.S. Women's Am	Westchester	Aug 2-8
U.S. Amateur	Oakmont	Aug 9-15
Curtis Cup	Conwy, Wales	Aug 26-28
U.S. Senior Am	C.C. of Detroit	Aug 28-Sep 2
43 rd Ryder Cup	Whistling Straits	Sep 22-27
U.S. Women's Mid-Am	Berkeley Hall, SC	Sep 25-30
U.S. Mid-Am	Sankaty Head	Sep 25-30
PGA Tour Chmpnshp	Eastlake	Sep 30-Oct 5



"Against stupidity, the gods themselves fight in vain."

John Le Carré (1931-2020)
SMILEY'S PEOPLE

Yours vy truly,

Gary A. Galyean
Editor & Publisher

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