



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

With the arrival of the Masters Tournament just days away, recalibrating ourselves to golf's most alluring qualities, many of which are on parade during the week of that tournament, is in order. The articles that follow are aimed at returning to a more endearing stage from the one that has generally been occupied by the professional players during this past year.

We begin with a slightly unusual competitive perspective of Bobby Jones, upon whose character still lies the spirit of the course's preparation and the resulting competition between the best amateur and professional players in the world.

The following piece was written specifically for THE GOLF LETTER by Laurence Viney who, as co-editor of THE ROYAL & ANCIENT GOLFER'S HANDBOOK for many years, was considered to be a leading historical authority with a proclivity toward timely and entertaining observations.

Injuries Mr. Viney incurred in a [World War II] glider accident caught up with him after 30 years forcing him to give up golf, but not give up writing about it. Besides editing the golfer's handbook, which was first published in 1904, he specialized in producing club histories for some of the British clubs that celebrated their centenary anniversaries during his lifetime. He was an exchange student in the 1938 class at Phillips Academy, Andover, Ma. He was a member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Rye, and Ashridge Clubs; and an officer of several golf and literary societies.

When considering the stories that follow, it is noteworthy to remember that Bobby Jones was just 19 years old the first time he crossed the Atlantic to play competitively

in England and Scotland. Writing in 1927—three years before his Grand Slam year—Mr. Jones reflected, “[I] added a lot to my meager stock of golfing education by taking a lacing in the British amateur championship at Hoylake and performing one last superbly childish gesture by picking up—that is, withdrawing—in the British open championship at St. Andrews.”

By the time he arrived in Scotland in 1921, he was nicknamed *Boy Wonder*, and St. Andreans knew he was someone to watch as the 56th Open Championship began. Mr. Jones, 19, was paired with Jock Hutchison, who would go on to win. In the first round (morning), Mr. Jones shot 78 and Mr. Hutchison 72. In the second round (afternoon), Mr. Jones shot 74 and led the amateur field at 152.

However, the third round (the following morning), saw Mr. Jones take 46 strokes to play the out nine. At the 10th—the hole that would be named for him posthumously—he made 6. At the short 11th he hit his tee shot into Hill Bunker and took four to get his ball onto the green. Exasperated, he picked up his ball, which ended his competitive participation but, at that time, it was permissible for him to continue playing, which he did through the fourth round.

“I have some sterling regrets in golf. This is the principle regret—that ever I quit in a competition ... But I was a youngster, still making my reputation.”

Bobby Jones and the Open Championships 1921-1930

The life of the greatest amateur golfer, Bobby Jones, is widely chronicled. Except for the two British events in his 1930 Grand Slam, or *The Impregnable Quadrilat-*

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Masters Advance
All Major Exemptions

eral as it was christened at the time, his successes in the United Kingdom are less well known.

He first came to Britain in 1921, aged 19, with the unofficial U.S. amateur team which played and beat the British amateurs at Hoylake. The match was a precursor of the first Walker Cup match the next year at the National, New York. After Hoylake the team went on to St. Andrews for the Open. Bobby was very perplexed with the blind shots and hidden bunkers on the Old Course, which he felt he would never master. He played quite well for two rounds, but took 46 to the turn in the third and in a youthful tantrum tore up his card at the short 11th, a precipitate action he regretted for the rest of his life. Subsequently he formed the highest possible opinion of the course, as the citizens did of him.

He made only three more visits in his prime and won the Open on each occasion, at Lytham St. Annes in 1926, St. Andrews the next year, and Hoylake in 1930. His most exciting win was at Lytham, the occasion of Hagen's attempt to tie with an eagle at the 72nd. Although the leaders did not necessarily play together in the last round, nor were they the last in the field, Bobby happened to be paired with Al Watrous who was in the lead two strokes ahead of him.

They arrived at the 17th level. With Watrous on the green in two, Bobby, who had pulled his drive into sandy waste ground amid scrub and a few trees, played as fine a shot as any in his career. The ball was lying clean in a shallow sand bunker 170 yards from the green with trouble all the way in between. His mashie-iron shot played blind found the green well inside Watrous. As Bernard Darwin wrote "a teaspoonful more of sand would have meant irretrievable ruin". The shattered Watrous took three putts and did so again at the 18th, leaving Jones the winner by two shots. There is a stone plaque marking the spot from where the shot was played and the mashie-iron hangs in the Lytham Club House next to his portrait in oils.

The following year he came to defend his title, partly because it was to be at St. Andrews. By then he had come

to appreciate its subtlety and understand its problems through playing there in the Walker Cup match the year before, when he had won his foursome and beaten the formidable Cyril Tolley 12 and 11 in his single. In that Open he led from the start with a 68 and finished with a total of 285 and no one else within six shots of him. So good was his play that on holing out at the 72nd, the crowd of appreciative Scottish spectators carried him shoulder high to the Club House door.

At Hoylake three years later he won by two shots from fellow Americans Macdonald Smith and Leo Diegel. This was the second of the four Grand Slam triumphs and his success was the more extraordinary in that he was not the man playing well. Such was the measure of the man that even so he could still win against the best players in the world.

Before that Open he had won the Amateur at St. Andrews when he endeared himself once more to the people. He did not return until 1936 when on a private

visit to Scotland on his way with

friends to the Berlin Olympic Games, they decided to drive to St. Andrews for a round on the Old Course. They telephoned the Club and booked a time. "Bobby is back" was the message which shot around the town. Such was the excitement that when he arrived at the 1st tee there were 2000 spectators to watch him. He did not disappoint them as, although out of practice, his reception had recaptured his old flair and he played the first nine holes in an astonishing 32.

His last visit was in 1956 when, already confined to a wheelchair through his crippling, incurable paralysis, he was Captain of the U.S. team in the Eisenhower Trophy at St. Andrews. During the tournament he was given the Freedom of St. Andrews by the Lord Provost on behalf of the citizens of the town. This was a signal honour as he was the first American to receive the Freedom since Benjamin Franklin in 1759. After the impressive ceremony in his speech of thanks he paid tribute to his "fellow citizens", several hundred of whom packed the hall. He finished with the moving words, "I could take out of my life everything except my experiences at St. Andrews and I would still have a rich, full life." The citizens were



Bobby Jones - The 10th at the Old Course

moved beyond words as they realised it was the last time they would welcome him.

Waist-High Relief in the Azaleas A Ruling at the 1993 Masters

Based on the language and intricacies of the Rules of Golf as they were at the time of this incident.

On Good Friday 1993 at Augusta National, Billy Ray Brown hooked his second on the par-5 13th into the azalea bushes that are planted to the left and slightly above the green. The ball embedded beneath one of the bushes. By *local rule*, Mr. Brown was entitled to relief for an embedded ball in this area, whereas the Rules of Golf only granted such relief in closely mown areas through the green.

It was obvious to officials at the 13th green that Mr. Ray would be entitled to relief but that dropping the ball would be complicated by the presence of the bush branches, which extended between the ground and the extension his arm would make in using the proper dropping procedure from shoulder height (as required at that time).

Rule 20-2b stated:

A ball when dropped must first strike a part of the course where the applicable Rule requires it to be dropped.

The Decisions Book specifically identified a bush as a part of the course; and stated that a dropped ball did not have to strike the ground [first, or ever]. If a ball so dropped lodged in the bush no nearer the hole and no more than two club-lengths from where it first struck the bush, it would be in play.

When Mr. Brown dropped his ball it was deflected by bush branches and moved closer to the hole. He was, therefore, required to re-drop, and the ball once again moved closer to the hole. Consequently, continuing under Rule 20, he was required to place his ball at the spot where it first struck the bush branch when it was dropped the second time ... and struck the leaves growing from the branch.

Unable to make the ball remain at rest on the leaves of the bush, Mr. Brown was then entitled to place his ball at the nearest spot (to where it struck the leaves), no nearer the hole, where it could be placed at rest. This turned out to be a fork of a branch at the top of the bush.

Realizing the more impossibly restricted predicament in which he would find himself—not to mention the penalty stroke—if he chose the unplayable option

and dropped on the ground under the bush, Mr. Brown seemed pleasantly surprised when told that he would be required (in taking embedded relief) to place his ball on the top of the bush and play from there, without penalty.

Having placed the ball atop the bush, Mr. Brown, a right-handed player, quickly selected his putter, made a left-handed swing, and moved his ball to the edge of the putting green. From there, he two-putted for par.

NOTE: With his ball having been placed at rest atop the azalea bush, Mr. Brown risked a penalty stroke had *he caused* it to move from its precarious perch before making his stroke. However, after being deemed at rest, had the ball moved without any action from Mr. Brown, he would have been required to play from its new position or declare it unplayable. Such a new position would most likely have been in a less-than-playable position within or under the bush; or the ball could have rolled down the slope, into the open, and closer to the hole to his great advantage and without penalty. ❧

PGA Championship and The Players Exemptions 2023 Qualifying LIV Members Can Play

The PGA of America—the club professionals, not the tour professionals, who conduct the PGA Championship and the Ryder Cup, among other important championships—fell into line Feb. 23 with the other three major championships and will permit LIV Golf members who meet exemption and qualifying criteria to compete at Oak Hill in June. Thus, qualifying LIV members will be allowed in all four 2023 major championships.

Speculation was floated for some months that due to the relationship between the PGA Tour and the PGA of America there might be restrictions on LIV members playing in the PGA Championship. That has not been the case and, more exceptionally, qualifying LIV members will also be allowed to compete in the Players Championship, which is conducted by the PGA Tour.

Following the Honda Classic, which finished two Sundays (Feb. 26) before the Players Championship (March 9-12) and traditionally determines those eligible to play in the Players, the PGA Tour announced that *all* players within the top 50 of the Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR) are exempted into the Players. All players—regardless of the tours on which they play e.g. PGA Tour, LIV, European, Asian, China, etc.

Once the Honda results were official, the top 10 in the FedExCup became eligible for the field of 144 at the Players. Predictably, those 10 already were exempt because of their strong play. The provision is presumably

reserved for players who did not finish inside the top 125 in 2021-22 Eligibility Points and first-time members off to a strong start who have yet to win in 2023. For example, Taylor Montgomery moved to 14th place, and will be first to fill the field if fewer than 144 of the qualifiers fail to commit. Inside the OWGR Top 50 following the Honda are Ryan Fox of New Zealand (33rd) and Min Woo Lee of Australia (50th) who are now exempt.

Although seeking membership in the OWGR, LIV is not a member and, therefore, those competing in LIV tournaments do not earn world ranking points. Through the attrition of time, the OWGR continually reflects the lack of ranking points for LIV members e.g. Dustin Johnson is currently ranked at 54th in the world down from 13th in June 2022 when he left the PGA Tour to join LIV; Cameron Smith has fallen from 1st to 5th in the OWGR since joining LIV following the Tour Championship last September.

A year ago, as the early reactions to the splintering of the professional tours were expressed, there was speculation as to whether LIV players would be permitted to compete in major championships. Those speculations have now been answered. LIV players will be allowed in all four majors if they meet the exemption and/or qualifying criteria. Time makes some decisions easier to make, and it seems the major championship governors have decided to maintain their respective OWGR criteria for entry, which moves the ultimate decision to whether LIV players will be acknowledged by the OWGR.



For W.D.H.:

*“Applauding mistakes is no part of the game of golf and we hope that visitors to the Masters will henceforth observe the etiquette and retain their reputation as among the most knowledgeable and courteous of golfing spectators.
[Added later] The rewards of golf and of life too, I expect, are worth very little if you don’t play the game by the etiquette as well as by the rules.”*

Bobby Jones

as printed on the back of Masters tickets

Litigation, should it be chosen by any of the parties, would seem to necessarily focus on the OWGR’s rules of membership. Foremost there would be the question of equating 54 holes of competition to 72 holes.

Weak LIV Debut on The CW Network

LIV Golf’s first tournament of the season, played in Mexico during the last weekend in February, gave television viewers their first chance to watch LIV competition on network—albeit The CW Network. [Details in last month’s GOLF LETTER]. The LIV broadcast finished miles behind NBC’s coverage of the Honda. Many CW affiliates did not run the LIV event so those markets were filled by other means.

According to LIV as reported by GOLF DIGEST:

- Saturday’s broadcast had 1.6 million viewers on the CW affiliates and other stations that carried LIV programming in the U.S.

- Sunday’s broadcast dipped to 1.3 million.

- The CW, which usually does not provide programming to affiliates during the 1-6 p.m. weekend windows when LIV aired, saw ratings “increase by double digits in ten top U.S. markets”.

How is an increase from nothing measured? One indicator was that *World’s Funniest Animals* reportedly finished ahead of LIV in the broadcast rankings. One subscriber suggested that it was too difficult to differentiate between the two shows.

Last season’s events were streamed without charge on YouTube.

Yours vly truly,

Gary A. Galyean
Editor & Publisher

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