



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER®

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

NUMBER 377

OUR 35TH YEAR

JANUARY 2024

Dear Subscriber:

† Götterdämmerung

The collapse, as of a society or regime, marked by catastrophic violence and disorder; broadly: downfall.

DIFFIDENCE, so novel and forlorn a manner of behaving in the world of professional sports for decades, was given another good shove away from the dock of propriety last month when the Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudia Arabia nicked Jon Rahm to their side of the fray with what is now estimated to be \$450 million.

From their huddled palace corners and Cullinans, the message was clear: If the P.G.A. Tour is intent on finding investors beyond the PIF, the nicking of the prominent Tour players will continue and will be something all parties will have to deal with going forward. The PIF is not leaving the fray; is not tempered by war, anti-Semitism, or dismal television ratings. The Tour, and any investors, will have to include the PIF in whatever deal is made in order to 1.) have access to the top players already in the PIF camp; and 2.) abate future appropriating of top players should the PIF be left out of the merger agreement. Condon punishment, or at least the semblance of it, for those already rewarded with mountains of PIF cash, can be offset with still more piles of the oily, green stuff for those who have not already been bought.

In either case, the persistence of the PIF and the cash needs of the Tour indicate that all the financial and operating parties, all the players, audiences, and supporters are sadly destined to take part in golf's approaching götter-

† GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG is the last in Richard Wagner's 1876 cycle of four epic music dramas entitled DER RING DES NIBELUNGEN.

dämmerung that will change our view and/or enjoyment of the professional game, such as it is or will become.

"To have Jon [Rahm] on board was critically important to our future and what we do," said Greg Norman, LIV Golf's chief executive. "It will create a domino effect—there will be more apples falling from trees—no question about it, because LIV continues to develop."

Scottie Scheffler's comment on Mr. Rahm's move was entertaining: "No, I'm not surprised. He wants to be the best golfer on tour. He knew with me being on the PGA...you know, he wasn't going to be able to accomplish that."

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Götterdämmerung [Kurzzeitig]

THE WALKER CUP
CENTENARY EDITION

On New Year's Eve, the self-imposed deadline for a final merger agreement, P.G.A. Tour Commissioner Jay Monahan wrote to his players in an undisclosed memo that the Tour and PIF are "working to extend" new negotiations into 2024. Speculation as to the new deadline stretches as far as the second weekend in April i.e. The Masters, but who knows?

New to the negotiation drama is the revelation that a fourth party, Strategic Sports Group (SSG), has joined the deal making talks. Previously the talks included just three: the P.G.A. Tour, the DP World Tour (European Tour), and the PIF.

SSG is an investment group led by the Fenway Sports

As we begin our 35th 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."

Group [net worth estimated at \$7 billion]. Their holdings include the Boston Red Sox, Liverpool Football Club, the Pittsburgh Penguins, NASCAR's RFK Racing, and the TMRW (Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy) Golf League's Boston Common Golf. Various other assets include Fenway Park and Anfield, Liverpool's home stadium.

As the P.G.A. Tour sought investors such as SSG in addition to or in place of PIF, PIF purchased Mr. Rahm to remove any ambiguity about their tenacity for owning a place of dominance within whatever new golf enterprise is to be created by the merger of the tours.

There is a samurai tactic referred to as *knocking the heart out*, which teaches a warrior to suddenly change their attitude to stop their enemy from having hope. The point is to make an enemy feel defeated from the bottom of their heart. This philosophy suggests that an enemy's heart can be broken with weapons, the body, or the mind. When an enemy has completely lost heart, the samurai does not have to pay attention to them anymore, and they will collapse. This seems to be a tactic employed by PIF through their purchasing leading professional players, which removes them from the P.G.A. Tour's roster and, therefore, broadcast appeal for Tour events.

Searching desperately for sources of revenue, the careworn P.G.A. Tour leadership has retained International Management Group to manage this year's *Cognizant Classic in The Palm Beaches*, which is the new name for the tournament formerly known as the Honda Classic. The Tour's move foretells, at least among our sources, that the Tour will take over future management of this and other tournaments on their schedule. This will restrict tournament profits going to charity, affect working volunteers, and may flat-rate spectator tickets at exorbitantly high prices.

An altogether *tout ensemble*, as P.G. Wodehouse often referred to such coming together of things. Billions in foreign and domestic sports company investment, the sloshing of billions to reconstitute a full professional tour of leading players, petulant player behavior, the interrup-

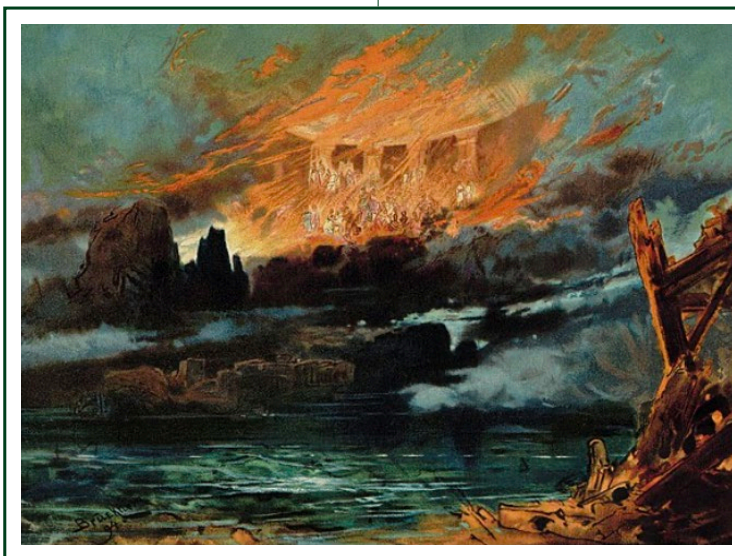
tion of charitable donations from weekly tournaments, and whatever else can be monetized including an aching desire for returned television ratings and worldwide streaming rights.

Elsewhere

• **David Rickman**, chief referee of The Open for 28 years and The R&A's executive director—governance from 1996 to 2022, one of the most widely respected figures in golf, is to retire from The R&A in 2024 after 37 years with the organization.

Mr. Rickman has refereed at nearly 130 important competitions during those years. The Open this July at Royal Troon will be his 34th as an official and his 28th as Chief Referee.

His most significant governance initiative was the modernization of the RULES OF GOLF in 2019, through which the approach to the Rules attempted to become less cumbersome and easier to absorb. This was a difficult transition which he navigated with patience and aplomb. It was also an improvement he envisioned since his early days at The R&A.



MAX BRÜCKNER, *Valhalla in Flames*.
From the original set designs for Wagner's *GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG*

Mr. Rickman has been a presence at major championships including 16 Masters, 15 U.S. Opens, 15 Walker Cup Matches, numerous Amateurs and U.S. Amateurs, and 7 British Women's Opens.

He will be missed but most certainly available as called upon by friends and associations who are still administering the Rules at the highest level.

• **Jon Rahm**, **Lilia Vu**, and **Steve Stricker** have been voted 2023 Players of the Year in their respective divisions by the Golf Writers Association of America.

Mr. Rahm, 29, won his first Masters Tournament after winning three early-season P.G.A. Tour events. He finished top-10 in 10 of his 20 P.G.A. Tour starts.

Ms. Vu, 26, won two majors among her four L.P.G.A. victories. She earned 72.9 percent of the first-place votes.

Mr. Stricker, 56, could not compete until May due to illness. He then won six times in 16 events and was runner-up in five other tournaments. ♡

• CENTENARY EDITION •
THE WALKER CUP
1922-2023
GOLF'S FINEST CONTEST
by
Gordon G. Simmonds

MR. SIMMONDS HAS written, and The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews helped to produce a breathtakingly accomplished history and reference book commensurate with the Walker Cup competition itself and the competitors who created the book's subject during the past century.

It is particularly rewarding to explore the details of the Walker Cup's founding, its early meetings, and the propriety of manners and sportsmanship that have threads throughout its important place in the history of golf as well the literary history of golf.

"I hope," writes Mr. Simmonds in his Acknowledgements, "this book will go some way to being a constant reminder of the event's importance and the need to participate in an era of unscrupulous financial temptation."

THE WALKER CUP, 1922 TO 2023 - CENTENARY EDITION is the third of Mr. Simmonds' painstaking volumes dedicated to the Walker Cup. The first came in 2000; an update in 2004; and now this 384 page volume replete with dozens of color and black & white photographs, Mr. Simmonds' meticulous statistical appendices, and the apropos forewords and afterword.

Symmetrically, the primary foreword and the afterword reappear (as they were written for the 2000 edition of this work) by Sir Michael F. Bonallack OBE [1934-2023] and William C. Campbell respectively [1923-2013].

As you will discover on so many pages of this book, these two men quietly epitomized the intellectual and athletic awareness of the amateur game, particularly as

it infuses the Walker Cup. Between them, they appeared in 17 matches, played 43 games, and won 17 times. Mr. Campbell captained in 1955 (St. Andrews); Mr. Bonallack captained in 1969 (Milwaukee) and 1971 (St. Andrews) — both winning at St. Andrews.

Mr. Bonallack, to whom Mr. Simmonds dedicated this book, wrote this in his 2000 foreword:

Although it took sixteen years before we won for the first time and thirty-three more before we repeated the victory, both times at St. Andrews, there was never really any doubt that the match would continue, as not only does it represent all that is best in amateur golf but it also enabled dozens of long-lasting friendships to be made, and these are far more important than the winning or losing.

Mr. Campbell, with his memory for detail and self deprecating way, wrote this in his 2000 afterword:

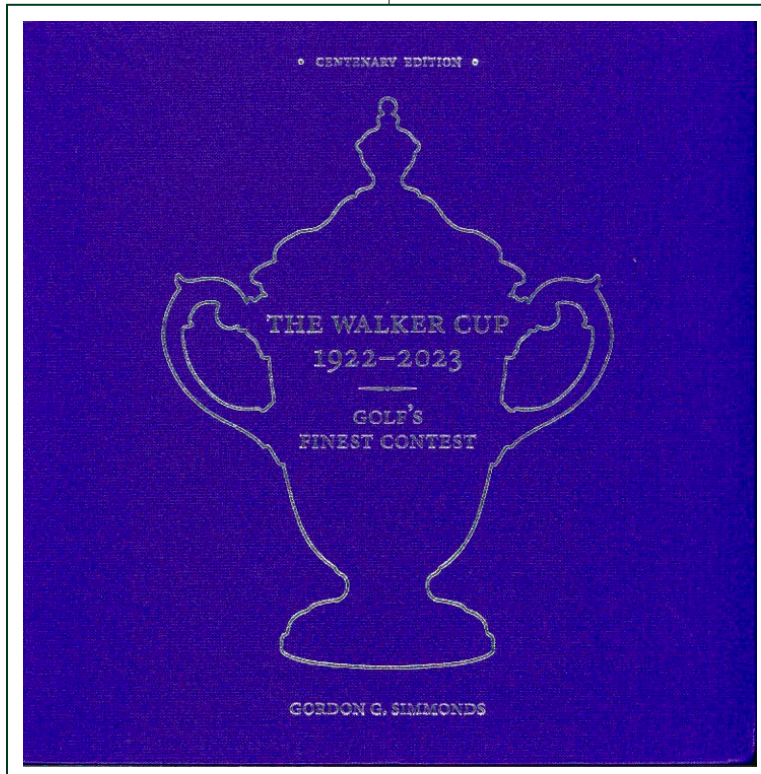
I affirm my own deep attachment to the Walker Cup over the last half-century, ever since my selection, at the age of twenty-eight, for the 1951 United

States team that won at Royal Birkdale, where as Frank Stranahan's partner in the first foursome vs. Carr and White, I struck the opening drive of the match. My eight such experiences were spread over twenty-four years, as the inconsistency of my sporadic competitive record didn't merit my selection to all the intervening United States teams; indeed, the twenty-four year span from my first to last matches, I missed five others.

Two more forewords lead this centenary edition, both by living players, one English and one American, both of whom captained Walker Cup teams.

Peter McEvoy, twice The Amateur champion (1977 & '78) and twice Walker Cup captain (1999, 2001), appears first, including this:

In many ways [the Walker Cup] has swept along



in the slip stream of the Ryder Cup ... However, the Walker Cup has additional challenges which the Ryder Cup need never fear. These challenges are largely related to amateurism upon which the Walker Cup depends for its lifeblood. It follows that if amateurism is attacked then the Walker Cup is under threat; as it has been for two decades, and more, from the burgeoning poser of the professional game and its siren-like attraction to young players. Where once it was unnecessary even to have to suggest that it was logical and advantageous to seek a Walker Cup place prior to embarking on a professional career, now the lure to the pro ranks is so strong that many do not wait around to savour these delights.

Fred Ridley, chairman of Augusta National Golf Club, U.S. Amateur champion (1975), and twice Walker Cup captain (1987 & '89) describes the Walker Cup as "the greatest event in amateur sports" then adds:

The opportunity to represent one's country on a Walker Cup side remains, in my view, the ultimate honor for any amateur golfer. Although the 1977 match was my only experience as a Walker Cup player, it nevertheless allowed me to become a part of golf's greatest fraternity [Editor's Note: There have been 639 Walker cup players], where memories and friendships are made and flourish over a lifetime. That is what the Walker Cup is all about; an experience well worth waiting for before professional aspirations are pursued.

The book is divided into ten chapters — before the nine appendices that follow at the end. The chapters sort the 49 matches into an overseeing logic e.g. Chapter 3 - Carr, Campbell, Nicklaus et al, 1947-1961 or Chapter 6 - The Eighties, Jay Sigel and Peter McEvoy, the Last Career Amateurs.

For A.B.P. III:



"You know, I've read this thing hundreds of times, and I can't find anything in it that authorizes me to be an editor."

Ed Tamm, Court of Appeals Judge
commenting to Anthony Scalia, newly appointed
Court of Appeals Judge, about Judge Tamm's
document of judicial commission.

THE WALKER CUP, 1922 TO 2023 - CENTENARY EDITION was published by Grant Books Ltd. for The R&A in a limited edition of 3,600 copies. A limited number of copies may soon be available through the U.S.G.A.

≈ ≈ ≈

IMPORTANT 2024 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Latin America Am.	Santa Maria - Panama	Jan 18 - 21
THE 88th MASTERS	AUGUSTA NATIONAL	APR 11 - 14
THE 106th PGA CHMP	VALHALLA - N.C.	MAY 16 - 19
U.S. Women's Open	Lancaster - Pa.	May 30 - Jun 2
THE 124th U.S. OPEN	PINEHURST No.2	JUN 13 - 16
The 129th AMATEUR	BALLYLIFFIN	JUN 17 - 22
121st [British] Wmn's Am.	Portmarnock	Jun 24 - 29
U.S. Senior Open	Newport - R.I.	Jun 27 - 30
U.S. Girl's Junior	El Caballero - Ca.	Jul 15 - 20
THE 152nd OPEN	ROYAL TROON	JUL 18 - 21
U.S. Jr. Amateur	Oakland Hills - Mi.	Jul 22 - 27
[British] Senior Open	Carnoustie	Jul 25 - 28
St. Andrews Trophy	Royal Porthcawl	Jul 25 - 26
U.S. Women's Amateur	Southern Hills - Ok.	Aug 5 - 11
124th U.S. AMATEUR	HAZELTINE - MN.	Aug 12 - 18
Jaques Leglise Trophy	West Lancashire	Aug 23 - 24
U.S. Senior Am.	Honors - Tn.	Aug 24 - 29
Tour Championship	East Lake	Aug 29 - Sep 1
Curtis Cup	Sunningdale	Aug 30 - Sep 1
U.S. Women's Mid-Am.	Brae Burn - Ma.	Sep 7 - 12
U.S. Mid-Am.	Kinloch - Va.	Sep 21 - 26
Presidents Cup	Royal Montreal	Sep 24 - 29

Yours vy 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 \$85US.



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 2024 Gary Galyean. Tag Galyean, Art Director.
Quotation, reproduction or transmission is prohibited.