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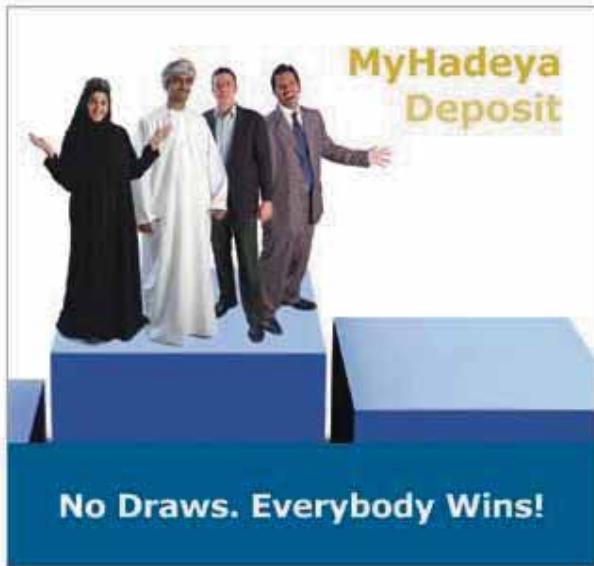
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› **Golf @ Olympics**

› **RETIREMENT**
Seve Ballesteros

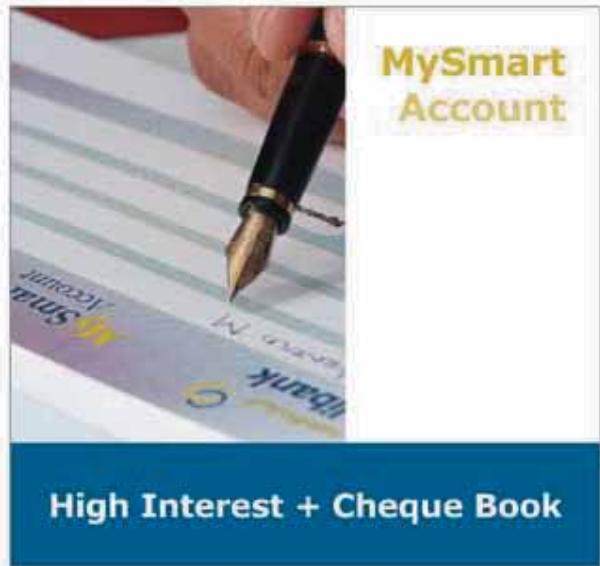
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FOREWORD

TEE OFF

For the fourth year in a row, we are back. With a bang, again. TEE TIME, an OER presentation, is in your hands. We are coming out with this fourth offering coinciding with the OER CEO Golf 2008 being held at Ghalla Wentworth Golf Club. As usual, we packed this special edition with stories of interest to golf aficionados: profiles of male and female golfers, the ascendancy of Asians on the circuit, freak accidents, news snippets, photo gallery featuring players at OER CEO Golf 2007, global ranking of players (both men and women) and lots more.

Do you know golf was an Olympic game almost a century ago? We did not know until we began digging interesting information to put this special edition together. Will it make a comeback as an Olympic game? Our guess is as good as yours. Here's another teaser: can you figure out the length of the longest golf course in the world? We bet, you can't. Hold your breath. It's 750 miles long! Incredible, but true.

Believe it not, the Gulf is in the throes of a golf boom. Look at the number of events being held in this part of the world. None other than the Numero Uno – Who else, but Tiger Woods – has got his hands full with his Dubai project. Greg Norman-sculpted 18-hole sea-fronted golf course in the Sultanate is on the fast track. Saudi Arabia is readying to host an international event. Bahrain is basking in its fresh glory.

Taking advantage of the golf enthusiasm gripping the world, big moneyed realtors are building properties around – yes, you've guessed correctly! – golf courses. Golf tourism is also on the rise. More, the merrier.

Hope you will enjoy this offering, commemorating the rising popularity of golfing culture in the Sultanate.

Happy teeing!

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OHI
ELECTRONICS

C O N T E N T S

2- Tee off - Foreword

10- News Snippets

14- Profiles

Tiger Woods

Phil Mickleson

Steve Stricker

Annika Sorenstam

Lorena Ochoa

Cristie Kerr

22- Rewind

30- Golf in the ME

Growing rapidly

**32- Tournaments in
the desert**

Major tournaments

34- Golf in Bahrain

Bahrain golfers shine

36- Golf in Saudi

The Dirab course prepares
for its first tournament

38- Golf@Olympics

Will it stage a comeback?



10



30





56



9



42- Golf Tourism

Golfing destinations on the rise

44- Golf in Asia

Asian players get better

46-Window Shopping



48- Oddities

750 miles long course!

49- Tournament Listing

50- Techscan

Technological Innovation

52- Retirement

Seve Ballesteros

54-Golf Humour

56- Caddydaddies

The person behind every golfer's success

58- Golf Accidents

Breaking the myth of a safe game

60- World Rankings

World's top ten golfers



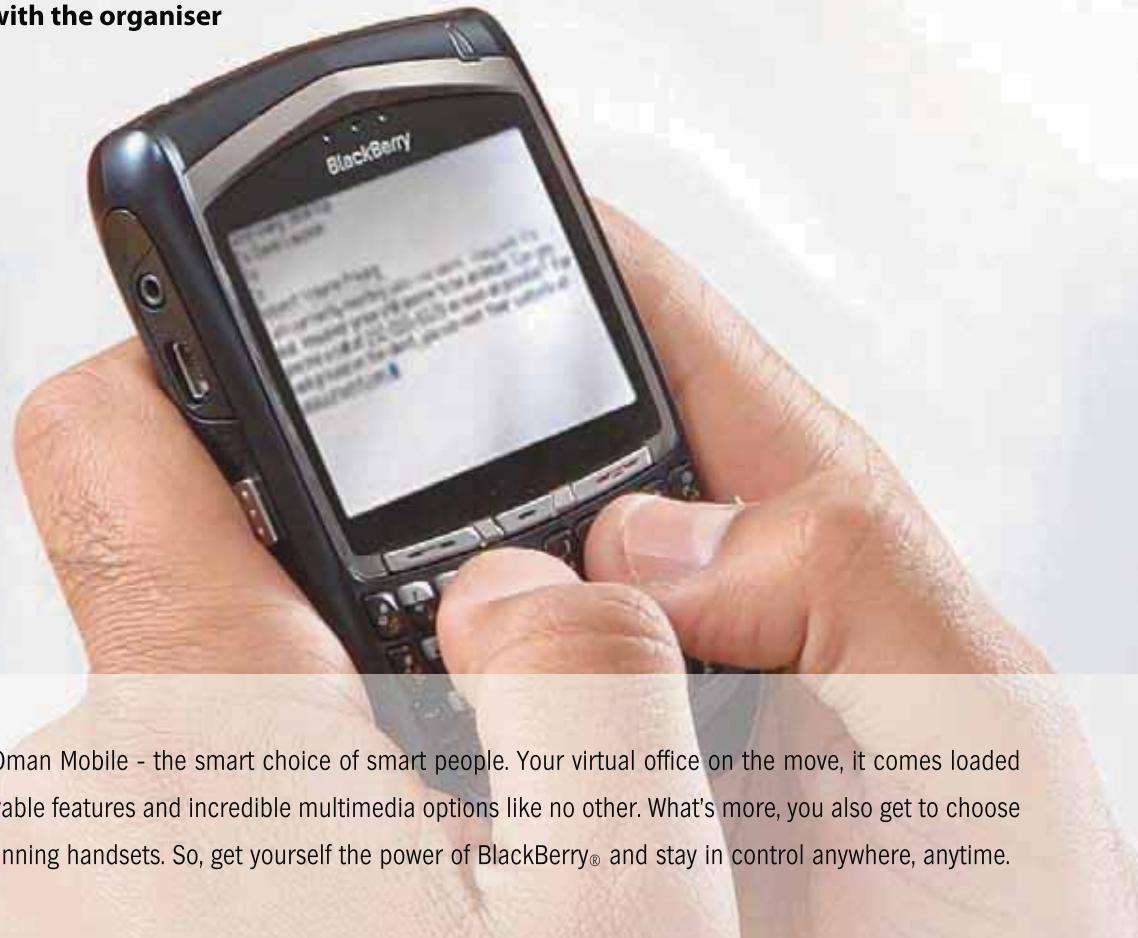
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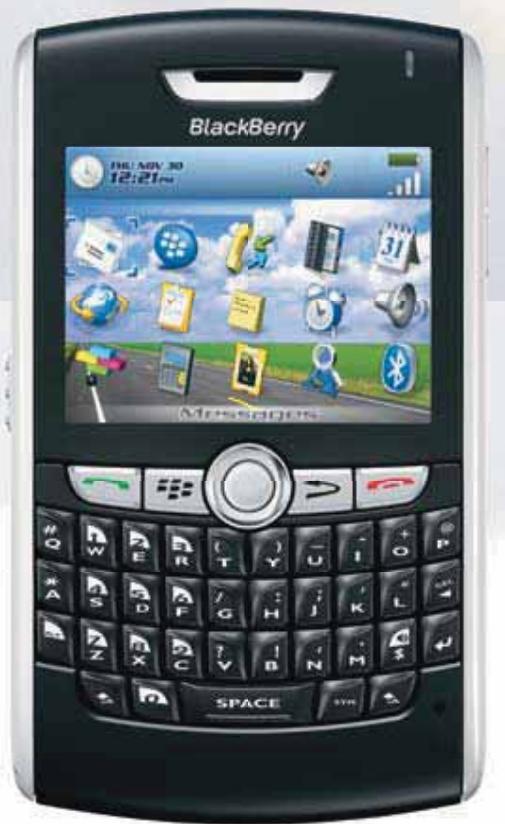
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IF IT IS FEBRUARY, THE GOLF ENTHUSIASTS IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN HAVE A NOT-TO-MISS ENGAGEMENT: OER CEO GOLF

It is no secret that the corporate captains simply juggle around their annual vacation or any other engagement to ensure their physical presence at this much-talked about - much participated and only one of its kind in the Sultanate - golfing event. It is not golf per se that is drawing audience and participation, but the novelty element factored by Applause Events which has been conceptualising and managing it for the fourth consecutive year for the country's most prestigious and elite business magazine, Oman Economic Review (OER).

The OER CEO Golf 2008, being held at Ghalla Wentworth Golf Club on February 21, is no exception. Overwhelming response to this Muscat's biggest

networking cum sporting jamboree is a foregone conclusion. Says Sandeep Saigal, General Manager of Applause Events: "Business and golf are natural partners. The OER CEO Golf Tournament is a perfect meeting ground not just for golf lovers in Oman but serves as a niche platform for decision-makers of top companies in Oman to develop and strengthen business relations."

"Being a one of a kind event in Oman, OER CEO Golf is highly anticipated every year. And with each passing year, it has only got better," adds Alpana Roy, Assistant General Manager of Applause Events. Like the previous years, the 2008 Edition has the usual intense 18-hole game for serious players. At the same time, enthusiasts are

“Like the previous years, the 2008 Edition has the usual intense 18-hole game for Golfers.”





not left out. They get first hand coaching lessons from professionals and square it off with a 4-hole round of golf. To enhance the experience of the participants, a special round of virtual golf has been included in 2008 edition.

It is the first time ever that a Golf Simulator is being showcased in Muscat and will exclusively be experienced by the participants at OER CEO Golf. After which, the fun and entertainment will take centrestage. Games for the ladies, a gala dinner and a dance group from Latin America will add glitz and character to the event.

What's a big sporting jamboree without prizes? The day will conclude with the distribution of prizes. Up for grabs are two Rolex watches for the Overall Gross and Nett winner. Golfers can also score a Hole-in-One and drive away a Mitsubishi Pajero.

OER CEO Golf 2008 is being presented by BlackBerry from Oman Mobile in association with Mitsubishi Motors and Zubair Automotive LLC and Ahli Bank and partnered by the Shanfari Group of Companies. The media partners for this event are *Times of Oman, Al Shabiba, Hi, Al Youm Al Sabe*.

Check this out. When the curtains come down at the end of a fun-filled day on Thursday, February 21 at the Ghalla Wentworth Club, the champions of both Gross & nett score will take home a Rolex Watch each sponsored by Khimji's Watches. The overall gross winner also takes home the recently launched Segway from Zubair Automotives.

That is not the only incentive for passionate golfers to display their talents, though it definitely is a major draw. Also, the lucky participant who plays a hole-in-one gets to drive away a Mitsubishi Pajero.

There are also other extravagant prizes to motivate the participants. Our prize sponsors have ensured that winners take home the best. These include Bose Lifestyle 48 from OHI Electronics, Perfumes and Personal Accessories from Capital Store, Samsonite from Khimji's Luxury & Lifestyle and their range of other products, Fuji Cameras from Photocentre and a Video Door Phone Access system from Majees Technical Services.

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“ It is the first time ever that a Golf Simulator is being showcased in Muscat. ”

Golfonomics, Bigger than Entertainment

A COMPREHENSIVE NEW STUDY BY THE WORLD GOLF FOUNDATION'S GOLF 20/20 INITIATIVE, HAS DETERMINED THAT GOLF IN THE UNITED STATES GENERATED US\$76 BILLION IN DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT IN 2005, UP SIGNIFICANTLY FROM US\$62 BILLION FIVE YEARS AGO

The report confirms that the US golf economy is even larger than motion picture and video industries. The five-year growth of approximately \$14 billion represents an average annual growth rate of 4.1 percent, well ahead of the average annual inflation rate of 2.5 percent during the years 2000-2005. The increase primarily reflects growth in golf facility revenues, real estate and golf-related tourism.

The financial contributions from the game's core segments are: golf facility operations (\$28 billion); golf course capital investment (\$3.6 billion); golfer supplies (\$6.1 billion); tournaments, golf associations, and endorsements (\$1.7 billion); and

charities (\$3.5 billion). Also included is the impact on "enabled" industries, such as hospitality/tourism (\$18 billion) and real estate (\$15 billion).

1. Golf rules amended

It's official now, a golfer can lift a ball for identification from hazard. Much awaited changes to Rules 12-2 and 15-3 are agreed upon by the United States Golf Association and R&A Rules Limited that will be in effect starting January 1, 2008. These changes will allow a golfer to lift a ball for identification in a bunker or water hazard. However, there now will be a two-stroke penalty for playing a wrong ball from a hazard. In match play, the penalty will be loss of hole.

Another notable change that the USGA and R&A made is the reduction in penalty in Rule 4-1 for carrying, but not using, a non-conforming club from disqualification to, in stroke play, a penalty of two strokes per hole, with a maximum penalty of four strokes for the round.

The penalty for the accidental deflection of a ball by a player, his partner or either of their caddies or equipment under Rule 19-2 will be reduced to one penalty stroke in both match play and stroke play. (In 2007, the penalty was loss of hole in match play and two strokes in stroke play.)

2. Anti-doping policy set in motion

Golf's top professionals will be subjected to random drug tests beginning in 2008 under the sport's first universal program against performance-enhancing substances. Golf organizations finally adopted an anti-doping policy that will be coordinated by World Golf Federation. Leading golf organizations



who have become signatories to the Policy include: Augusta National Golf Club, European Tour, Ladies Professional Golf Association, PGA of America, PGA TOUR, The R&A for The Open Championship, United States Golf Association for the U.S. Open, the U.S. Women's Open and the U.S. Senior Open. Other leading golf organizations who have agreed to become signatories to the Policy include: Asian Tour, Australasian Tour, Canadian Tour, Japan Professional Golf Tour, Sunshine Tour and Tour de Las Americas.

Officials released a list of 10 classes of drugs that will be banned, which range from anabolic steroids to hormones to narcotics to beta blockers. It is all likely that PGA will start the drug testing program possibly as early as July this year with penalties that range from a one-year suspension from professional golf up to a lifetime ban if a golfer is caught three times. The policy invoked mixed responses from the players.

3. Tiger ties Arnold Palmer in all-time PGA wins

With a win at Buick Open Tiger Woods equals with Arnold Palmer for fourth on the PGA career win list at No. 62. Next on the list is Ben Hogan in third with 64 career victories. Jack Nicklaus is second with 73. Sam Snead is first with 82.

Palmer earned his 62 victories in a span of 19 years from 1955 to 1973. Woods has earned his from 1996 to the present, a span of 11 and half years.

Pinehurst best US golf resort in 2007

Pinehurst Resort, North Carolina wins title of Best U.S. Golf Resort, according to Travel + Leisure Golf's 2007 World's Best Golf Resorts readers' survey. Last year's top winner, Kiawah Island Golf Resort, SC, is ranked second best in the U.S., and Pebble Beach Resorts, CA, comes in third. New to the top ten U.S. list is Doral Golf Resort & Spa, FL and The Greenbrier, WV. In Europe, St. Andrews (Old) is named Best Course in Scotland.

Travel + Leisure Golf 2007 Best U.S. Golf Resorts:

- Pinehurst Resort, North Carolina
- Kiawah Island Golf Resort, South Carolina
- Pebble Beach Resorts, California
- Kapalua Resort, Hawaii
- Bandon Dunes Golf Resort, Oregon
- Princeville Resort, Hawaii
- Doral Golf Resort & Spa, Florida



Four Seasons Resort Scottsdale at Troon
North, Arizona

The Boulders Resort and Golden Door Spa, Arizona
The Greenbrier, West Virginia

Travel + Leisure Golf 2007 Best Golf Resorts by Region:

Bermuda/Bahamas/Caribbean -- Ritz-Carlton, Rose Hall, Jamaica
Canada -- Fairmont Banff Springs, Alberta
Mexico/Latin America -- Cabo del Sol Beach & Golf Resort, Mexico

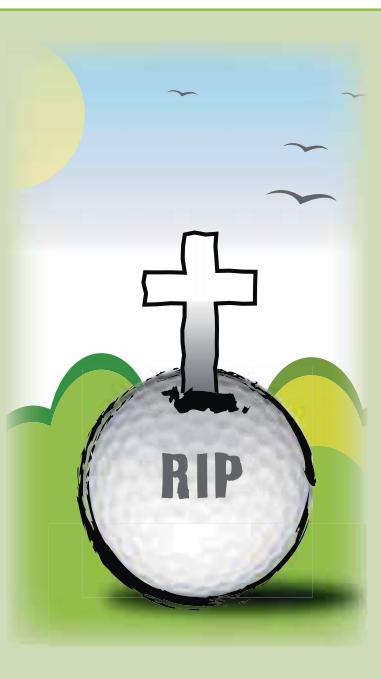
Travel + Leisure Golf 2007 Best Golf Courses in Europe by Region:

Scotland -- St. Andrews (Old)
Ireland/Northern Ireland -- Ballybunion (Old)
England/Wales -- Royal St. George's

Obituaries

Gray Brewer: The 1967 Masters champion who won 11 times on the PGA TOUR, died at the age of 75. Brewer, who also won once on the Champions Tour before retiring in 2000, had been battling cancer. Brewer made his last appearance in the Masters in 2001. In June 2007, Picadome Golf Course in Lexington, where Brewer learned to play, changed its name to honor him. Brewer played college golf at the University of Kentucky.

Steve Duplantis: We usually remember players but caddies who leave a lasting impression upon players and people are very rare. Steve Duplantis is one among them. He was killed after being run over by a taxi while he was crossing the street in late December 2007. When he died he was working at the Buick Invitational for Eric Aley. He was popularly known as "Asbestos" because he was thought to be fireproof among the caddies. He worked with Jim Furyk, Rich Beem and Tommy Armour.





Regional News

1. Saudi to host PGA tour

Joining with other Gulf countries in promoting golf in the region, Saudi Arabia is to host its first European PGA Tour golf tournament with the Saudi Masters for seniors being staged at the Dirab Golf Club near Riyadh from March 19-21, 2008. PGA senior's tour was earlier held in Abu Dhabi and Bahrain and main European PGA tour held in Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Qatar. But this is the first time a major tournament is organized in Saudi Arabia.

In early January Saudi Arabia also hosted 28th Pan Arab Championships at the Dirab Golf Club near Riyadh, in which all member countries of Arab Golf Federation except Morocco and Syria participated.

2. Scott wins Qatar Masters

Adam Scott of Australia won his second title at the Commercialbank Qatar Masters presented by Dolphin Energy with achieving a new course record. With this Scott has become the first person in the tournament's history to win twice. Earlier in 2002 he won the Qatar Masters.

"I suppose the thought was in my head that I might shoot 59 but the main aim was to win the tournament. That's twice I've been here and twice I've won but I'm not going to quit while I'm ahead – I'll be back," said Scott after winning the tournament.

3. 'The Race to Dubai'

Dubai will stage the world's richest golf tournament

as part of the European Tour's 2009 schedule, with the winner pocketing \$1.6 million.

The Tour's Order of Merit will be renamed 'The Race to Dubai' with a prize pool also of \$10 million, is expected to start in January from 2010 instead of late November on the current calendar. The top-ranked player will receive \$2 million, the runner-up \$1.5 million and the third-placed player \$1 million, with prizes down to the 15th player, who will earn \$250,000.

The inaugural event will run on either the fire or earth course, both of which were designed by former world No.1 Greg Norman. Jumeirah Golf Estates also includes a water course designed by Vijay Singh and a wind course design credited to Norman, Sergio Garcia and American designer Pete Dye.

4. Audi golf tournament reaches Gulf

Audi Amateur golf competitions are finally happening in the Gulf region. The first tournament of the Audi Quattro Cup golf tournament series was held in Golf Club Dubai in January this year.

From there the tournament journeyed to Kuwait and will be back in Abu Dhabi for its final competition.

Since its establishment in 1991 the Audi Quattro Cup golf tournament series has become the largest and most prestigious amateur golf tournament in the world.

In 2007 Audi dealers from 47 different countries worldwide organized a total of more than 750 tournaments with over 75,000 amateur golfers participating at an Audi Quattro Cup tournament.



Adam Scott



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Tiger Woods The Demi-god

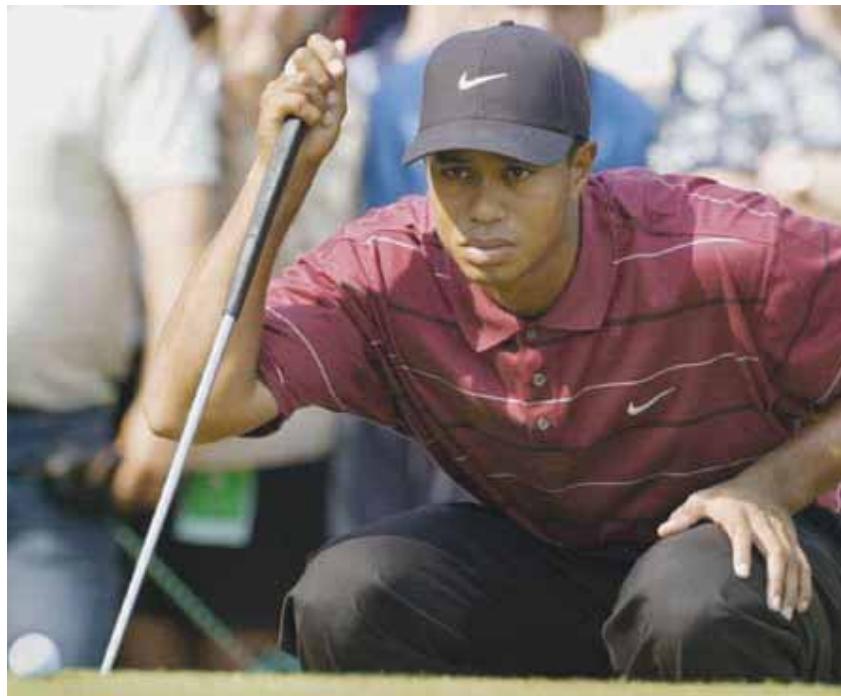
There are players who add value to the institutions they belong to and then there is that extra-special rare league of players who become institutions in their own right. At least momentarily, till they are around and do not become the preserve of history. So formidable is their dominance and exploits. For the golf enthusiasts all over the world, Tiger Woods is certainly one such figure; a demi-god who has taken the game's popularity to new heights.

Born on December 30, 1975, in the United States Tiger Woods is today's world number one ranked player and has an earning level which is envious for all his peers. He is believed to have earned over \$100 million in 2006 from tournament victories and endorsements in 1996 which made him the highest paid sportsperson in the world and according to a golf agency, he is likely to emerge

as the first billionaire sportsperson in the world around 2010.

But if this player has been at the receiving end of unprecedented windfall of fame, money, and adulation then he has amazing records to back it up. Till date, Woods has notched victories in 13 professional major golf tournaments and 62 PGA tour events. He has been the youngest player to achieve the Career Grand Slam and has been PGA Player of the Year for nine years in a row and to top it all, he has held the numero uno position for the most consecutive weeks. Nothing surprising then that he has been showered with such prestigious accolades as Byron Nelson Award and Associated Press Male Athlete Award on as many as four occasions. But according to many golf experts, Woods is yet to reach to the peak of his potential and that is the good news for his millions of fans who would like to continue enjoying his exploits on the green for many years to come.

“ But if this player has been at the receiving end of unprecedented windfall of fame, money, and adulation then he has amazing records to back it up. ”



Phil Mickelson

Mr Unpredictable

Phil Mickelson, the US born professional golfer, is yet another major name of today's men golfing circuit. Rated as a highly unpredictable player, there are many who believe that on his day, he can overshadow anybody. But part of the reason is that, Mickelson has never been as much focused a player as his peers have been. A complete family man, he has often shown preference to his wife and three children over the game.

Born on June 16, 1970 in San Diego, Mickelson is a natural leftie and watching him in form is a delight for golf enthusiasts. As a child, he inherited the love for the game from his father and received a golf scholarship to Arizona State University where he won three NCAA individual championships while at Arizona State. His exploits as an amateur were further marked with the victory at the US Amateur Championship in 1990.

Mickelson soon arrived on the professional circuit and during the first decade of his career, he won as many as seventeen tournaments on the PGA Tour.

But despite being a threat to all leading players, his inability to win at the masters began giving rise to the criticism that he can't deliver at the highest level. Mickelson, however, finally broke the jinx in 2004 when he won the Masters Tournament by defeating Ernie Els. The following seasons he further improved his record by winning the PGA Championship in 2005, and the Masters again in 2006 among other victories. On a cumulative basis, his present report card reads as victories in 30 PGA Tour victories, 3 of which were Major championships.

His victory spree in the last few years seems to have silenced his critics permanently and he is now firmly ranked as number two male golfer in the world.



“ Rated as a highly unpredictable player, there are many who believe that on his day, he can overshadow anybody.”

Steve Stricker

The Comeback Golfer

If Mickelson is unpredictable, then current number three in the world's golf ranking (male), US-born Steve Stricker is an out and out riddle for many and this reflects in a popular tag attached to him – 'comeback golfer.' There have been instances in the career of Stricker when critics have written him off due to his inconsistency. But it goes to the credit of the 41-year-old Stricker that he has often shown indomitable grit to bounce back.

Former alumni of the University of Illinois, Stricker turned professional the same year he graduated (1990) and had quite an eventful initial spell on the professional circuit. In 1996, he won two major tournaments – Kemper Open and Motorola Western Open. The other major victories of his career came much later – WGC- Accenture Match Play Championship in 2001 and then the Barclays tournament in 2007.

On an overall basis, he has won four times on the PGA tour. His best result in a major tournament has been in 1998 at the PGA Championship where he stood runner-up to Vijay Singh.

“ There have been instances in the career of Stricker when critics have written him off due to his inconsistency. ”



But victories apart, the most remarkable thing about Stricker have been his impressive performance in major tournaments in recent years. For instance, during 2006 Stricker notched seven top-10 finishes in the PGA tour which earned him the title of PGA Tour Comeback Player of the Year.



In 2007, he finished runner-up to Tiger Woods in the FedEx Cup and was again voted as the comeback player of the year. Stricker has simply stoked years of hard work and perseverance to break into the league of big three of the game (in terms of world ranking) but the question doing the rounds is: how long will he be there? Stricker would certainly need to continue with his impressive shows this year as well to respond to this challenge.

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AnniKa Sorenstam First Love



In the last one decade or so, nobody has probably dominated the women golf scene as formidably as Annika Sorenstam. This Swiss national (born on October 9, 1970) has a distinguished report card which includes 69 official LPGA tournaments that includes ten majors and 18 other prestigious international tournaments.

As a child, Sorenstam's first love was tennis and she was ranked in the junior tennis league in tennis. However, her fixation with golf began around the age of 12 which only grew in intensity in the subsequent years ultimately resulting in making her one of the all time greats in the history of women golfing.

Sorenstam arrived in the United States during her early teens to attend college at the University of Arizona and here her golfing skills found full expression. She arrived on the scene as a promising talent in 1991-92 when she notched runner-up

position in the NCAA national championship. Sorenstam's first major tournament victory came in 1994 when she won Holden Australian Open Championship and since then her credential as the golfing sensation of the present era has only kept on adding more punch thanks to her winning spree.

She has to her credit six Vare Trophies which are awarded to players with the lowest seasonal scoring average. In 2003, she also created history by becoming the first woman golfer since 1945 to participate in a men's PGA tour at the Bank of America Colonial tournament. Among her personal hobbies, cooking tops the list and she is working on a plan to establish a golf academy named after her.



“ As a child, Sorenstam's first love was tennis her fixation with golf began around the age of 12 ”

Lorena Ochoa

The Mexican Tornado



If the present women golf scene had not been simply a story of Annika Sorenstam's exploits, the credit would go to Lorena Ochoa who is currently ranked as number one. A Mexican national (born on 15th November, 1981), Lorena Ochoa is the first golfer from her country who has notched the numero uno position in the women ranking. Unlike Sorenstam, Ochoa was an early starter in picking up the game and had won as many as 22 state events at the junior level. She also won the Junior World Golf Championship five times in a row.

On the commercial circuit, she arrived in 2001 when she finished runner up at NCAA National Championship and since then there has been no looking back. Ochoa won her first LPGA Tour Title in 2004 followed by championship victories at Wegman's Rochester Rochester in 2005. The

following two seasons saw her developing a profile comprising six major tournaments resulting in her being awarded LPGA Tour Player of the Year in 2007. In addition, she has also won the LPGA Vare Trophy for lowest scoring average. 2007 was, in fact, a milestone year for her professional career as she became the first woman golfer to earn over \$4,000,000 in a single season overshadowing the previous record set by Annika Sörenstam. More importantly, she also staked her claim at number one ranking in the chart of women golfers.

Dubbed as the most promising talent in the sphere of women golfing, many noted accolades have been showered at Ochoa at a very tender age including Mexico's National Sports Award (2001), Nancy Lopez Award (2003) and NCAA Division I Golf Most Outstanding Athlete Award (2006). For golf experts around the world, the verdict about Ochoa is singular – "her best is yet to come."

“First woman golfer to earn over \$4,000,000 in a single season.”

Cristie Kerr The Powerhorse



By 2004, she won three major LPGA tournaments which was followed by two more victories in the subsequent year. Till now, her report card reads ten major LPGA tour victories. In 2006, she also had the distinction of being the only American to put more than one event on the LPGA tour in her kitty.

Known for her exquisite putting skills, Kerr is predicted to stay in the top ranking for many years to come. Outside the golf course, her life also has a major humanitarian side wherein she is working for the cause of advancing breast cancer research. She presides over a foundation titled Birdies for Breast Cancer for which she has raised funds totalling over \$250,000 in the last three years. For her exemplary contribution to the cause, she bagged the LPGA Women Award in 2006.

Cristie Kerr is often viewed as the player who contributes to the troika reflecting women golf powerhouse club comprising Annika and Ochoa. A US national who was born on October 12, 1977 in Florida, the present day women golf story is incomplete without the mention of her exploits.

This former alumni of Miami Sunset High School had won many tournaments at the junior level including Junior Orange Bowl International Golf Championship (1994) and was adjudged as the American Junior Golf Association Junior Player the following year. Her professional career kicked off in 1996 when she participated in the Futures Tour and Players West Tour and notched her first major tournament victory by winning Ironwood Futures Classic in her debut year. But for a major LPGA victory she had to wait for another six years. In 2002, she won Longs Drugs Challenge which firmly established her in the league of top ranking women golfers.

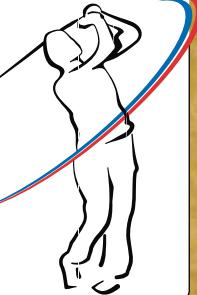
“ Kerr is predicted to stay in the top ranking for many years to come.”



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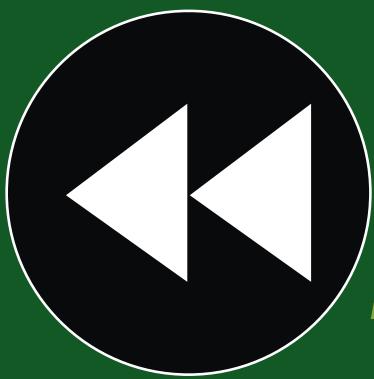

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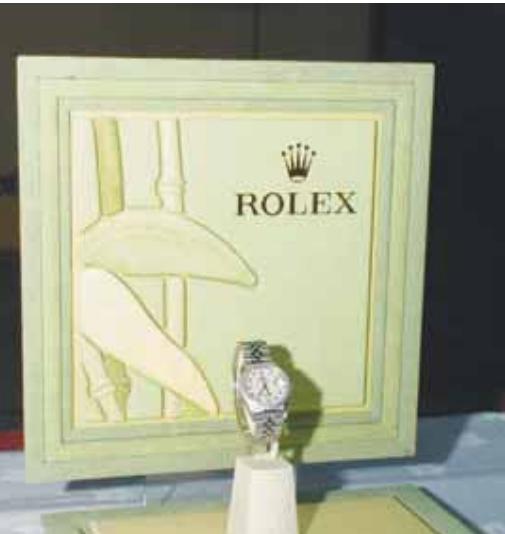


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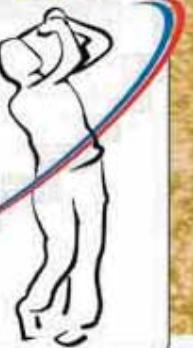


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Ghalla Wentworth Golf Club | Feb 21

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Expensive, yet Attractive

GOLF HAS ADDED SPICE TO THE LIFESTYLE REAL ESTATE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. ONE FACTOR THAT MAKES GOLF COURSES IN THE MIDDLE EAST STAND OUT IS THE SHEER VOLUME OF PLAY, THANKS TO YEAR-ROUND AVAILABILITY

Sowmya Sri Rallabhandi

Golf is sweeping over the desert for the last couple of years. Dubai leading from the front consists almost 58 per cent of the golf courses available in the Middle East region. Golf is still in the infancy stage with only 20 regular grass courses in the Middle East but it is already shown its potential by cumulating revenues three to four times higher than similar golf course businesses in Europe.

The Golf Benchmark Survey Summary Report published by KPMG recently showed that revenues of 18-hole golf courses in the Middle East average

5.3 million euros (Dh28.8 million). However the supply and demand is more or less concentrated in Dubai. Courses in Dubai are proving especially successful, with revenues averaging just under 7 million euros (Dh38 million), dwarfing other top-five golf locations – Portugal and the Netherlands (EUR 1.8 million); Spain (EUR 1.5 million); and Ireland (EUR 1.3 million).

Golf has added spice to the lifestyle real estate in the Middle East. As a result numerous golf projects are in the planning, design or construction phase, with 20 more golf courses to come up in UAE alone, two courses due to open before the end of 2008 in Oman and 9-10 other projects are also on

“Golf is cumulating revenues three to four times higher than similar golf course businesses in Europe.”





the cards in other Middle East countries. Though demand for golf is relatively smaller in size in the Middle East, "Golf in the Middle East continues to grow rapidly, and with Tiger Woods designing his first signature golf course in Dubai (Al Ruwais), and the European Tour's recent announcements about the Dubai World Championship from 2009, plus The Race to Dubai, there will be further significant development," said Andrea Sartori, head of KPMG's specialist Golf Advisory Services Team in EMA.

Who play most?

Due to the odd weather conditions, golf is the least favoured sport in the Middle East. KPMG estimates the number of golfers in the region to be around 17,000, a 0.026 per cent golf participation rate, much lower than in European countries. In the UAE, the number of golfers is estimated to be 7,000.

Men account for 48per cent of the memberships at 18-hole golf courses, while female and junior members make up 17per cent and 5 per cent respectively. Corporate membership is notably higher than in other regions, with close to 31per cent on average.

Expensive hobby

Golf in the Gulf, is more expensive than anywhere in Europe and Africa, KPMG said. On an average, 18-hole weekend green fees in the Middle East cost 107 euros, more than double the average 50 euros paid in Britain and Ireland. However, in the region the membership fees are low as the courses cater primarily to golf tourists.

The initiation fee at courses in the Middle East averages US\$ 1460 and the annual subscription for individual full members was on average US\$ 3741. Membership fees in Dubai are approximately 7per cent higher than in other parts of the Middle East.

Even green fees are higher in Dubai compared to other parts of the region. Average weekend green fees reach US\$150 in Dubai with other locations slightly less expensive at US\$110 on an average.

Profitable investment

Despite having 10 times more staff than courses in Europe, Middle Eastern courses enjoy average profit margins 32 per cent higher than anywhere in Europe. On average there are 188 staff at 18-hole golf courses in the Middle East, with Dubai courses employing about 230 people KPMG said.

The average revenues of the courses in the Middle East were around US\$ 6.7million and courses in Dubai collected nearly US\$ 8.8million on an average, twice more than that of courses in other parts of the Middle East. Also, average revenues at golf courses in Dubai and the UAE are four times greater than those in Portugal, the second top performer in the survey.

If we split up the revenues, membership revenues and green fees make up 27 per cent each of total revenues on an average. Food and beverages and pro-shop revenues made up around 14 and 18 per cent respectively and remaining 15per cent includes other revenues, such as lease fees or advertising and sponsorship.

One factor that makes golf courses in the Middle East stand out is the sheer volume of play, thanks to year-round availability.

The region is proving to be golf's international hot spot, with courses averaging 45,000 rounds per year, compared to the 26,000 rounds played on courses in Great Britain and Ireland, and profitability levels (average: 45per cent gross operating profit) far beyond other courses in the seven regions surveyed.

“Golf in the Gulf, is more expensive than anywhere in Europe and Africa.”

Games Aplenty

DUBAI IS A REGULAR HOST FOR EUROPEAN TOUR CHAMPIONSHIPS SINCE 1989

Sowmya Sri Rallabhandi

Of Dubai's 1.5 million residents, only 200,000 are UAE nationals. The rest are people from over 150 countries from Europe, South America, Australia, the Far East, and even North America. That may be the reason why golf is so successful in this part of the world. Internationally renowned golf courses and hospitality brought the west to the Middle East, particularly to Dubai. The golf march that started from Dubai is now spread across the Middle East. UAE supplies 50 per cent of the golf courses in the region, Saudi Arabia (15%), Israel (10%), Bahrain, Lebanon, Kuwait, Qatar and Syria are catching up very fast.

Dubai is a regular host for European Tour championships since 1989. Now seniors

European PGA tour is arriving in Saudi Arabia. Though not many major international tournaments are happening in the Middle East, national golf tournaments are a regular feature in this part of the world. If we see the past history of the game, there are many golf events taking place here, Bahrain Open, inaugurated in 1964; the Aramco Invitational Tournament, inaugurated in 1965; and the Kuwait Open, inaugurated in 1966. All these tournaments are played annually. Though the Bahrain and Kuwait events are open they attract few international amateur players.

Some of the major tournaments organized in this part of the world are:

Dubai Desert Classic: Dubai Desert Classic is an annual professional golf tournament which was contested in 2008 from January 28 - February 3rd.





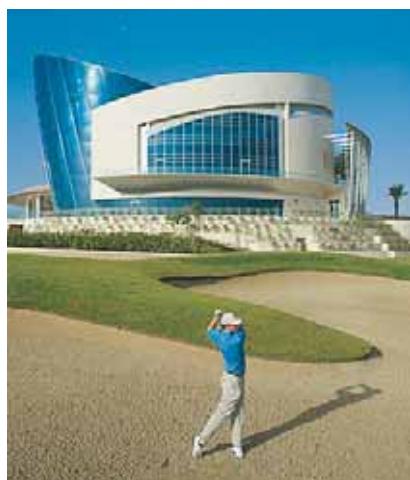
It takes place at the Majlis Course of the Emirates Golf Club for a prize of US\$ 2 Million as a part of European Tour schedule. The Emirates Golf Club was built in 1987 and was the first grass course in the Middle East. The main sponsor of the event is Dubai Aluminum, with co-sponsors consisting of Omega, National Bank of Dubai, Jumeirah Golf Estates, CNN, Emaar, Emirates Airlines, BMW and Gulf News.

it failed to attract top players to the tournament. In 2005, Ernie Els appeared at the Qatar masters and opened the gates for the World top 50 players. By 2007 the tournament had one of the strongest fields on the European Tour, with 48 world ranking points for the winner. In 2008 the prize fund is US\$ 2.5 million.

Abu Dhabi Golf Championship: This is a European Tour golf tournament that was staged for the first time in 2006. It is played at the Abu Dhabi Golf Club. Unlike most European Tour events staged in Asia it is not co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour. The prize fund for each of the first three editions was US\$2 million.

GCC Golf Championship: It is a 54-hole team competition annual event held since 1993 among the six GCC countries. The first GCC championship was held in Qatar. This is the second biggest regional amateur event in the Arab world.

Pan-Arab Golf Championships: The first tournament of Pan-Arab golf was held in 1975. The teams that participated in the first event includes Morocco, Libya, Bahrain, U.A.E., Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Palestine, Syria, Kuwait and Lebanon. Arab Golf Federation annually organizes this tournament across the Arab world. Annually the Federation conducts Pan Arab team championships, PA Junior Championships, PA Men, Senior individual Amateur Championships and PA Ladies Amateur Championships.



Qatar Masters: The tournament is held at the Doha Golf Club, Doha in Qatar. The tournament was first established in 1998 as European tour expansion plans to Asia. From 2005 to 2007 the tournament was co-sanctioned by the Asian Tour. Till recently

“National golf tournaments are a regular feature in this part of the world.”

Flying High

BAHRAIN'S GOLFERS HAVE BEEN FLYING THE FLAG FOR THE KINGDOM OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS WITH CONSISTENTLY FINE PERFORMANCES IN REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS

G N Biar

They have proved their supremacy in the Pan-Arab Golf Championship right from the inaugural event by winning the title 11 times out of the 28 played so far – nine of them in the last 13 editions. In the latest edition, which concluded in Saudi Arabia recently, they finished runner-up to Lebanon. Individually too, Bahrainis have been performing impressively in the championship winning it eight times, with Hamad Mubarak Al Afnan clinching it four times and 51-year-old Abdulla Sultan pocketing it twice. There are three clubs on the island, namely Bahrain Golf Club, Royal Golf Club (previously Riffa Golf Club) and Awali Golf Club. Golf is very popular amongst the business community, while a number of the ruling family members also play the game. Ambassadors of various countries are also keen golfers.

"There are about 180 Bahraini golfers playing in the three clubs," said Daij Khalifa, Bahrain Golf Association acting general secretary. "Among the younger players, the most promising golfer is 17-year-old Abdulla Jalal, who has a handicap of three," said Khalifa.

Royal Touch

The Royal Golf Club has the only championship standard golf course. However, Bahrain has two very good sand courses, one at the Bahrain Golf Club and one at Awali. His Majesty King Hamad has a private 9 hole grass course which is excellent and great fun to play on. It is opened for a number of charitable events every year. The Durrat Al Bahrain

project in the south of the island has an Ernie Els-designed golf course on the drawing board and they are intending to commence construction later this year.

The Bahrain International Golf Course Company (BIGCC) owns Riffa Golf Club and is a partner with Arcapita Bank in the Riffa Views development. "Once the new Colin Montgomerie-designed golf course is completed in October of this year we will reopen as the Royal Golf Club at Riffa Views," said General Manager Michael Braidwood who has been with BIGCC for nine years. The Royal Golf Club will have an 18-hole championship golf course which will have floodlights on the back 9 (holes 10 – 18). It will also have a 9 hole par 3 course and an extensive golf academy and practice facilities.

"We do a tremendous amount to promote the game within Bahrain, support the National Team, the National Junior initiative and the disabled through the Shaikh Faisal bin Hamad Al Khalifa Memorial Trophy. We have recently, in conjunction with Arcapita Bank, built Bahrain's first public access driving range in Hunainiya Valley.

The National Junior Development Programme was developed by us in conjunction with the General Organisation for Youth & Sports (GOYS) with support from NBB (National Bank of Bahrain) and we are working closely with the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews (governing body of golf worldwide) to further develop the game in this region," Mr Braidwood added. There are five PGA professionals, including Braidwood, at



Rank	Player	Total Points	No. of Comp.	High Points	Low Points
1	Hamad Mubarak Al Afnan	569.75	9	100.00	8.25
2	Sultan Abdulla	478.50	11	66.67	14.00
3	Abdulla Sultan	464.07	11	100.00	9.07
4	Nasser Yacoob Saleh	420.07	11	100.00	9.07
5	Ali Misbah Khalid	353.95	10	100.00	5.60
6	Daij Ahmed Abdulla	294.26	12	80.00	5.20
7	Yousif Ahmed Al Murbati	268.10	9	100.00	5.30
8	Khalid Salem Hamad	241.96	10	100.00	5.86
9	Diab Sager Al Naimi	240.03	11	35.00	7.50
10	Abdulla Khalifa	204.25	11	50.00	7.50
11	Nabeel Sabt Mohd	166.46	10	35.00	5.86
12	Mohd Khalifa Al Merisi	163.79	13	35.00	6.40
13	A. Hadi Mohd Al Naimi	148.04	10	35.00	7.25
14	Yousif Yacoob Saleh	146.66	10	35.00	5.86
15	Abdulla Hassan Jalal	137.18	8	30.00	6.56
16	Mohd Ahmed Rashid	123.61	11	20.67	5.30
17	Hamad Salem Hamad	121.04	6	60.00	9.00
18	Faris Khalifa Al Merisi	115.59	10	22.00	5.60
19	Hussain Ahmed Salem	103.53	10	22.00	6.05
20	Khalid Ahmed Al Rowai	100.36	10	17.00	5.30

the club. They will be employing two more PGA qualified professionals in the summer to work in the new academy.

The club had 500 members of which 100 were Bahraini before they closed down for refurbishment. "When we reopen we expect to have in the region 800 members and are expecting the number of Bahrainis to increase," said Braidwood. The members of the club are very active and sometimes around 200 of them take part in the club competitions. The ladies section is also very active and more than 100 players took part in their "Think Pink" charity event.

Oldest Club

The Awali Golf Club on the southern part of Bahrain is the oldest golf club in the Arabian Gulf and perhaps the oldest in the Middle East. It has an 18-hole desert course with oiled sand greens. There is a practice range, practice greens, bunkers

and a fully licensed club-house. They also have a development programme for juniors which has resulted in several students going on to become professionals. Every year, the club brings a teaching professional from the UK between November and March. The club has a busy competition season between September and May with atleast one competition at the weekend and sometimes two.

Major competitions started in 1956, with the British Overseas Airways (BOAC) Cup, currently sponsored by British Airways, being the oldest recorded sponsored competition in the Gulf.

It attracts a large field of competitors from as far away as the UK, South Africa and the Middle East each year. The club has a couple of 'firsts' to their credit – the Bahrain Open Golf Championship, which began in 1964 and the Bahrain Ladies Open, staged for the first time in 1988.

Golf is very popular amongst the business community, while a number of the ruling family members also play the game.

First Time!

SAUDI ARABIA IS GETTING READY FOR ITS FIRST INTERNATIONAL GOLF TOURNEY AT THE DIRAB COURSE

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is hosting its first European PGA Tour golf tournament, with the Saudi Masters being staged at the Dirab Golf Club near Riyadh from March 19-21. Earlier, the European Seniors Tour had to be held in Bahrain and Abu Dhabi in the GCC region. The main European PGA Tour also has a long history of association with Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Qatar. This is the first time that Saudi Arabia is hosting an event with the PGA European Tour Group.

Around 72 professional golfers, including players such as Carl Mason, winner of the 2004, 2005 and 2007 European Seniors Tour Order of Merit, Ian Woosnam and Sam Torrance, both multiple



tournament winners on the European Tour and winning Ryder Cup captains, are expected to take part in the tourney. Six regional amateur players will supplement the international field.

Built in 1991 by Khaled and Mohammed Abunayyan, the Dirab Golf and Recreation Centre is renowned for



“ The Dirab Golf and Recreation Centre is renowned for its exceptional year-round playing conditions. ”



its exceptional year-round playing conditions, carved rolling fairways, large target greens and challenging hazards. The club is located 40 km southwest of Riyadh, nestled in the picturesque Dirab Valley.

The Centre shows the growth the game has registered in the Kingdom since American expatriates first introduced golf to Saudi Arabia in the late 1940s when they created a course near Dhahran.

Dirab Golf Club boasts of a 7,280-yard par-72 championship course, featuring lush tree-lined fairways set against the backdrop of the Twaiq Mountains. The practice facility at the club is a destination that is both a challenge and fun. The anchor of the practice area is a wide driving range 27,000 sq.m long, excluding the 1,600 sq.m practice tee, with all-grass hitting stations that can simultaneously accommodate 30 golfers, with plenty of room for long hitters to practice their 300 yard drives.

The club is replete with 12 synthetic mat stations with automated ball dispensers with sunshades, enabling golfers to stay cool during their practice. The hitting stations are lit after dark. The distance flags are located just off the driving range to help you determine which club and swing length to use for each distance. Grass stations are rotated frequently

to ensure a quality practice surface. Grass range maintenance includes weekly aeration, seeding and top dressing.

The pitching area, consisting of both a pitching green and distance flags, is about 9,000 sq.m and allows players to pitch to a green from multiple situations such as from below the green, above the green, over bunkers, side hill lies and flat lies.

The Dirab Pro Shop offers the latest models in drivers, irons, putters, wedges, gloves, shoes, bags, trolleys carts, balls, golf wear and accessories. Professionally trained employees can help both a beginner and a pro find the right equipment for the game. Club repair services like changing grips, lofting, lying alteration, etc., are also available on the course.

The Dirab Golf Academy combines a new nine-hole par three course, situated near the 18th hole, with the opportunity to take digital video lessons.

Using the latest golf technology tuition software, the Interactive Frontier V1 system, the Golf Academy lessons can offer features like recording all lessons using a digital camera, model a player's swing to that of a touring golf pro, and even overlay one's swing with the swing of a professional for comparison.

“ Dirab Golf Club is set against the backdrop of the Twaiq Mountains. ”

Olympics, a Distant Dream

GOLF IS ONE OF THE MOST GLOBALLY PLAYED GAMES
STILL IT IS NOT CONSIDERED FOR THE OLYMPICS

Sowmya Sri Rallabhandi

Yet another Olympics to pass this year-end, but there is no way golf could be played at Beijing. It's been a century since golf was an official sport in the Olympics with George Lyon of Canada claiming the last gold medal in 1904. There is a general perception that golf already has many tournaments inviting international competition such as Ryder Cup (U.S. vs. Europe every even-numbered year) and the Presidents Cup (U.S. vs. the rest of the world except Europe every

odd-numbered year). No need to mention, four majors and four World Gold Championship events, The Players Championship. On the LPGA Tour, there's the Solheim Cup (U.S. vs. Europe) every odd-numbered year.

Nevertheless, Olympics are different. It's where, an individual plays for a medal for his country and himself involves no big purse. How many golfers are ready to play in Olympics? Perhaps, none! A PGA Tour attracts millions of dollars from its sponsors and world's top players participate in it. The same





cannot be said about Olympics.

That does not guarantee that if golf is included in Olympics players will not turn up. When tennis was included all leading players of the game participated in the event. So golfers may perhaps turn out to fight for pride for a change than for huge prize money.

However, now the time has passed for Beijing Olympics. Golf was dropped following the 1904 St. Louis Games since only 4 nations (US, France, Greece and Great Britain) participated in 1900 and only 2 nations (US and Canada) took part in 1904, the IOC decided to discontinue this event for lack of entries.

Reluctant Players

From then golf re-entering games was never considered a great deal. It is apparent from how the things are shaping up that it is not just the Olympic committee that is reluctant to include golf but the players and global associations are also not keen to be part of the Olympics.

Fay, co-secretary of the International Golf

Foundation, believes it's in everyone's interest to get the sport under the Olympics rings, even though he said the inclusion would not be a big deal in the United States.

IOC likes to see top players from golf at Olympics to attract spectators; otherwise there is no point in making huge investments in preparing courses.

But players like Tiger Woods are keeping distance from the issue. South Africa's [hyperlink](http://www.golftoday.co.uk/tours/profiles/ernie_els.html) Ernie Els though supported golf in Olympics; he is quick to add it should be limited to the game's top amateurs.

Three-time major champion Phil Mickelson also voiced the same opinion. "We as professionals have a chance to compete in Ryder Cups and Presidents Cups and World Cups and represent our country in so many different events.

Let amateurs experience the thrill of representing their country at the Olympics."

“It’s been a century since golf was an official sport in the Olympics”



The way things are moving, golf cannot be part of even 2012 games in London. It failed to win enough votes to be included in the games. So now the earliest possibility for golf to be included would be in

the 2016 games. Now with significant tournaments coming up from Australia, Asia and the Middle East the chances of golf returning to Olympics is a distant dream.



“The chances of golf returning to the Olympics is a distant dream.”



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Big Time Game

THE COMPETITION FOR GOLFING TOURISTS IS HEATING UP, AS MORE AND MORE DESTINATIONS JOIN THE FRAY

Sowmya Sri Rallabhandi

Golf attracts affluent, high-value-adding tourists who generate significantly above-average per capita revenues for the destinations they frequent. The golf tourism industry worldwide is worth over \$17.5 billion. North America is by far the world's leading golf market. In the US, golf is estimated to contribute more than US\$60 billion to the economy - some 6% of GDP (gross domestic product).

Meanwhile, with the exception of the British Isles, golf remains relatively underdeveloped in Europe, where it has been restricted traditionally to the moneyed elite. On the other hand, Japan and Oceania are highly developed and mature golfing markets.

Golf tourists can be broken down into three basic categories:

Tourists who go on holiday principally to play golf, tourists who play some golf as a secondary activity whilst on a holiday or business trip and those who attend tournaments as spectators.

It is difficult to isolate the full extent and impact of golf tourism, since trips which include golfing or attending tournaments may very well encompass other activities, such as conventions, corporate meetings, incentives, or other leisure activities, such as cruising or skiing.

When these golfers are deciding where to go on a golf holiday there is an ever growing list of destinations and the preferences are quite amusing. French golfers tend to stay in France to play golf, or favour countries that are French speaking e.g. Morocco. German golfers typically go to Spain or stay in Germany; some make the short journey to

Austria. Golfers from Sweden like to play in Spain and Portugal and at home in Sweden. They also make the short trip to Denmark.

Despite its popularity there is great growth potential with 1% of the world population playing golf at present. This compares with the United States where 10% of the population play golf. Statistics by the International Association of Golf Tour Operators shows that the UK is the largest European market with 1.8 million active golfers, 51% of whom go on holiday specifically for golf. Sweden is the second biggest with 380,000 golfers (70% go on holiday), followed by France (280,000, 51%) and Germany (250,000, 70%).

Sports Marketing Surveys produced a document for the R&A in 2005 entitled "What is Golf?" This stated that European participation in golf was growing at 7% per annum. If this is the case by 2015 there will be an additional 2.4 million registered golfers in Europe. In addition to this there will also be a



“ Despite its popularity there is great growth potential with 1% of the world population playing golf at present. ”



growth in the number of unregistered golfers which is good for the future of golf tourism. There is also a lot of activity in the construction of courses around Europe. According to SMS figures there are currently 6,229 courses in Europe, they think that this will rise to 7,639 by 2015. SMS claim that there are 3 new courses being built every 2 weeks around Europe. This is something to be aware of when you think about the competition for golf tourism.

The growth of golf tourism depends to a large extent on increases in the number of players, and on the availability of golfing facilities. The principal market for dedicated golf tours has been 'regular' golfers, who play at least eight to 12 times a year. Recently,

however, there has been a noticeable stagnation and even decline in the numbers of 'core' golfers, particularly in the mature markets of the Anglo-Saxon countries. However, growth in the number of registered golfers in the wealthiest continental European countries continues apace.

With the exception of Scandinavia, which is already a mature market, continental Europe offers significant growth potential even though the rate of participation in the sport remains very low - less than 1% of the population.

At the same time, the number of 'occasional' golfers is growing virtually worldwide, providing the opportunity for tour operators and resorts to offer golf as an add-on feature to holidays as well as MICE (meetings, incentives, convention & incentives) events. The competition for golfing tourists is heating up, as more and more destinations join the fray. Well-established golfing tourism regions include Florida, California, Scotland, Ireland and Spain, where the number of courses should double in the coming years. Countries such as Mexico, Egypt, Thailand, Malaysia, Middle East and even China are emerging as golf destinations.



“SMS claim that there are 3 new courses being built every 2 weeks around Europe”

Asian Swing

PLAYERS FROM ASIA ARE SHOWING THE TEMPERAMENT OF BEING VERY AGILE ON THE LEARNING CURVE

Ritwik Sinha

Among other things, the term or process called globalization is also credited with sweeping away the element of regional-specific exclusivity. So the key attributes of developed countries (read western) in the not so distant past are finding expressions on the Asian turfs and they are only getting more profound in terms of reverberations.

The game of golf is certainly one such example where Asian content has certainly become more formidable in the last one decade or so. No, nobody is saying that Asian golfers have reached to the stage from where they can take a shot at wresting supremacy from the likes of a Tiger Woods. But the fact of the matter is, players from Asia are showing the temperament of being very agile on the learning curve.

The growing prosperity of Asian economies or societies like China, India, South Korea or some far-eastern minnows has also paved the way for

creation of better infrastructural environment (like lesser priced golf clubs and courses) wherein Asian enthusiasts can aspire to pick up and hone their golfing skills and the results are there for everyone to see. In a domain which was first picked up by Japanese corporate chieftains around 1960's in Asia as mark of their rising might in the global business, there are now players from various countries in the continent who are considered to be rising forces in the game.

Growth Zone

Golf legend Jack Nicklaus, while making a special appearance at the inaugural Pine Valley Beijing Open last year, had testified the theory that the future of the game lies in Asia. "Asia is the place where the most growth will come from, and there will be more young players being introduced to the game here than in any other place, by comparison to what we have seen in the past," this was his point blank observation.

He had particularly praised the achievements of Asian players like China's Zhang Lianwei, Korea's

“ Asian enthusiasts can aspire to pick up and hone their golfing skills and the results are there for everyone to see. ”



Charlie Wi and Choi Kyung Ju. The winner of 73 PGA tour tournaments had also displayed the satisfaction on the rise of the Asian Tour calling it a turf which will further breed the new Asian talents.

"The Asian Tour will continue to grow and Asian players will continue to get better. The world is getting smaller. Now the Asian Tour has events with the European Tour and I think this is a big step in making the world smaller as the game is becoming more global," he had clearly stated. The import of message was clear: Asian golfing talents have the attributes to make it big in this game at the global stage.

When someone of Nicklaus' stature feels so, there could hardly be any argument to nullify it including the viewpoint that Asians do have the built and strength to break into the big league. Recently, quite surprisingly, a Wall Street veteran while arguing the case of how Asian countries are managing to steer away from the choppy waters of global business and charting their own course also brought in the element of golf. That is, the way it is being nurtured by the new forces on the block.

"The body, loosely and unofficially titled "One Asia", is set to become a major force in the world of golf. The possible union of a number of countries and golfing bodies (including Korea, India and Australia) into one entity, operating in a growing market with money to spend has the potential to alter the status quo of the golfing world," he wrote.

Competitive Manifestation

The sentiments pertaining to the rising might of Asians in the game of swing now has concrete manifestations in terms of the competitive structure of the game in the continent. The manifestation can also be viewed in the way the International Federation of PGA Tours is conducting its affairs. It has six distinctive legs out of which two are Asia-centric: Asian Tour and Japan Golf Tour while its European chapter does visit Asia periodically.

Furthermore, the growing popularity of the Asia Tour also indicates how this game is scaling the popularity chart in the continent. For instance, in 2004 only 22 tournaments were played under the Asian leg and the total offered prize money was \$ 12.3 million. But in 2008, this tour will comprise 30 tournaments and will have a total prize kitty of \$29

million. The Asian Tour 2008 which kick started recently in India will see 14 countries hosting these 30 events.

With prize money multiplying, the world's top players are now also heading to participate in these tournaments. Commenting on this year's Asian Tour, executive chairman Kyi Hla Han told a news agency recently, "We're poised to hit 30 events for the first time in Asian Tour history and it's truly exciting as sponsors are putting a lot more into the game. It will be an unprecedented year as well for many established tournaments which will offer record prize funds. This is a clear indication that the game has a solid foundation in Asia and we will strive and continue to grow the game in this region," he said excitedly.

Tournaments under Asian Tour will not only be played in economically turbo-charged countries like China and India but even in destinations like Cambodia.

Not Yet

Though an Asian player has yet to break into the top five league of the Official World Golf Ranking, the fact of the matter is some players have begun hovering around the top citadel and if the list of top-200 players is viewed, then it becomes clear that Asians are increasingly finding their way to it.

As per the Official World Golf Ranking published in August 2007, Korean star Choi Kyung-Ju was the highest ranked Asian at 12th position. India's Jeev Milkha Singh was ranked 63rd while another Korean, Yang Yong-Eun was positioned at 79th place. In total, there were over one dozen Asian players in this top-200 list. India's Jyoti Randhawa, Chinese star Liang Wen-Chong and Prayad Marksang of Thailand were some other noted players from Asia in the top gallery.

That the world has started believing in the rising force of the Asian swing also found subtle expression recently when three players from Asia, namely, Liang Wen-Chong of China, Prayad Marksang of Thailand and Jeev Milkha Singh of India, were offered special invitations by the Masters to participate in their prestigious tournament, another clear proof that the world has, by and large, concluded that for the future of the game, the Asian content is now indispensable.

Asian golfing talents have the attributes to make it big in this game at the global stage.

What's on display



TaylorMade New Balls:

The TaylorMade-adidas Golf Company has introduced six new golf ball models engineered to promote longer distance and better performance for a broad spectrum of player types.



For the first time, four ball models will carry the TaylorMade® name and all will feature a new proprietary aerodynamic technology called Low Drag Performance, which promotes improved distance on the most common types of off-center driver hits.

TaylorMade® balls are played by more than 120 tour pros around the world including Sergio Garcia, Justin Rose, Retief Goosen, Sean O'Hair, Fred Funk, Darren Clarke, Hale Irwin and Natalie Gulbis.

Now TaylorMade is introducing three new tour category balls: the new Tour Preferred Red, Tour Preferred Black and Burner® TP.

Callaway products:

Callaway Golf Company lined up more than 30 new offerings

from the Callaway, Odyssey and Top-Flite brands. In addition to the Callaway Golf Hyper X Driver, the FT i-brid Irons, and Tour i Golf Balls, the 2008 Callaway Golf new equipment roster also includes a new FT-i(R) Driver, three new fairway woods, re-engineered Callaway Golf FT Irons, new Big Bertha(R) Irons, X-Forged(R)

Wedges, new Odyssey(R) Black Series(TM) i Putters and new Top-Flite(R) Golf Balls.

Some of the 2008 new products include:

FT-i Tour Low

CG Driver

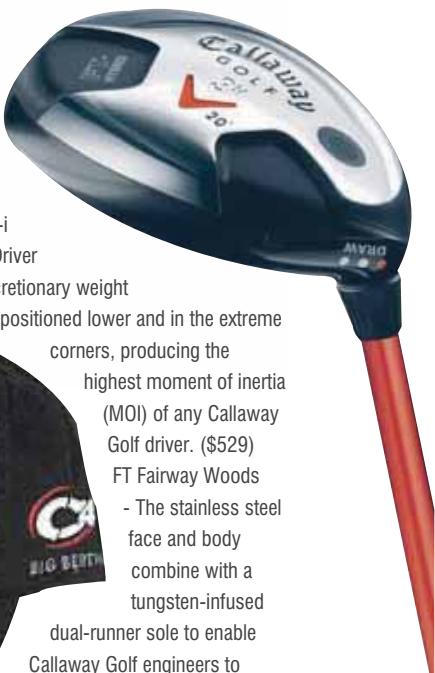
- Designed with input from Callaway Golf's Tour players, the FT-i Tour Low CG Driver

has discretionary weight

positioned lower and in the extreme corners, producing the highest moment of inertia (MOI) of any Callaway Golf driver. (\$529)

FT Fairway Woods

- The stainless steel face and body combine with a tungsten-infused dual-runner sole to enable Callaway Golf engineers to





strategically position discretionary weight for a higher MOI and precise positioning of the center of gravity (CG). The OptiFit(R) Weighting System allows golfers to choose a Draw or Neutral CG bias to fit their individual shot shape. (Standard model, \$249; Tour model, \$269)

FT Hybrids - A stainless steel face and body is combined with a tungsten-infused sole to optimize the CG and increase the MOI for superior forgiveness. The OptiFit System enables golfers to choose Draw or Neutral weighting to fit their individual shot shape.

(\$199)

Hyper X and Hyper

X Tour Drivers

- The innovative

Hyper X Driver

provides a new

benchmark in

performance with

the introduction of Hyperbolic

Face Technology(TM), redefining the look, feel and speed at which golf balls leave the clubface. The Tour models are designated by half-degree lofts and have square faces for enhanced workability and a more pleasing look at address.

NEW Big Bertha Driver for women - The 440cc titanium head is slightly smaller than a men's clubhead to reduce the club's weight.

When combined with its

slightly longer shaft and core Callaway Golf technologies, the new women's Big Bertha driver allows a woman to maximize her swing speed for increased ball speed and longer distance. In addition, the CG has been strategically positioned to promote a draw and help reduce fades and slices

King Cobra S9 Irons:

The King Cobra S9 Iron, winner of the 2007 Golf Digest Hot List Editors' Choice Award for Super Game-Improvement Iron, is now new and improved for 2008. The expanded three-piece polymer topline and urethane sole insert optimize discretionary weighting for a lower CG and higher MOI, offering higher launch, greater distance and more accuracy.

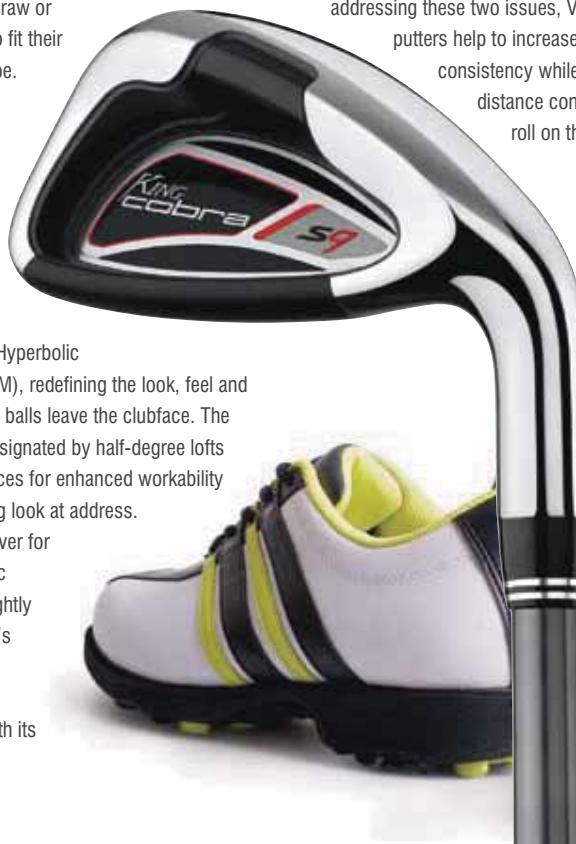
Cleveland Golf:

The Company introduces its range of new products in putters, blades, and clubs. VP Milled putter series of putters combines Cleveland Golf's Dual Axis Alignment™ technology with the benefits of precision CNC Milling. Dual Axis Alignment technology allows golfers to determine when their hands move out of position and to detect when their eyes are not directly over the ball. By addressing these two issues, VP Milled putters help to increase impact consistency while improving distance control for a truer roll on the greens.



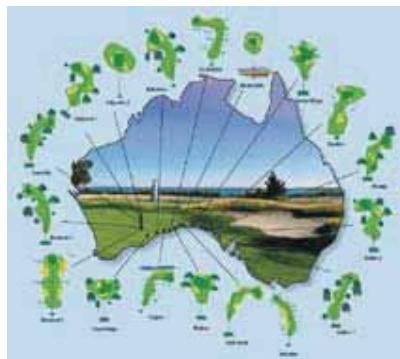
The company is also introducing the CG Tour irons and HiBORE / Gold Combo Set. The CG Tour irons's larger face design gives them increased stability while their increased muscle helps move the center of gravity (CG) lower and deeper within the clubhead to promote a higher ball flight, especially in the long irons. The CG Tour irons also boost precision milled faces and score lines, which gives players increased accuracy.

Cleveland Golf's other new product is the HiBORE/Gold Combo Set, which includes eight pieces; HiBORE three and four irons and CG Gold five through Pitching Wedge.



750 miles long!

BETTER BELIEVE. THE WORLD'S LONGEST GOLF COURSE IS COMING UP – WHERE ELSE BUT IN AUSTRALIA



Even those who don't understand what club or tee means in golf parlance would be amazed if we tell them that a giant golf course is to be built in Australia. The Nullarbor Links course will spread over 750 miles, from tee-off in Kalgoorlie, Western Australia, to the 18th hole in Ceduna, South Australia.

Players will go across the huge, arid Nullarbor Plain, and travel the full extent of the Eyre Highway, one of Australia's classic routes, stopping off to play a hole in towns along the way. The course is expected to open towards the end of 2008. The local authorities behind the project believe that it will increase tourist influx to the isolated spots. Each stop will have at least one other attraction, from fossil beds to whale-watching centres.

The concept was developed by Bob Bongiorno while managing the Balladonia Road House on the Eyre Highway in 2000. He discussed the idea with a number of people who all thought the concept had merit. In August 2004, Bob spoke to Alf Caputo from the Eyre Highway Operators Association and Alf immediately recognised the enormous potential of the concept. The benefits could be unlimited for the participating roadhouses and towns. Alf discussed the idea with a number of politicians who indicated they were prepared to support the concept. The concept is basic. Each roadhouse would have

one hole placed near their site. Towns that already have existing golf courses would be able to use one nominated hole. Each player would purchase a scorecard and ball container at either Kalgoorlie or Ceduna – either end of the Nullarbor Plain. The player would purchase a ball at each of the sites visited. On completion of the hole, the used ball would be placed on display in the container, as a memento of having played the course.

Each roadhouse would stamp the player's card on completion of the hole. On arrival at either Kalgoorlie or Ceduna – depending whether the player was travelling east or west – the player would have his card validated at either the course or a nominated business within the town.

Plans are for the Nullarbor Links to become an international tourist icon. It will be the only golf course of its kind in the world.

This 18-hole course will bring together the tourism aspirations of the Nullarbor community and will have a positive effect on increasing the number of tourists using the road link to the eastern states, while making their journey just that little bit more enjoyable and entertaining. A Pro-Am tournament would create enormous awareness in state, national and international golf clubs.

source: www.nullarborlinks.com



“ The Nullarbor Links course is expected to open towards the end of 2008. ”

Major Golf Tournaments 2008

Date	Tournament	Venue
PGA TOUR SCHEDULE		
Feb 18-24	World Golf Championship – Accenture Match Play Championship	The Gallery Golf Club Marana, AZ
Feb 28 – Mar 2	The Honda Classic	PGA National Resorts & Spa – Palm Beach Gardens, FL
Mar 13 -16	Arnold Palmer Invitational	Bay Hill Club and Lodge, Orlando, FL
May 3-11	The Players Championship	Sawgrass Country Club Ponte Vedra Beach, FL
May 15-18	AT&T Classic	TPC at Sugarloaf, Duluth, GA
July 14-20	US Bank Championship in Milwaukee	Brown Deer Golf Club, Milwaukee, WI
July 24-27	Canadian Open Golf	Glenn Abey Golf Club Ontario Oakville, ON
July 31-Aug 3	Bridgestone Invitational	Firestone Country Club Akron, OH
Aug 20-26	Barclays Golf Classic	Westchester Country Club Rye, NY
Aug 28 – Sep 1	Deutsche Bank Championship	TPC o f Boston, Boston MA
Sep 4-7	BMW Championship	Bellerive Country Club, St Louis, MO
Sep 8-14	The Tour Championship	East Lake Golf Club, Atlanta, GA
MAJORS		
Apr 7-13	The Masters	Augusta National Golf Club Augusta, GA
Jun 10-18	US Open Golf	Torrey Pines, La Jolla, CA
Jun 26-29	US Women's Open Golf	Interlochen Center, Interlochen, MI
Jul 13-20	British Open	Royal Birkdale Golf Club Southport, England
Aug 4-10	PGA Championship	Oakland Hills Country Club Bloomfield Hills, MI
CHAMPIONS		
Jul 28-Aug 3	US Sr. Open Golf	Broadmoor Golf Links, Fletcher, NC
Aug 18-24	Boeing Classic	TPC at Snoqualmie Ridge, Snoqualmie
Oct 24-26	AT&T Championship	Oak Hills Club, San Antonio, TX





DEFINING STYLE

CLASS AND STYLE – THESE ARE THE TWO KEY CALLING CARDS OF THE GAME OF SWING AND TEE. AND THOUGH MOST OF US MAY NOT REALIZE, TO SUSTAIN OR RATHER CONSISTENTLY UPGRADE THESE TWO INTRINSIC QUALITIES OF THE GAME INVOLVES QUITE AN EFFORT FROM THE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE BUSINESS

Ritwik Sinha

Yes, the term business is not a loosely quoted term here but rather a reality and according to an estimate global golf economy on a cumulative basis generates a business of around \$75 billion annually. Quite a staggering figure, this includes the

cost of equipments, the expenditure on R & D to produce better equipments, the prize tags of scores of tournaments, the sponsorship fees, and also the business generated by that fast rising segment called golf tourism. Among other things, of course.

The sale of golf equipments itself account for over \$3 billion every year and that explains that for equipment manufacturers this is a big buck business therefore, to stay afloat they are pressed with the imperative of consistently upgrading their products through technological innovations and this is what precisely is happening in all the segments of the game. Be it shoes, kit, apparel, or shaft, rapid change is the only constant factor in the game which keep on adding new style and class quotients.

Harder & Straighter

Take the case of metalwoods which have gained immense popularity in last couple of years because of their ability to facilitate players to hit the ball harder and straighter. Now that impact was achieved by making use of a hybrid technology which has subtly combined the two quintessential desired features.

But more pronounced is the case of golfers' footwear for golfers where shoe manufacturers are relying on technological innovations more than ever before. Along with style, the key focus of golf shoe makers in last ten years have also been on material and sole configurations to create utter most comforting footwears for the players. In the consideration list, equally important have been the points like waterproofing and the stability factor.

And as a result, we now notice myriads of footwear options for golfers including unconventional boots or sandals. Some of the recent entries in golf footwear segment clearly reflects that innovation in golf footwear is running full throttle. For instance Bite Golf's new range of shoes have extra foam padding, moisture absorption lining and flex grooves in the sole to provide better flexibility to the players.

They also offer sandal products to golfers which offer strategic strapping; compression molded midsole; a "Monster Drive" protective toe guard; etc. which are the results of intensive R & D. There is Florsheim which is much known for its golf shoes fitted with full-length magnetic innersoles construed on the basic premise of the bio-magnetic therapy. The giant of the shoe game, Adidas is using a technology called Traxion to produce state-of-the-art shoes for golfers which promises efficient resistance for rotational traction during the swing.

Novel Apparels

Apparels are no different where something novel

keeps on cropping up at the drop of a hat. For instance, in the United States right now there is a lot of buzz about the Callaway Golf Apparel Fall 2008. The company is claiming to offer the next generation of luxury performance knits (called FT Performance) emanating out of its painstaking innovative efforts as the product has features like being anti-microbial, wrinkle resistant and machine washable.

In an official comment made recently, Steve Pena, a senior official with Callaway Golf Apparel explained the USP of this new offering, "FT Performance represents groundbreaking technology, a hallmark of Callaway Golf products and we are confident that golfers will love both its look and its advanced functionality. In fact, our entire Fall 2008 lineup features products that are tailored to every type of golfer, with technology that is second to none."

Swinging Shaft

Shaft is another significant item in the game where technological innovations are in full swing. A company called UST has developed a new technology called AXIV Technology which promises to resist the deformative character delivered to the shaft by the golf swing. Jim McIntosh, a senior representative of UST recently commented, "UST engineers created the AXIV Technology so that it weaves four different high-modulus carbon fibers in four different directions all in one ply of material. This AXIV Technology is quickly earning a reputation for delivering real performance benefits." Going by the initial market buzz, the new offering does have the potential to raise the bars in the premium golf shafts segment.

The spate of R & D in golf equipments is equally fast-paced in the segments meant to help and support the beginners in the game. There is this popular Swing Flex machine which goes with this tag line of having been produced after an intensive research of over two decades and a revolutionary machine designed to teach the budding golfers the rudiments of the golf swing in the most health friendly manner. The machine is believed to be selling like hot cakes in the western market and so is the Dancin Dogg Shot Making Simulator which has scaled on the popularity chart quite rapidly in the recent months.

In fact, the popular perception about technological upgradation trends in the game of golf clearly veers

round to the point that there is no scarcity. But rather it could be the case of abundance or over-supply. The rapid pace of new product offerings (based on technological innovations as the companies claim) which often results in 'what is in vogue today becoming history overnight' is, in fact, now being accused of creating confusion in the mind of the golf enthusiasts especially the beginners.

Is it really helping the game? The question is now increasingly becoming more pronounced. But when a game becomes the germinating ground of a multi-billion dollar economy which is in that rare ever-growing mode, can this trend be bucked? Simply put, this also has become the issue of separating wheat from chaff. Period.



“ The popular perception about technological upgradation trends in the game of golf clearly veers round to the point that there is no scarcity. ”



Goodbye, Mr Ballesteros!

A PROFILE OF SEVE BALLESTEROS, WHO HAS RETIRED AT THE AGE OF 50 AFTER A RECORD-BREAKING CAREER

It was a Tour career that began at the 1974 Spanish Open with him scoring 83 and ended 23 years later with him 16 over par and joint last with a 67-year-old Lee Trevino. But in between what joy and what excitement Seve Ballesteros brought to the world of golf! The European game had certainly never seen anything like him and it was not just that he was brilliant with a short game to die for.

He was charisma personified and every emotion was worn on his sleeve for all to see. Five majors – three Opens, two Masters – a record 50 European Tour victories, six World Match Plays, 31 other wins around the world and, of course, all those Ryder Cup highlights.

The match could have been made for him. It was indeed changed to accommodate him because the year he won his first Open at Royal Lytham in 1979 was also the year that continental Europeans were allowed to play.

Every time he played and as captain in 1997, he poured his heart and soul into beating the Americans – and how he enjoyed it when Europe did. With Jose Maria Olazabal, he formed the deadliest partnership in the event's history, winning 11 and halving two of their 15 games together.

Ballesteros first announced his arrival as a world star at the age of 19, finishing runner-up to Johnny Miller in the Open at Birkdale after leading the first

“ Ballesteros first announced his arrival as a world star at the age of 19 ”



three days. The chip-and-run between bunkers to tie with Jack Nicklaus on the final hole is still recalled to this day and it was only another three years before he became the youngest winner of the title for almost 100 years.

No European had won the Masters at that stage, but he soon changed that, dominating two of the next four and, come the 1984 Open at St Andrews, he was the man to deny Tom Watson a record-equalling sixth win. Another win at Lytham in 1988, achieved with a superlative closing 65 to beat Nick Price, proved to be his final major, but there were lots more highlights to come.

He continued playing in the Ryder Cup until 1995 and, even though he had become a wild hitter by then, he guided David Gilford to a victory in the fourballs before showing Tom Lehman that despite hitting it all over the place in their singles clash, he was still capable of magic. With a chronic back condition everybody knew they had seen the best of him, but he was determined to battle on despite falling further and further down the world rankings. As Ryder Cup captain at Valderrama (it was taken

to Spain for the first time largely because of him) he used to wake vice-captain Miguel Angel Jimenez up in the early hours to tell him his latest plan.

Not every player liked the way he went about things, more hands-all-over than hands-on, but he got the result he wanted.

Long into the decline that has now finally brought his retirement, he even beat Montgomerie twice in the duel between the captains at the Seve Trophy, but when that result was reversed at El Saler in 2003, Ballesteros was not seen on a course again for nearly two years. But it was not the end.

When he came back at the Madrid Open, he still entertained hopes then of finding some form, but that did not happen and now, years after people first started calling for him to stop playing, he has.

The current generation might find it hard to imagine the impact he had. But try this – if Ballesteros was in Britain and in contention with Nick Faldo, Sandy Lyle, Ian Woosnam or any other British golfer, he was the one most people wanted to win.

“ Not every player liked the way he went about things. ”



Golf Humour

1. It's Called Golf

In primitive society, when native tribes beat the ground with clubs and yelled, it was called witchcraft; today, in civilized society, it is called golf.

The man who takes up golf to get his mind off his work soon takes up work to get his mind off golf.

Golf was once a rich man's sport, but now it has millions of poor players!

Golf is an expensive way of playing marbles.

The secret of good golf is to hit the ball hard, straight and not too often.

There are three ways to improve your golf game: take lessons, practice constantly ... or start cheating.

An amateur golfer is one who addresses the ball twice ... once before swinging, and once again, after swinging.

Many a golfer prefers a golf cart to a caddy because

it cannot count, criticize or laugh.

Golf is a game in which the slowest people in the world are those in front of you, and the fastest are those behind.

Golf: A five mile walk punctuated with frequent disappointments.

There's no game like golf: you go out with three friends, play eighteen holes, and return with three enemies.

Golf got its name because all of the other four letter words were taken.

2. Golf Definitions

Fairway: An unfamiliar tract of closely mowed grass running from the tee to the green. Your ball is usually found immediately to the left or right of it

Oxymoron: An easy par-3

Practice Tee: A place where golfers go to convert a nasty hook into a wicked slice

Mulligan: Invented by an Irishman who wanted to hit one more 20-yard grounder

3. The laws of golf

LAW 1: No matter how bad your last shot was, the worst is yet to come. This law does not expire on the 18th hole, since it has the supernatural tendency to extend over the course of a tournament, a summer and, eventually, a lifetime.

LAW 2: Your best round of golf will be followed almost immediately by your worst round ever. The probability of the latter increases with the number of people you tell about the former.

LAW 3: Brand new golf balls are water-magnetic.

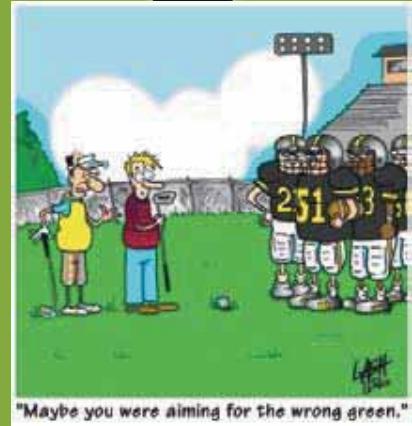
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Golf got its name because all of the other four letter words were taken.



Though this cannot be proven in the lab, it is a known fact that the more expensive the golf ball, the greater its attraction to water.

LAW 4: Golf balls never bounce off of trees back into play. If one does, the tree is breaking a law of the universe and should be cut down.

LAW 5: No matter what causes a golfer to muff a shot, all his playing partners must solemnly chant "You looked up" or invoke the wrath of the universe.

LAW 6: The higher a golfer's handicap, the more qualified he deems himself as an instructor.

LAW 7: Every par-three hole in the world has a secret desire to humiliate golfers. The shorter the hole, the greater its desire.





LAW 8: Topping a 3-iron is the most painful torture known to man.

LAW 9: Palm trees eat golf balls.

LAW 10: Sand is alive. If it isn't, how do you explain the way it works against you?

LAW 11: Golf carts always run out of juice at the farthest point from the clubhouse.

LAW 12: A golfer hitting into your group will always be bigger than anyone in your group. Likewise, a group you accidentally hit into will consist of a football player, a professional wrestler, a convicted murderer and an IRS agent -- or some similar combination.

LAW 13: All 3-woods are demon-possessed.

LAW 14: Golf balls from the same "sleeve" tend to follow one another, particularly out of bounds or into the water (See Law three).

LAW 15: A severe slice is a thing of awesome power and beauty.

LAW 16: "Nice lag" can usually be translated to "lousy putt." Similarly, "tough break" can usually be translated "way to miss an easy one, sucker."

LAW 17: The person you would most hate to lose to will always be the one who beats you.

LAW 18: The last three holes of a round will automatically adjust your score to what it really should be.

LAW 19: Golf should be given up at least twice per month.

LAW 20: All vows taken on a golf course shall be valid only until the sunset.

9. This is my first golf lesson

The schoolteacher was taking her first golfing lesson.

"Is the word spelt p-u-t or p-u-t-t?" she asked the instructor.

"P-u-t-t is correct" he replied.

"Put means to place a thing where you want it. Putt means merely a vain attempt to do the same thing."

10. The amazing golf ball

A golfer, playing a round by himself, is about to tee off, and a greasy little salesman runs up to him, and



yells, "Wait! Before you tee off, I have something really amazing to show you!"

The golfer, annoyed, says, "What is it?"

"It's a special golf ball," says the salesman. "You can never lose it!"

"Whattaya mean," scoffs the golfer, "you can never lose it? What if you hit it into the water?"

"No problem," says the salesman. "It floats, and it detects where the shore is, and spins towards it."

"Well, what if you hit it into the woods?"

"Easy," says the salesman. "It emits a beeping



sound, and you can find it with your eyes closed."

"Okay," says the golfer, impressed. "But what if your round goes late and it gets dark?"

"No problem, sir, this golf ball glows in the dark! I'm telling you, you can never lose this golf ball!"

The golfer buys it at once. "Just one question," he says to the salesman. "Where did you get it?"

"I found it."

11. Why are these Americans good at golf

Did you know that O.J. Simpson, Monica Lewinsky, Ted Kennedy, and President Bill Clinton are all avid golfers?

O.J.'s a slicer, Monica's a hooker, Ted Kennedy can't drive over water, and Clinton can't seem to hit the right hole!

12. Arnold Palmer & Tiger Woods

Arnold Palmer and Tiger Woods are playing the 16th hole, when Tiger's tee shot lands behind a huge, 100 foot fir tree. Tiger looks at Arnie and says, "How would you play this one? Lay up and take the extra stroke?"

Arnold replies: "When I was your age, I'd just play right over this tree."

Tiger, not wanting to be shown up by ol'Arnold Palmer, proceeds to hit the ball high, but not high enough. It bounces off the tree and lands out of bounds. Tiger, really ticked at this point, asks Arnold how he EVER hit a ball over that tree.

Arnold replied: "Well, when I was your age, that tree was only three feet tall."

“The Unsung Heroes”

A CADDY'S KNOWLDEGE AND WISDOM ABOUT THE GAME CAN WIN ACCOLADES FOR THE PLAYERS BUT AT THE SAME TIME HIS IGNORANCE AND NEGLIGENCE CAN COST THE PLAYER HIS CHAMPIONSHIP

Sowmya Sri Rallabhandi

When Tiger Woods is putting a ball all eyes will be on him, but nobody notices the person behind his success. Yes, the real hero who is always ignored by everyone. The person who carries a player's bag and finds the player's ball. In golf terminology, he is known as 'Caddy'.

Often known as Bagger, Jock, Looper, Lugger, Noonan and Weekend Warrior, caddies give insightful advice and moral support to the player and are expected to be aware of the challenges and

obstacles of the golf course being played, along with the best strategy in playing it. This includes knowing overall yardage, pin placements and club selection. He is like a minister in the chess game, who is all over the board and at the end it is His Majesty who takes away the victory!

A Caddy's knowldege and wisdom about the game and courses can win accolades for the players but at the same time his ignorance and negligence can cost the player his championship.

For instance, a caddy on the PGA tour, Miles Byrne, became famous when he forgot to count the clubs in Ian Woosnam's bag (only 14 allowed) before



“ caddies give insightful advice and moral support to the player ”



Caddy ranks

At many clubs, caddies are ranked as Pro, Honor, A, and B. "Pro" and "Honor" caddies are the most experienced, carry two bags, and are generally considered the best caddies. "Pro" and "Honor" caddies are generally given the privilege of caddying in club tournaments such as member guests, most notably 4-Days, team matches, or team competitions. "A" caddies carry two bags and are less experienced than the Pro and Honors. "B" caddies carry a single bag and are the least experienced and youngest caddies.

Caddy Earnings

Caddies typically draw a modest weekly salary (at least \$1,000, most of which goes on travel expenses), plus 5 percent of a player's prize money if he makes the cut, 7 percent if he finishes in the top 10 and 10 percent if he wins the tournament.

the final round of the British Open. His mistake cost Woosnam two strokes and possibly the championship.

Shouldering weight and responsibility

A professional golfer's bag typically weighs 20kg, and includes clubs, rain gear, golf balls, food, drinks, an umbrella, and various other items. The average round of competitive golf also takes

approximately four and a half hours, covers 4-5 miles, and involves the caddie picking up the bag in the region about 50 times. He not only shoulders the weight of a player but he is also responsible for cleaning the golf clubs, providing information on shot selection (e.g., keeping yardage in order to indicate the distance of a shot), having new golf balls ready when needed, keeping things dry when it is raining, and assisting with travel preparation.

Although the golfer is the one who executes a shot, it is the golfer-caddy combination that plans a task. Above all the caddy keeps his player focused and in a positive mood throughout the game.

A caddy is a guide, strategist and a thinker to the player. He can not compel a player to take his advice but certainly helps him in framing a game strategy.

Success formula

A caddy should know when to talk and when to keep his mouth shut. If a player asks for advice give him that or else move along his side. The key for a caddy's success depends upon how well he knows his golfer, his moods and his expectations.

The old saying was caddies were meant to "show up, keep up and shut up." Not any more. In modern golfing, players look at a caddy for something more than just to show up. At times a golfer turns to his caddie for advice - Which club? How far? What kind of break? How's the wind? He is expected to have answers for every question, always. Yet, they are looked down upon!

“ A caddy is a guide, strategist and a thinker to the player. ”

Safe game? Not at all

A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO DON'T PLAY GOLF MAY THINK THAT SINCE IT ISN'T A "CONTACT SPORT", IT IS SAFE

Bakul Roy

The pictures of a golf course we usually see are also a great sight. Lush greens and blue sky. But beware, there are plenty of body blows if one is not careful. In South Carolina and Florida, alligators are surprise visitors on golf courses. In other states of the country (America), you need to have an eye for the prowling hissing animals, the snakes! The bonus at other grounds are loose (wayward) balls, clubs flying,

hills which are slippery and runaway carts.

The legendary Tiger Woods has been bothered by a sore left knee for quite some time. Finally in 2002, an hour-long surgery was performed by Dr Thomas Rosenberg at the HealthSouth Surgical Center in Utah. Dr Rosenberg removed fluid from inside and outside the anterior cruciate ligament. He also got rid of benign cysts. Woods was operated upon on the same knee in 1994 to remove a benign tumor.





Woods has been injury-free since he turned pro in 1996. He had a stinger in the left wrist when he tried to hit through a softball-sized rock at the 1999 Tour Championship in Houston. Woods also sprained ligaments in his left knee at the 2001 Pebble Beach National Pro-Am when a fan accidentally tripped him up while trying to get an autograph. Woods had a sore Achille's tendon during the US Open.

Nextel Cup champ Jimmie Johnson broke his left wrist when he fell out of a golf cart during a celebrity tournament. The injury occurred in Lecanto, Florida.

He was in a golf cart and the driver took a sharp turn. Johnson wasn't holding on tight enough and landed awkwardly. Watching golf professionals play so well with so little visible effort on television is misleading: the true rigors of the game are not apparent. Several articles in the medical literature, including large surveys of the pros, provide insight into just how frequently the elite, professional players sustain injuries from golfing.

More than 80 per cent of professional golfers reported a golf-related injury at some point in their career. An estimated 10 percent to 33 percent of professional golfers are playing while injured at any given time. Pros average nearly two injuries during their career.

The average time lost from touring due to an injury is more than nine weeks for men and nearly three weeks for women. When the injured pros return to the tour, nearly half are bothered by their injuries.

Professional golfers not only swing the club many times a day, they also do so in a very demanding way. A majority of professional and low-handicap golfers employ a so-called 'modern' swing technique in which maximum coiling of the body's trunk is combined with an explosive downswing and

hyperextension of the spine on the follow-through to produce optimum club head speed and power.

Brett Quigley, who hasn't played in nearly five months because of knee surgery, withdrew from the Buick Invitational recently because of a tailbone problem that makes it painful to walk. Quigley said the best-case scenario was a couple of days of recovery.

Some weird incidents

Mother nature can also take its 'course' of action during an inning of golf. There's chance that you might be struck by lightning playing golf. But is it true? So how worried should one be about being struck by lightning?

A study by the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in 1997 revealed 3,239 deaths over 35 years in the open. Golfers accounted for 5 per cent of deaths during that time.

Wild balls:

Balls on the wild side can give you the jitters. Read on. A golfer in Malaysia was attacked by a croc while playing at the country's Famosa Resort. The golfer required at least 40 stitches after the beast grabbed his leg while he was looking for missing balls at the seventh hole! Mistaking it to be wood initially, he stood on it. The golfer has not played since then.

Crows, alligators and even cows are known to have an enjoyable time munching golf balls. But human beings can be as damaging to wildlife with golf balls too.

The Golfer's Handbook reports numerous incidents where fish and animals have been terminated by golf balls. No kidding: The gradual interest of children in golf is resulting in an upswing in head injuries.

Review of 2,546 patients under 19 seen by pediatric neurosurgeons at Georgia's Medical College between 1996 and 2001 revealed 65 sports-related injuries, 15 of them were golf-related. Seven of the golf injuries were caused by cart (golf) accidents, seven by clubs and one by a ball. Brain swelling resulted in the death of a child in a cart accident and six of 15 children required surgery. Five of the six kids who needed surgery did well and the remaining nine had excellent outcomes. The youngest patient with golf-related injury was less than a year.

“ More than 80 per cent of professional golfers reported a golf-related injury at some point in their career. ”



Me, First!

Men (as of February 03, 2008)

TIGER WOODS has held the World Number One position for a total of 480 weeks and his lead over World Number 2, Phil Mickelson is 11.02 average points.

The other players who have had official World Number 1 status in the 21 year history of the Ranking are BERNHARD LANGER (3 weeks), SEVE BALLESTEROS (61 weeks), GREG NORMAN (331 weeks), NICK FALDO (97 weeks), IAN WOOSNAM (50 weeks), FRED COUPLES (16 weeks), NICK PRICE (44 weeks), TOM LEHMAN (1 week), ERNIE ELS (9 weeks), DAVID DUVAL (15 weeks) and VIJAY SINGH (32 weeks).

Rank	Players Name	Country	Points Average
1	Tiger Woods	USA	19.55
2	Phil Mickelson	USA	8.53
3	Steve Stricker	USA	6.72
4	Adam Scott	Australia	6.19
5	Ernie Els	South Africa	6.18
6	Jim Furyk	USA	6.13
7	Justin Rose	England	5.92
8	K J Choi	Korea	5.73
9	Rory Sabbatini	South Africa	5.68
10	Padraig Harrington	Ireland	5.17

Women (as on January 28, 2008)

Rank	Players Name	Country	Points Average
1	Lorena Ochoa	Mexico	16.62
2	Suzann Pettersen	Norway	7.98
3	Karrie Webb	Australia	7.66
4	Annika Sorenstam	Sweden	7.66
5	Paula Creamer	USA	6.57
6	Cristie Kerr	USA	6.42
7	Ji-Yai Shin	Korea	5.38
8	Juli Inkster	USA	5.12
9	Mi Hyun Kim	Korea	5.00
10	Se-Ri Pak	Korea	4.94

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