

The game of Integrity

BY CARR McCALLA

What other game is played without officials overseeing every play or depends on the individual trustworthiness of each and every competitor to maintain an even playing field for the competition? Are there other sports that require the competitors invoke penalties on themselves even though no one else has any idea that a rule has been breached? I'm a great fan of sports in general, but there's no arguing that golf lends itself to honoring the principles of honesty, integrity, and fair play like no other game.

And are these not the qualities that drew us to the game and the reasons we love it so? If you'll pardon my editorializing, allow me to offer some food for thought for the next time you play. Consider playing the ball "down" and putting everything out. I think you'll be surprised at the improvement in your game if you commit to playing the game as its pioneers intended. As Richard S. Tufts, a former USGA President and Chairman of the USGA Rules of Golf Committee, indicated in his book *The Principles behind the Rules of Golf*, the two most important principles of the game are to "play the course as you find it" and "put your ball in play at the start of the hole, play only your ball and do not touch it until you lift it from the hole." One of the reasons we play is to challenge ourselves against the breaks of the game, taking advantage of the good ones and dealing with the bad ones with perseverance and creativity. Sounds a bit like life in general doesn't it? Why limit the joy and challenge of the game by "bumping" your ball into a good lie when the "golf gods" dictate you play that perfectly struck drive from a half-filled divot, or "giving" yourself that 3-foot knee-knocker putt just because it's "in the leather." Play the game as was originally intended and you'll also tend to appreciate the good breaks (the good ones and the bad ones do tend to even themselves out) more when you've had to extricate yourself from a bad one every so often. And oh, by the way, you'll be honoring the game and its wonderful traditions.

KEVIN JONES JOINS LGA STAFF

The LGA is pleased to welcome Kevin Jones to its staff. Kevin has recently been named Assistant Executive Director, Director of Handicapping and Course Rating and will begin his tenure with the LGA May 7. He comes to the LGA from a position with Boeing in Seattle, Wash., and is also a former USGA Boatwright intern with the Oregon Golf Association. As his title indicates, Kevin will have responsibility for the administration of the LGA Handicap Network and the LGA's course rating program, and will work with other aspects of the LGA as well. We're excited to have Kevin and his wife Colette on board and look forward to initiating them into our Louisiana culture. We'll plan on Kevin introducing himself to you through this column in the coming months.



CLUB TEAM CHAMPIONSHIP RECAP

Gray Plantation took home the title in the LGA's first event of the season the weekend of April 21-22. Gray's six-man team from Lake Charles simply ran away from the field in shooting a 17-under-par 415 to best Houma's Ellendale Country Club (one-under 431) and Alexandria's OakWing Golf Club (two-over 434). The Farm d'Allie Golf Club just north of Lafayette proved to be a popular venue for this event. Gray Plantation took home the Championship for the third time in the last eight years, having also won in both 2000 and 2001. The Club Team Championship pits 6-man teams from LGA Member Clubs against each other in a Ryder Cup-type competition over 36 holes. On Saturday each club fields three two-man Four-Ball teams and the best two Four-Ball scores are combined to determine the Club Team's score for the day. On

Sunday all six team members play as individuals with the best four of the six scores counting for the team score. Philip Hoffpauir and Bo Stewart combined for a seven-under par 65, John Gregory and Doug Quinalty shot 67, and Neel DeRouen and Billy Gabbert combined to shoot 68 in Four-Ball play on Saturday for the winning Gray Plantation team. On Sunday, with all competitors playing their own ball, Hoffpauir fired a 66 and Stewart a 69, with Quinalty and Gregory rounding out the scoring with a 73 and 75, respectively. Other low scores on Sunday included Ellendale's Greg Crain (69), St. Mary Golf and Country Club's Tillman Simmons (69), and Greystone Mike Neal (69).

CHAMPIONSHIPS REMINDER

Just a quick reminder of our other upcoming championships, sites, and deadline dates. Our next event is the LGA Net Amateur Championship to be held at Beaver Creek Golf Club in Zachary on May 21-22, with the deadline for entries set for May 8. The TPC Louisiana will host the 88th edition of our marquee event, the Louisiana Amateur Championship, on June 7-10. Deadline for entries is May 1, with qualifying events held at eight sites around the state in early May.

We're back at Beaver Creek for the Junior Amateur June 27-29, with the deadline for entries scheduled for June 19. Baton Rouge's University Club, site of last year's Mid-Am, will be host venue for the 2007 Four-Ball Championship July 21-22. Deadline for entries is July 10. And we're pleased to visit Squire Creek Country Club, just northeast of Ruston in Choudrant, for this year's Mid-Amateur August 3-5. Squire Creek was recently honored again as the top course in the state by Golf Digest. Deadline is June 22 with qualifying at seven statewide sites in early July.

Entries will be available for our last two events of the year, the Senior Amateur at Carter Plantation (Aug. 16-18) and the Senior Four-Ball at the Atchafalaya Golf Course at Idlewild (Sept. 15-16), on June 1.

See you next month.....Inside the Ropes!

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