

■ In reply to David White's by-line (page 22, August) on the origins of golf, I have to say that if golf is a Dutch game then I am a Dutchman, and the first *Homo erectus* that ever scampered across the savannah in a loin-cloth was the inventor of the Olympic Games.

The truth, however, is that the game of golf as we know it developed in Scotland and no Dutch historian can deny that. I would also suggest that it is quite fruitless to employ words such as 'early Dutch golf' – the Dutch game in the period referred to was called *Kolven* and while it undoubtedly contributed to the development of golf, it was not golf. In fact its closest modern relative in my opinion is croquet, and one doesn't hear too many Dutchmen singing the praises of that game.

It always amuses me that those who would belittle the Scottish contribution to golf simply let their minds sail across the water and take root in Dutch soil. Why on earth do they stop there? Were the Dutch the only people ever to put a stick to a ball in bygone days? Chimpanzees have been known to wallop a stone with a stick – are they golfers? Maybe that's why golf makes monkeys of us all. I rest my case.

MAURICE GRAY
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It was bound to happen, the sore nerve having been touched... but I am unrepentant and still claim – with proven historic records on the side of reason and truth and dispelling folklore – that the game of golf (irrespective of its foreign title of Colf – the long game – and Kolf – the short game (still played in Holland) – or even 'Goff', the original Scottish derivative taken and developed from its Dutch ancestry) originated in the Low Countries. I would never, as Mr Gray implies, belittle the Scottish contribution to the game's development but would recommend the reading of EARLY GOLF, the historic work by Steven van Hengel, a member of the R&A and a true golfing Sherlock

*Holmes who made research his life's work. After having read his book, Mr Gray and other doubters will find it difficult to believe that golf – yes, golf – originated in Scotland. Incidentally, the game referred to by Mr Gray, correctly *Het kolven*, never existed in the 'imagined' form in which it was first described in Victorian fantasy. Summarising, golf was originally a Dutch game imported to Scotland. No longer exclusively Dutch or Scottish, it is now truly Universal. – Editor.*

■ Following the publication of your article (July pages 22-26) on the workings of the PGA European Tour, I write to further clarify some of the points made therein.

There are many courses on the European Tour that have *Poa annua* greens and even though these are less than perfect in the winter months, the Tour professionals find that well prepared *Poa annua* greens often give a very respectable putting surface during the summer. The article seemed to imply that the Tour regularly recommends the killing of *Poa annua* greens by Methyl Bromide gassing. I must stress that this is not the case. May I also stress that this method of cleansing greens by gassing can be very dangerous and should only be carried out by experts.

Finally I would like to clarify and expand upon the role of Richard Stillwell, who manages to successfully run his own independent International Turf Consultancy business whilst



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