

Getting it off my chest

Reading the papers recently has got me really mad. It doesn't often happen so I thought I'd take this chance to share it with you and get it off my chest. It's all about Nick Faldo and his well-documented decline in form. It was topical because he only just made it into the field for the first World Championship event by the skin of his teeth. It was open to the top 64 players in the world but the former World Number 1 only made it as first reserve.

People were lining up in the press to declare that Faldo, the man who'd won seven Major Championships and is arguably this country's top all-time golfer, had lost it and would never be the same player again. The fact that he was still pounding away on the practice range trying to rediscover his form, and obviously still thought he could be a force in the game, made it all the more tragic.

This was a man who had been at the game's sharp end for almost 20 years, who'd made more money out of golf than we could spend in a series of lifetimes, yet he was still striving hard to succeed. Still willing to work hard to get back to the top. But it was almost as though some people were licking their lips and revelling in his demise.

It's an unfortunate British trait. We hate the thought of success. We distrust anyone who has a naked desire to be the best. It's much too vulgar. If we're honest we hate favourites... in the betting sense. We will always root for the underdog, cheer on the little guy. But surely a favourite only becomes so because of personal sacrifices, hard work and a desire to make the most of a talent. It's not cheating, and surely they deserve support too.

Other people's success is something to celebrate, particularly if it is on the world stage, not despised. Heaven knows, as a nation, we only share in it occasionally. Success shouldn't be a stick to beat someone with just because their form takes a dip or their long and illustrious career enters the back nine.

But deep down we are suspicious of winners. It's the same in other walks of life. Someone who achieves success at an early age "will learn that it's not so easy as he get older"; someone who is a little too brash "will get his comeuppance", someone trying out new ideas is "doomed to failure". As a nation we should applaud such things. Taking a chance is not wrong; sticking your head above the parapet is not wrong; being a little bit different is not wrong; wanting to be a success is not wrong.

But it is wrong to have a pop at those who do. In the meantime Faldo will have to take solace from the fact that when his supposed slip back into mediocrity is complete he'll become everyone's favourite.

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Greenkeeper

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44 Eco warriors



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