

A Completely Different Ball Game

A few months ago I took time to crow about how sport had much to learn from golf in terms of sportsmanship. Well, unfortunately, I may have to revise that thought a bit.

Sure, I believe in its conventional form golf is a truly genuine game when it comes to true sportsmanship but Team Golf, well that's a completely different ball game.

We won't forget in a hurry the scenes on the 17th hole at Brookline Country Club when the American Ryder Cup team celebrated victory despite Jose Maria Olazabal still having the chance to hole a makeable birdie putt, win his game and therefore affect the result of the entire match. The scenes on the green have been well documented and did golf a great disservice but if mitigation were needed they were borne out of a genuine exuberance on the back of an atmosphere of high excitement and tension.

Prior to that there was the War on the Shore at Kiawah Island and the ridiculous Gulf War style hats that were worn by some of the American team. Dottie Pepper had been known to cheer when her Solheim Cup opponent missed a putt. Before that there were various incidents, one including a certain GBS&I Ryder Cup Captain who memorably instructed his team not to search for American balls in the rough.

However much of it pales into insignificance against the events at Loch Lomond during last month's Solheim Cup when a cynical attempt by the American team to win at all costs was witnessed by an appalled gallery and suffered by the European team.

For those who are not aware of what happened. Returning after a break for rain Annika Sorenstam was off the 13th green faced with a little chip while her American opponents, Pat Hurst and Kelly Robbins, were on the green. She then chipped in for what would appear to have been a hole-saving birdie only to have the Americans ask the referee to adjudicate on who had been further from the hole. The referee paced it out and decided that in fact, by about a yard, Annika Sorenstam's ball had been closer to the hole. The Americans then ordered her to replay the shot and, in tears, she missed.

The Americans were quite within the laws of the game but no attempt had been made to clarify the situation before the chip shot had been played and the general consensus was that if the shot had not gone in the matter would never have been brought to light.

It caused a bitterness which, even though Europe won the Cup, will not disappear for quite some time.

These incidents only seem to occur in team competitions when tensions are at their height and the true essence of the game is overlooked. It does highlight the magnificent sportsmanship Jack Nicklaus displayed in conceding Tony Jacklin's three footer to tie the 1969 Ryder Cup match at Birkdale.

Of course, Nicklaus's Captain, Sam Snead, was not best pleased but that brings me back to where I started.

Scott MacCallum
Editor



This old timer can still cut it!



A fully restored and working version of the world's oldest motor mower, a Ransomes 42" built in 1903, has been donated by Cadbury's World in Birmingham to The Hall and Duck Trust. It has been lovingly restored by Michael Duck, curator at the Somerset-based Trust. He and his team of volunteers have scoured vintage vehicle jumbles across the country sourcing parts to help in the restoration.

"The Hall and Duck Trust is one of those organisations that act as guardians of our heritage and I am particularly delighted that they have chosen to restore such a fine example of British craftsmanship," said Textron Marketing Director Neil Woodfin.

"It really is a testament to the work that the Trust undertakes and it looks quite magnificent."

CGSA International Turfgrass Conference and Trade Show Vancouver, 24-27 February 2001

BIGGA's links with the CGSA grow ever stronger as the presence of their members at BTME testifies. Their 2001 Conference and Trade Show will be held at the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre from 24-27 February. Departure will be from Heathrow Airport on Thursday 22 February at 1635 hours returning from Vancouver on Wednesday 28 February to arrive at Heathrow the following morning. Accommodation will be provided at the Waterfront Centre Hotel which is one of the CGSA official hotels.

Vancouver is most certainly one of the world's most beautiful cities and the Waterfront Centre Hotel is surrounded by the towering peaks of the majestic Rocky Mountains and located on Vancouver's spectacular harbour and city parks. From here you will have the opportunity to explore Chinatown, historical Gastown, the exclusive boutiques on Robson Street, Stanley Park surrounded on three sides by the sea with 1000 acres of gardens, lakes and forest, or bask in the view atop Grouse Mountain.

Itinerary

Thursday 22 February
Assemble at Heathrow Airport for the 1635 hours British Airways flight direct to Vancouver arriving at 1815 hours. You will be transferred to your hotel for a six night stay on a room only basis inclusive of private facilities.

Wednesday 28 February
You will be transferred to the airport for your return flight departing 2020 hours to arrive in London at 1335 hours on 1st March.

Prices

Prices are £665 per person based on a twin share and £849 per person based on single occupancy plus comprehensive holiday insurance for the duration of £25 per person.

Included in the price are return economy class flights from London Heathrow to Vancouver with in-flight refreshments and meals; airport taxes; transfer from the airport to hotel and return; six nights accommodation on a room only basis and Canadian accommodation taxes.

Please note: Registration costs for the Conference and Trade Show are not included in the package and bookings will need to be made directly with the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association. Details are available from BIGGA on request. Please forward full payment of £665 or £849 (plus insurance if required) to BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Airedale, York, YO61 1UF to arrive not later than Friday 8 December 2000, together with name, address and contact telephone number. If accommodation is required for the night of 21 February please advise in order for the hotel rooms to be booked. Payment will be made on checking out of the hotel.