

**T**aking a quick spin around one of America's great old courses, I came upon a two-some and their caddy. They appeared to be a father and son, out for a quick afternoon round. Well, not quick. The father was frozen over his tee ball.

I quietly stopped the golf car I was tooting around in and got out to inspect a nearby bunker rake that looked similar to those used at this year's Memorial tournament. While lost in a deep analysis of the furrowing-friendly rake, I noticed out of the corner of my eye that the father still had not hit his shot.

Nor had he waggled.

Now I couldn't take my eyes off this fiasco, barely resisting the urge to break into full Al Czervik mode and screaming, "Let's go, while we're young."

Sensing my curiosity in this particular freak show, the son and caddy turned toward me with embarrassed faces. To think they must go through this 40 to 50 times a round.

Finally, prior to the sun setting or the son intervening, the old man pulled the trigger a solid 45 seconds after locking himself into place with nary a flinch or waggle to break up this madness. And I know you'll be shocked to learn that this Smalls wannabe hit a weak push into the right trees.

This painful episode reminded me of the story about John Arthur Brown, the legendary president of Pine Valley who ruled over that great club for 52 years. America's No. 1 course has always been run as an autocracy, with the club president calling the shots. Brown was notoriously impatient with slow players.

One day a foursome of guests was taking its sweet time playing George Crump's dream course. The group had been warned to keep up, but either they were unable or unwilling to do so.

So Brown got in his personal golf car and drove to where the group's caddies were forecaddying on the 13th fairway. Upon his arrival, Brown told the caddies, "That's enough. Take the bags in."

With that, he drove off.

## Sadly, Slow Play Has Come to This

BY GEOFF SHACKELFORD



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The caddies picked up the clubs.  
End of round. End of problem.

Sometimes there is no other way to deal with an act as selfish as holding up play.

I know, I know, slow play has many causes, including Tour players, technology, architecture, course setup, tee times spaced poorly, etc.

But slow play has become endemic of a world where individuals take themselves too seriously — one where the earth's inhabitants are often so sure of their self-entitlement that they actually think every shot must be treated as their last.

And anyone who dares to tell them otherwise is mean-spirited. Or worse, infringing on their vaunted individual right to take as much time as they deem necessary, regardless of the impact on others. Which is why Brown's display is sometimes the only way to deal with a problem that plagues the game.

No room for debate, no pleas for forgiveness. Some people are just rude and you have to treat them accordingly.

Oh sure, we could come up with other ways to tackle the problem. Make everyone buy a \$300 device, widen out courses, shorten them and assess two-shot penalties for Tour players. But that still doesn't address the number of rounds ruined by selfishness.

Perhaps contracts need to be signed by golfers that require them to leave if they don't play nine holes in a certain amount of time. Or shotgun tournaments will be treated like they were on the Champions Tour, where after 4.5 hours the round is over, regardless of how many holes have been played.

Sadly, this is what it has come to.

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Contact Geoff Shackelford at [geoffshac@aol.com](mailto:geoffshac@aol.com) and visit his Web site at [www.geoffshackelford.com](http://www.geoffshackelford.com).