



THE THONG ADJUSTER



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A word from the editor

Now that the chillier weather is here, and we fell back an hour for Daylight Savings the first weekend of November, our cotton shirts and shorts may soon change to pullovers, sweaters and long pants! But not for me, boy – at my age I've lost all feeling below the waist, so it's shorts all winter for me!

Our group is still growing. Our newest members are Scott Williams and Carl Rogers. John McClendon played with us one Saturday, but we haven't seen his dues yet, so let's go, John! Ante up!

Since we've gained so many new members, it's time to remind everyone to fill out a Bio sheet. Everyone wants to know who you are and it takes only a few minutes to fill it out and send it to me at stevevanwert@hughes.net. I'll send it on to John H. and he'll put it on our homepage.

Here is all we need. Answer these questions, and have some fun doing it!

(1) Average Handicap (2) Nickname (3) Average length of drive (4) What's in my bag (5) My history of playing golf (6) My greatest moment while playing golf (7) What I like about the Iron Thong Golf Gang (8) The best and worst parts of my game.

We need a photo or two or you, as well, preferably on the links.

See you all next Saturday!

Steve
VanWert





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Go to <http://www.IronThongGolf.com> to view the current issue.

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‘Age-Shooter’ records in golf

In golf, an “age shooter” is a golfer whose score matches or beats his age. For example, a golfer of age 70 who shoots a 70 or better. What are the records relating to age-shooters in golf? Here are a few. (Source: The Golf Digest “record book,” which appeared in the Jan. 1999 issue of the magazine, is the source for much of the information that follows.)

The age-shooting records that follow take into account only those rounds played on courses of 6,000 yards or more in length.

The overall record for youngest golfer to shoot his age belongs to Bob Hamilton, a golf pro who shot his age of 59 at Hamilton Golf Club in Evansville, Ind., in 1975.

The golfer who holds the age-shooting record on golf’s major professional tours is Walter Morgan, playing the Champions Tour. In 2002, at age 61, Morgan shot a 60 in the AT&T Canada Senior Open Championship.

On the PGA Tour, the record belongs to Sam Snead. Slammin’ Sam fired a 67 at the Quad Cities Open in 1979, when he was 67 years old. Then he set a new record a day later, shooting 66.

The oldest golfer to shoot his age was 103-year-old Arthur Thompson of Victoria, British Columbia.

Thompson was playing the Uplands Golf Club in Victoria when he accomplished the feat in 1972.

How about the record for beating your age by the most strokes? OK, that’s Ed Ervasti, who in 2007, at age 93, posted a 72 at Sunningdale Golf & Country Club (Old Course) in London, Ontario.

On the pro tours, the most-strokes-below-age record is held by Joe Jimenez (who in 1991 set a record for youngest age shooter on pro tours - with a 63 at 65 on the Champions Tour - later bested by Walter Morgan). Jimenez shot a 62 during the 1995 Ameritech Senior Open on the then-Seniors Tour when he was the ripe old age of 69.

And finally, the record for most times shooting your age belongs to T. Edison Smith of Moorhead, Minn. Frank Bailey of Abilene, Texas, had long held this record, matching or beating his age 2,623 times, from age 71 until age 98. But in 2006, Smith passed Bailey and continues on with the record.

Rules Quiz



Missing the ball

You make a stroke at the ball on the tee box but completely whiff. You address the ball again but accidentally knock it off the tee. You should:

A. Count one stroke for your whiff and one penalty stroke for moving your ball while it was in play and replace it.

B. Take a penalty for missing your tee shot, but replace your ball without penalty for accidentally knocking it off the tee.

C. Count one stroke for your whiff and one penalty stroke for moving your ball and play it as it lies.

Answer: A. When you make a stroke at the ball, it is deemed to be in play, so Rule 11-3 regarding a ball falling off the tee no longer applies. When the ball moves after it is addressed, you incur a penalty stroke and must replace the ball (Rule 18-2b).

Abnormal ground conditions

Which of the following is not considered an “abnormal ground condition?”

A. Casual water

B. Ground under repair

C. Storm drain

D. Hole, cast or runway made by an animal

Answer: C. Anything artificial is considered an obstruction, such as the surfaces of roads, paths and drains. An abnormal ground condition is temporary and generally not man-made, such as an accumulation of casual water in the middle of the fairway. Unless otherwise stated by a local rule, you’re allowed relief without penalty if your ball lies in or touches the area, or if your stance or intended swing is affected.

Practicing during a round

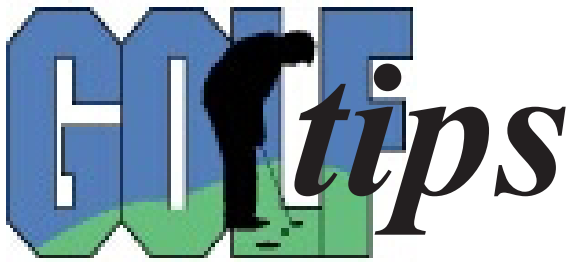
As you’re waiting for the group ahead of you to clear the green, you decide to kill some time, so you grab your putter and putt your ball back and forth on the fairway. However, one of your buddies in your foursome says you’re in violation of practicing during a round. Under the rules, you should:

A. Take a 2-stroke penalty for making practice strokes during your round.

B. Take no penalties because you were just “killing time” and not actually practicing.

C. Take a 1-stroke penalty for making practice strokes during your round.

Answer: A. Under Rule 7-2, you can only make practice strokes during a round on or near the putting green of the last hole, any practice putting green, or the teeing ground of the next hole to be played. If practice strokes are made anywhere else during a round, you should receive a 2-stroke penalty.



How to control every shot

By Robert Baker, GOLF Magazine Top 100 Teacher

You can create any ball flight you want by turning your left-hand knuckles either up or down.

Knuckles down is good for...

- All full swings, rough escapes and fairway bunker shots

Knuckle down for power

For maximum speed and distance, gradually rotate your forearms (right over left) and turn your wrists through the hitting zone so that your left-hand knuckles and left elbow point toward the ground in your release.

Why it works

Maximum acceleration occurs when your hands give in to the force of your downswing and turn over to release your clubhead toe over heel. You know you've reached your power threshold when your left-hand knuckles and left elbow point down in your release.

How to do it

Through the hitting zone, sling the club smoothly past your left thigh by trying to "flick" an imaginary object off your left thumb. Or, think of how you'd turn your left hand out to hitch a ride.



When you need full power and speed, point your left knuckles at the ground.

Knuckles up is good for...

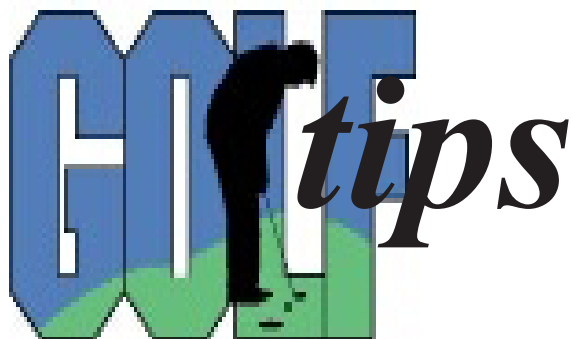
- Greenside bunker shots, chips and pitches, knock-downs, bump-and-runs and punch shots.

Knuckle up for control

For shots that require control over raw distance, keep your hands ahead of the clubhead at impact and the back of your left hand pointed up in your follow-through.

Why it works

You're basically holding off your release, which is the fastest part of your swing. While you'll



Knuckle up, knuckle down

Continued from page 4

lose distance, you'll gain extra accuracy because you're squaring your clubface with your upper body turn instead of your hands, and big muscles are easier to control than little ones.

How to do it

Through impact, cup your left wrist slightly and lift the back of your left hand toward the sky. This usually produces a scoopy impact, but if you set up with your hands ahead of the ball, your contact will be crisp.



Knuckle up for control

Make this simple change to stop stroking off-line putts

The problem

You struggle with rolling the ball on target. The reason could be that you grip the handle in your fingers like you do with your irons and woods. This allows your wrists to hinge, which is good for full swings but bad for putting.

What to do

Arc your left wrist downward and grip your putter with the center of your left palm. Notice that the shaft and your forearm now line up. Do the same exercise with your right hand only, and then place both hands onto the putter.

The can't-miss putting grip



What it works

This new grip position automatically stands the the shaft more upright, so that when you take your address your eyes will look straight down the target line, which gives you the best optical view of your intended line of putt. It also encourages your putterhead to remain square and release along the proper arc with a nice rhythm. All of this adds up to better distance control and accuracy on putts of all lengths.

A Luke Samuel Goodyear Mystery by Steve VanWert**MURDER ON THE 13TH GREEN****Chapter 17 -- The final match**

Saturday, the 28th of August, shone as bright as a proverbial new penny. The sun was shining through wispy little clouds so thin they barely diffused the light. It was what pilots call a "high sky." The temperature was supposed to hit the high 90s later in the afternoon, but a slight north breeze helped keep the heat manageable. When Luke reached the course, about eight, the parking lot was already full of cars. More were pulling in. Luckily, the two competitors had reserved spots by the clubhouse. Luke pulled his little red Escort GT in like he was important or something.

Hartly's pick-up truck was already parked in the space next to Luke's. As he alighted from his snazzy, yet inexpensive, sports sedan, Nick Adena came walking up and patted Luke on the shoulder. "Don't you lean in there and grab those clubs," he said, "that's a caddie's job."

He reached into the sorta trunk, grabbed Luke's sticks and brought them out to the light of day. He immediately began counting them. "Twelve, thirteen, fourteen ... okay, just making sure there are no screw-ups today," he said.

Luke was mildly surprised that Nick was displaying such enthusiasm. "If it's this much fun," Luke said, "we should all quit our jobs and become caddies."

Nick smiled, his teeth glowing white in contrast to his dark face. "Luke, my friend, there are many times when I wish what you say could be true. Life would be so much simpler."

Nick stood and watched as Luke put on his spikes, grabbed a couple extra towels, and

shut the hood. "You're looking good, just like Demaret," Nick said.

"You're showing your age, Nick," Luke laughed.

They walked toward the clubhouse.

Jimmy Demaret was a real character in the bygone days of professional golf, known for his stellar play and color-coordinated outfits. He was a great golfer, as well, winning 30 PGA tournaments, including the Masters three times. And like Jimmy D., Luke did look good. He was wearing a red-and-pink striped golf shirt with the Griffon Lakes crest emblazoned on the left chest pocket. His slacks were bright red, cotton and polyester, held up by a light tan alligator belt. His socks were the same shade of pink as the major part of his shirt. And he was wearing brand new white Foot-Joys. On his head there sat a white Ben Hogan cap, tilted at a jaunty angle.

Luke had this outfit in his closet for two years, ever since he bought it at the Nevada Bob's anniversary sale in Pensacola, just waiting for a club championship. Of course, the thought had also occurred to him that the red might not show the blood quite so much.

They got to the pro shop. Nick put Luke's clubs down on the rack. A group of about 50 spectators stood by the entrance to the men's locker room, and began to applaud as Luke appeared. He didn't know what to do, so he tipped his cap.

"Good luck, Luke," someone said.

"Thanks," he replied.

"Hit 'em good," someone else yelled.

"Thanks," he replied.

"Knock 'em dead," someone else called

out.

"Ah, yea," he stammered, "dead."

Nick and Luke went on inside. They took the clubs with them, just in case one of the madding crowd wanted souvenirs. Inside the locker room there was sheer pandemonium. Men in bermuda shorts wandered around next to men in suits. Luke spied Horace pushing his way through people. "Horace," Luke called, "over here."

Horace saw him, and hurried over. "My god," he said, "there must be 500 people here! How are we ever going to keep an eye of you-know-who with all these vultures hanging about?"

Luke looked around. "Vultures?"

"Of course. You don't think all these people, most of whom don't even live in Summitview, came out here today to see golf, do you? They're hoping for another murder."

"Gee, Horace," Luke remarked, "that makes me feel a lot better."

It was still more than two hours until match time, so they pushed their way around people who either slapped Luke on the back amidst thundering words of encouragement, or flashed camera strobes in his face. They were heading for Horace's office, a sanctuary in the sea of humanity that was bursting the Griffon Lakes clubhouse to the seams. Just before they got there, though, they heard a disturbance in the hallway outside the kitchen. Luke and Horace stopped and tried to see what was happening.

Hartly was shoving people out of his way like Godzilla slashing through Tokyo meter maids. Bodies were flying in all directions.

"I hope you lose, you big ape," yelled someone.

"Choke, you giant geek," yelled another.

"Who you calling a 'geek', you son-of-an-asshole?" screamed Hartly in return, reaching for some poor bystander who was obviously too scared to have said anything.

"Hartly!" Luke called out, "over here!"

The livid linkster looked around, spotted Luke and Horace, and, after tossing the poor shit somewhere down the crowded hallway, stomped their way. "Jesus Christ," he exclaimed, "what is this, a fucking circus?"

"Yea," Luke replied, "three ring, with a goddamn freak show attached."

The threesome ducked into Horace's office and sat down, heavily, in brown leather chairs. Luke broke the ice. "Well, Hartly, are you ready for an interesting few hours?"

Hartly kept looking down at his brown slacks, like he was trying to find a crease. He looked up. "Yea, well Luke, I've been thinking about it, and I don't know if I can lose on purpose."

Luke was afraid something like this was going to happen.

"You didn't say anything to Cash or Cassy about our plan, did you, Hartly?" asked Horace.

Hartly shook his head. "Nah, that ain't it. I just don't know if I can do it, that's all."

"Well," Luke sighed, "all we can do is try."

"Yea," said Hartly, "I'll try."

They sat there in silence, drinking coffee out of a silver service Horace had on his desk. It was kinda eerie. All that noise outside in the hall, and dead silence in Horace's office. About 9:30, they got up and fought their way to the practice putting green, after stops at the mens' latrine. Normally, both of the competitors would hit balls on the practice tee, but neither Luke nor Hartly wanted to fight their way all the way over there. At least the putting green was on the way to the tee. By this time, the gallery numbered well over 1,000 people. Luke recognized barely a tenth of them.

Nick dropped a couple balls for Luke to putt, as did Hartly's caddie, who was, amazingly enough, Putts O'Shea himself. Luke motioned toward Putts with his head, just

perceptible enough for Hartly to see it. Old Hartly shrugged his shoulders, signifying he had nothing to do with it. As the two competitors finished rolling in their practice putts, Horace went to the edge of the green, lifted a bull horn to his lips, and began talking.

"Ladies and gentlemen," his magnified voice reverberated from oak tree to pine and back, "welcome to Griffon Lakes Golf Course. I see many unfamiliar faces here today. I hope that you will return and try our beautiful little golf links in the near future."

"Christ," Luke thought to himself, "he just can't resist sticking in a commercial."

Horace continued. "Today, I am proud to announce the annual Griffon Lakes Golf Course Mens' Championship final round."

"Not too final," Luke thought, almost aloud.

"Today, we will have 18 holes of golf played according to the rules of the United States Golf Association, amended by the Governing Council of Griffon Lakes Golf Course, as pertaining to local ground rules. I request that you remain quiet while our competitors are hitting, refrain from taking flash pictures, and generally confine yourselves to proper decorum. This is golf, not hockey. Please let's behave accordingly."

He pointed to Hartly and Luke. "It is time to begin. Are you gentlemen both ready?"

They nodded, handed their practice putting balls to their caddies, and headed for the first tee. Luke was hoping he could just hit the ball and start walking, but it wasn't to be. Horace walked out on the first tee box, called them both over, and flipped the biggest coin Luke had ever seen. It tumbled through the air, rising to its apex, and began its descent.

"Someone call it," Horace whispered.

"Tails," said Hartly.

It hit the ground, bounced once and stopped. Horace looked down as if he were preparing to dissect a frog. "Tails it is," he announced to the crowd. "Mr. Haroldson has

won the coin toss and will hit first."

The whole scene was a little surreal, so Luke was just as glad to let Hartly swing first. Hartly strode to the tee markers, bent down and teed up his ball, stepped back and prepared to take a practice swing. But Horace wasn't about to let his moment in the spotlight fade away so easily.

"First to hit," he boomed through his megaphone, "is Mr. Hartly Haroldson. Mr. Haroldson was runner-up in competition for this title last year, and the year before. He carries a three handicap. Mr. Hartly Haroldson!"

The crowd applauded politely. Luke was amazed. Hartly turned and tipped his sweat-stained, black-and-silver Raiders hat. He addressed his ball, took a mighty swing with his over-sized driver, and hit a screamer down the right side of the fairway about 280. The match was on. Luke walked up to the tee.

"Next to hit," screamed Horace, through what had to be a cumbersome contraption to keep holding to his mouth, "is Mr. Luke Samuel Goodyear. This is Mr. Goodyear's first appearance in a Griffon Lakes Championship final. Mr. Goodyear holds a six handicap. Mr. Luke Samuel Goodyear."

"Shit," Luke wondered, "does Roland know what a handicap is?" He waved weakly, teed up on the extreme right of the tee box, locked his shaking knees, and actually hit a straight drive that landed about 220 out and rolled down the hill to about 265. A damn good swat, considering. The gallery applauded again, and Hartly and Luke began their morning stroll through the innocence of Griffon Lakes.

Strolling right along with them were nearly 1,000 blood-thirsty strangers, a dozen or so police, and two would-be murderers. Luke felt encouraged.

Luke was about 105 yards from the center of the green, so it was his turn to hit. Nick handed him a nine-iron. Luke took a slow, easy swing and promptly hit it all the way to

the back of the green. Hartly was only about 90 yards out, so he grabbed a sand wedge from Putts, popped it nicely, and watched as it settled about six feet from the pin. Luke rolled a pretty good putt down the hill, but left it about a foot short. Hartly knocked it back to him and calmly drained his six-footer for birdie. One hole. One down.

They stood on number two tee box, shoulder to shoulder, waiting for the crowd to settle some.

"Nice shot," Luke said. "Too nice, if you ask me."

Hartly shrugged. "I can't help it," he replied, "you're just gonna have to play better."

Number two is a long par five, 553 yards, that big hitters like Bruce, Hartly and Mighty Joe Young can reach in two, but mortals like Luke Samuel hope like hell to hit in regulation. Hartly took out his giant graphite monstrosity and cracked a low draw that started dead in the center of the fairway, and drifted to the left edge almost 290 yards away. Luke could barely see that far.

Luke's drive wasn't bad, down the left side and safe, but a good 40 yards behind Hartly's. They got to Luke's ball first, naturally. "How far am I?" he asked Nick.

"A mile-and-a-half, roughly," he said, handing Luke his three-wood. "You can hit all of it, kemo sabe. Don't leave anything in the bag."

Luke took his stance, swung as hard as he could, and watched the ball roll to a stop about 80 yards short of the green. He felt pretty good.

"That was all of it, huh?" asked Nick.

Hartly had a real good lie in the fairway, so he decided to hit his driver again. As the crowd quieted, he began to swing. Bruce Benning had the world's fastest swing, from beginning to end. In contrast, Hartly Haroldson had the world's slowest back swing. He seemed to barely move, the club head inching back along the ground behind

the ball in a perfect arc. It was slow motion until he hit the top. When the club reached just past parallel, Captain Kirk yelled, "Warp speed, Scotty!" and Hartly took a swipe down at the ball just barely short of supersonic.

That screeching noise that the ball made through the air wasn't displacement, it was suryIn screaming in terror. Hartly smacked his driver into the ball so hard that it rolled unimpeded by friction all the way to the front edge of the green. Luke saw Hartly smile to himself.

Luke wasn't about to be intimidated, though. He hit a nice little wedge to about 10 feet. Hartly took what looked like a new putter, one that was all angles and high-tech design, and rolled his putt to six feet left of the pin.

"Well, Nick," Luke said, "what do you think?"

Nick was tending the pin, sizing up the line at the same time. "Hit it straight up the hill," he said.

Knowing that he had to put a little pressure on Hartly, Luke settled his nerves, and did nearly what Nick instructed. Right at the heart of the hole – an inch short.

"Nice putt," said Hartly, as he picked up his marker behind his ball. "But not nice enough."

He was right. He rolled his little left-to-right breaker in the high side for a birdie. Two holes. Two down.

Horace, in his private blue and gold electric cart, flying a gold Griffin Lakes flag, drove over to Luke as Luke approached the par three number three tee. "He knows he's supposed to lose, doesn't he?" he asked.

"Yea, but I'm not sure he knows how," Luke replied. "Have you identified any of the representatives of the police here today, either county, state, or federal? I haven't."

Horace patted Luke on the shoulder. "Don't worry, everyone is here. Including the Cassenbergs. And Roland Adena."

"Where's he?" Luke asked. "I've never even seen the son-of-a-bitch. I don't even know what he looks like."

“He’s riding in a cart driven by a guy who should have a cart of his own. Take a sniff. You can probably smell the Cuban tobacco.”

As any serious cigar smoker knows, the aroma of a genuine Cuban cigar is recognizable anywhere. The doughboys in World War I could pick out the fragrance of a Cuban cigar while under attack from German mustard gas, if anyone had the urge to light up, that is. Luke stopped, and sniffed the air. There it was, faint but distinct ... the Andalusia paper plant.

“Breeze from out of the north, I guess,” Luke said. Horace drove away.

Hartly still had the honors. He must have been trying to get a grip on this “taking a dive” thing, because he pushed a three-iron off into the right trap protecting the green. Luke followed with a five-wood to the front of the green.

Hartly had a terrible lie, imbedded in the upper lip, almost completely buried. He took his pitching wedge instead of his sand wedge, attempting to dig deeper into the sand than usual, and hit a great shot. The ball skimmed the top of the trap and rolled to within 12 feet of the pin. Luke’s approach putt wasn’t a big breaker, but it was against the grain. He thought he hit it firm enough, but it put on the brakes about six inches short. Luke tapped in for par.

Hartly never gave his putt a chance, leaving it a foot-and-a-half short. Luke gave it to him and won the hole with a par. Three holes, now Hartly was only one-up. Horace gave Luke the “thumbs up” sign.

After four holes, Luke was still one down, with Hartly showing few, if any, signs of honoring their agreement.

Luke was more than a little concerned. Hartly apparently hadn’t had a change of heart after all. Or else he’d had a change of mind about his change of heart. Luke was damn lucky to be only one down.

Number five is the hardest hole on the course. It’s only a 552 yard, par five, but this is the baby with the lake at the right turn of a slight dogleg, with a creek running all the way down the right side. This is the sucker that Luke dumped in the water trying to follow Bruce’s drive. He wasn’t about to make that mistake again.

Nick handed him his driver, and handed him some advice at the same time. “Unless you woke up this morning with someone else’s biceps, you can’t carry the water. Hit a fade around the turn. Be safe.”

“Yessir,” Luke mumbled. And did so, 260 out. Hartly, though, the gorilla that he is, smashed a beauty that flew the lake on the fly, landed about 10 yards past the water, and rolled to just over 290 yards from the tee. Luke shook his head in amazement at the guy’s power.

His only choice was to lay up short of the ditch, so Luke hit a soft five-iron. Hartly, figuring he was on a roll, decided to go for the green. He took a mighty swipe at the ball, but apparently his lie was down, because he hit a low hook that started out over the creek, then bent left right along the waterline. It hit over the water, but landed on the steep bank and rolled back into the drink. Hartly, apparently feeling that he didn’t need a three-wood any more that day, promptly tossed the offending hunk of steel and graphite toward the green as hard as he could. He sounded like Monica Seles hitting a forehand. Or maybe Luciano Pavarotti’s imitation of Monica Seles hitting a forehand. Well, at least it was loud. The club splashed as it hit the creek. By the time he and Putts got to it, only the handle was showing, like a beacon.

Hartly stood, his hands on his hips, and stared at it. “You dumb shit,” he said to himself, “now look what you’ve done.”

Putts was standing to his right and put Hartly’s bag gently down on the ground. “I’ll

get it," he said.

"You do that," said Hartly. He picked up his bag, dropped another ball where Horace indicated his drop area was, and watched Putts reach futilely toward the nautical three-wood.

"If you can't reach the son-of-a-sucker," Hartly growled, "wade out and get it."

Putts looked shocked. "Wade out?"

"Wade out or I throw you in."

"There-there are snakes in there," said Putts.

"Don't step on any," replied Hartly.

Putts gulped and muttered "yessir," and proceeded to wade carefully into the mucky water. The mixture of fear and loathing on his face was worth the price of admission. About a hundred flash bulbs went off as Putts reached for the club, hauled it in and sloshed back to shore.

Luke was only about 110 yards from the center of the green, with a chance to win a hole. The pin was tucked, as always, behind the right trap. He turned to Nick, and said, "Nine-iron."

Nick handed him an eight. "Trust me," he said.

So Luke did. After all, Nick's the pro. And he was right. Luke hit the eight to the back of the green, nice and safe.

Hartly, now not so pissed, having embarrassed Putts in front of so many people, hit a punch wedge that gouged a mark the size of a silver dollar in the front of the green, bounced once and spun to a stop eight feet away. The crowd applauded that one. Still, Luke lay three to Hartly's four. When they got to Luke's ball, he found that he had a putt that even Cash wouldn't wish on him. It was straight downhill, with a right-to-left break anywhere from six inches to two feet, depending on speed. Determined not to show fear, Luke tapped the little sucker as feebly as an emaciated rabbit, and left it five feet short.

Believe it or not, Hartly missed his sidehiller, too, giving it too much break, and leaving it inches on the high side. He tapped in for a bogey. All Luke had to do to win the hole was make a twisting five footer. Sure. Luke missed it as badly as he missed the first one. They both bogeyed and tied again. Luke was still one-down.

Luke hates hole number six. Just to be on the safe side, he drove with a three-wood and hit a slight draw that stopped about 240. It wasn't a crowd pleaser, but he was happy. Hartly, either fearless or stupid, or a little of both, decided to hit his driver again. He tried to hit a draw and started it down the right side. He hit it a ton, low and screaming, but it never took the spin. It hit in the right rough, bounced as straight as a die, and rolled into the creek. It was more than 300 yards, great on length, piss-poor on direction.

Hartly re-teed, lying two, hitting three. Hurriedly, he smacked the ball to almost the same spot, only dry. Even though he was only 76 yards out, he then hit a full wedge and dropped it on the back of the green. On the bright side, he was still 40 feet away from the hole. Luke hit his seven-iron and left it six feet short, but on line.

Hartly started his putt gently down the slope, barely moving. It picked up speed and plummeted into the exact center of the cup. It was, to say the least, a heroic bogey. Luke was so shook by this despicable turn of events that he jabbed his putt and missed it right, and then, still shook, pulled it left. Then, to cap off a stunning display of putting mastery, spun out the tap-in. Hartly won the hole with a ball in the water. Six holes. Two down again.

This match was not going the way Luke had envisioned. He was looking forward to at least looking like he was winning a club championship, even if Hartly was going to fumble it to him. Luke figured he'd be two-up by now, with Cash getting antsy, his finger on

the trigger, ready to blast his way to jail.

Every time Luke had a spare second, he was searching the crowd for Cash, or Cassy, or Roland, or Jack McGarvey, or someone who was part of this harebrained scheme. Who thought this up, anyway? Luke. Who was feeling like an idiot? Same guy. More than once, Luke called Hartly over and asked him gently what the fuck he thought he was doing. Every time, Hartly apologized and said he was trying his best. Now they were standing on a long, par three that definitely favored Hartly. After all, the last time he played it in competition, all he did was ace it.

But that time, the pin was in the left rear, tucked behind the front trap, perfect for his draw. This time he hit his shot to just about the same spot. Only this time, the pin was in the front right.

Luke took Nick's advice this time, and hit a three-wood. It sailed high, just like the TV commercials, and landed just off the right edge of the green, between the front and rear bunkers on that side. It wasn't putting, but it was half again closer than Hartly.

Hartly's putt rolled just as straight as Robin Hood's arrow. It stopped just inches away. Luke gave him the putt, being the wonderful guy that he is. Luke's chip was wonderfully charitable, too, stopping just short of the hole. He tapped in for par to tie. Seven holes gone, still two down.

There's a cinder-block john just behind the seventh green. Luke needed to make a pit stop, so he pointed to the latrine to let Hartly know where he was going, and ducked inside. Horace, who had gestured to Luke just a moment earlier, was waiting. "What's going on?" he asked.

"Damn if I know. But I know one thing. There hasn't been a peep out of either of our suspects, not a squeak. We'll never get Cash to play his hand at this rate. I don't know what to do."

That is, Luke did know something to do. He took a whiz. When he came out of the john, he walked up to Hartly, and whispered, "Say, Hartly, don't you feel nature calling, buddy?"

Hartly looked at Luke, quizzically. "Shit no."

Luke Samuel leaned a little closer. "Horace wants to talk to you. In there." He jabbed his head back toward the building.

"Oh. All right. Shit."

Hartly left to visit the facility. Luke just hoped Horace wasn't going to get a bad reputation, hanging around toilets and all. A moment later Hartly was back, shaking his head.

"You're still up," Luke said.

"Yea. Right."

Number eight is a long, uphill, 436-yard, par four that plays way longer than its yardage. This is where Bruce began his run to go ahead in his last match with Hartly. It was a hole that Hartly's power should have left Luke in the dust. But he teed up on the left side of the tee box and, taking a swing mighty even for him, pull hooked the ball through the left rough and into the roadway on the other side. Out-of-bounds.

Luke tried to take advantage of Hartly's mistake. He pounded one of his best drives ever, and watched it roll past the blue marker, almost 275 yards out, all up-hill and all roll.

Hartly grimaced as he tried to hit his driver again, this time pulling it left, but not as far as the last one, the ball stopping in the left rough 20 yards past Luke's. This time, as Luke was walking up the fairway, he caught a glimpse of Cash Cassenberg. He was wearing a Kelly green silk shirt, stylishly left to hang carelessly outside his light olive linen slacks. He was wearing his customary Ray-Bans, and smoking a thin, black cigar, definitely not Cuban. He was carrying what looked like a purse made of tan denim cotton, a shoulder strap keeping it snug to his bodice. Luke was impressed. He only wished that Jennifer Stubbs was nearby, so one of her Arabians

could piss on Cash's avocado-dyed alligator shoes.

Cassy was no where to be seen, but Luke did notice a couple of smooth characters tailing Cash. They looked like professionals. He hoped they were theirs. After all, there was plenty of room in that bag for a gun. Luke also noticed Suzi Benning, walking primly along not too awful far behind Cash. She was carrying an umbrella with the initials "T.S." on it to shade her from the sun.

Luke was 161 yards out, and hit a five-iron just short of the green, again. He looked at Nick, who mouthed "Four-iron." Luke nodded.

Hartly had a bad lie in the rough. That happens a lot in northern Florida in August. Too many lazy golfers driving carts, who think they're protecting the environment by driving in the rough instead of the short grass. Hartly almost got his seven-iron to carry to the green. Almost, but not quite. It reached the apex of its flight, and seemed to die, falling straight down into the left front trap. He could tell by the size of the splash that it was probably buried. And it was. Hartly was still out, so he tried a deep explosion shot that just barely caught the front lip, spun a little, and fell back into the sand.

Luke chipped to two feet. Hartly conceded. Back to one down. Whatever Horace had said, it was working. Luke still wasn't convinced that Hartly had changed his mind, so he tried to make it easier on him by hitting a good drive on nine, the famous "My clumsy caddie dropped my bag" hole. That was a moment to remember, unlike Luke's drive that settled softly into the right fairway trap, only about 220 yards out. Hartly smashed a drive down the left rough that didn't stop until it ran 285 yards, just short of the little mound over there that plays host to a half-dozen little palms.

Luke had played eight holes, and lay only three over par, but was still losing the match to

a guy who was supposed to be in the tank. He hadn't hit any really bad shots, but hadn't done anything heroic, either. The ball sat balanced on a little mound of sand pushed up by someone's footprint. The traps had all been dragged earlier in the day, so the print was probably made by one of the multitude of half-crazed spectators. Luke was lucky. The ball could just have easily been down in the depression. He was still 185 yards from the center of the green.

Luke turned to Nick and said, "Nickie, I've got to do something good here. What do you think?"

Nick looked at the ball sitting up like Junior at the Fourth of July picnic, and handed Luke a five-wood. "Pick it clean," he said, "and the loft will do the rest."

Nick stood back as Luke ground his feet into the sand, took the club back and hit the perfect shot. It was so good, Luke didn't ever want to hit a sandy five-wood again. It rose into the August air and sailed like a John Daly nine-iron, all loft and power. It hit soft as Ellen's shoulders, spun once, and backed up 10 feet closer to the hole than it hit. It stopped about 25 feet away, but it was the most beautiful 25 feet Luke had ever seen.

The crowd exploded in cheers. Luke jabbed his fist into the air, smiling his best Seve grin. He jogged out of the trap like Bob Tway. He just hoped Hartly felt a little like the Shark. He must have, because he took an eight-iron and tried to hook it around the palms. He caught it clean on the sweet spot. It shot right, jerked left, landed on the back of the green and ran all the way over the green and onto the road behind. The crowd behind the green scattered as the ball hurtled past them and out-of-bounds.

Hartly jabbed both arms in the air, but in anger, not elation, and let loose a stream of curses that parted the gallery on his side of the rough just like it was the Red Sea. One

woman's face turned so red that two squirrels popped right out of the ground, already cooked. It was admirable, if only for the duration.

Hartly dropped a new ball, took his nine-iron this time and slashed at it with a fury not yet abated. It rose in the air, wondering why fate was picking on it, landed on the green and stopped barely six feet from the hole. Luke looked over to see Hartly's expression, but all he could see was a thundercloud, and Putts cowering behind a baby palm. Hartly still managed to hit him with the club. You have to admire a man with such fine aim, even if it's misdirected.

Luke managed to two putt to win the hole. He gave Hartly his bogey putt and walked off the ninth green all even on the day.

As they were trudging up the ninth fairway, Pauly Panishe was in Horace's office, handing an attaché case to Inspector Devlin. He was wearing a smile as brilliant as his aroma was strong.

"Are these the gambling logs?" asked Devlin.

Pauly looked shocked. "How would I know?" he protested. "I just, uh, found this case in the Griffon Lakes parking lot and I'm giving it to the nearest representative of the local authorities. I wouldn't think of opening it. That would be against the law."

Inspector Devlin smiled, opened the obviously sprung latches, and dumped the contents out on Horace's desk. Out fell six yellow, lined pads of paper. Devlin momentarily overruled his protesting olfactory sensory system and patted Pauly on the back. "We've got the slimy bastard now," he beamed, "thanks to

you."

Pauly patted him back, affectionately. "Isn't it amazing what people will lose in public places?" he asked in mock seriousness, and left the room.

Horace let Luke and Hartly take a quick run to the head before continuing play. That is, the participants in this golfing extravaganza were allocated five minutes to visit the facility. While Nick and Luke ran into the "Members Only" locker room latrine to try to avoid the crowd, Hartly barely took two steps before getting waylaid by Cash Cassenberg.

"Hartly, you talent less amateur," began Cash, in his normal sweet tone, "what the hell is going on out on the course? You assured me that you would win this match easily."

Hartly stopped and stared at Cash with a menacing look. "Leave me alone, I know what I'm doing."

Cash scrambled over to stand directly between Hartly and the clubhouse. "Exactly what are you doing, may I ask?"

"Look, Cash, this match is supposed to be competitive, right? You bozos got Luke down as a 10-to-one favorite, for Christ sakes. Keeping the game even through nine makes it look genuine. That's all I'm doing. Don't bite your manicured little nails, you'll get what you've got coming."

Hartly pushed by Cash and began to walk away.

"Fine," Cash called after him. "But if you don't start winning, I'll have to take things into my own hands. Do you understand?"

Hartly turned and delivered a look of contempt that would liquefy most men. "I said, leave it to me."

Next month, Chapter 18 - The big finish.

Lightning strikes!

A TRUE STORY

I have been a police officer for 18 yrs and have seen a lot of gruesome and disturbing scenes (if you can imagine it I have probably seen a variation of it). this one was different because it hits close to home and some of us have been in this situation.

This 75 year old golfer (no pictures of him) was golfing with three other retired guys in a regular weekly tee time and the weather forecast never even predicted rain at 10pm the night before.

They teed off and got around to the back nine when it started to rain then a little lightning way off in the distance so they headed in and waited under a tree half way in when the rain became very heavy. Three of them then continued in but one guy decided to wait it out under a 50 foot pine with an overhang of 10 feet standing next to his bag.

A lightning bolt minutes later struck his bag and push cart as he was holding onto one of his clubs killing him instantly. On the top of the first photo you will see what was left of his driver, also in a later photo are little brown clumps I think that used to be golf balls. The old man was literally cooked. Most of the items in the bag simply disintegrated from the heat and intense initial zap including the labels to his ping irons and Cleveland woods which popped off and the electricity burned holes into the bottoms of the clubs.

The strange thing is, the tree under which he was standing had no sign of a lightning strike. The bolt literally went sideways under the tree to the golf clubs.

LESSONS: If you are caught out on the course or water, distance yourself from anything metal OR graphite. Did you know that lightning rods are often made of graphite? Put your cart 50 feet away from you!

