



THE THONG ADJUSTER



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The unofficial online magazine of the Iron Thong Golf Gang

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The Putter speaks

A word from the editor

Welcome to the third issue of The Thong Adjuster, our online monthly magazine. All our normal features are here: Golf Jokes, Golf Tips, Golf Rules, and our Member Profile. In addition, chapter 3 of "Murder on the 13th Green" is included.

To those who have replied to me with filled-out bio forms, I thank you. We'll be able to continue our Member Profile for the next couple of issues. To those of you who haven't filled it out (and you know who you are), please do so soon.

Also, there are a few dues for the second half of the year still unpaid. Get them to me soon, please, or you might lose your eligibility for the second Iron Thong tournament of the year. The last one was a blast, so you don't want to miss the second one.

Speaking of membership, we need to make a concerted effort to find new members. We seem to have a rock-solid group of 8-10 players who show up almost every week. We need to expand our numbers so we can guarantee area courses that we have three to four foursomes playing regularly. That will help us negotiate lower fees. The larger we are, the more power we have. One of the best ways to gain new members is to bring guests. Once a guest plays and sees what a great time we have, and what a great thing we have going, he or she (sure, women are welcome!) will undoubtedly sign up.

Sam and John are compiling a list of nominees to run for our officers for next year. If you have someone you want to nominate for any of the four offices (president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer), email them with your list. This has been a year with a lot of change. Our initial officers have worked hard to get this group going, but a new group needs to be elected so new ideas can be advanced. That's how organizations keep actively evolving, by infusing new blood into the decision-making corps.

Most of all, everyone keep having a great time on the course. Let's keep sharing good time with each other. See you Saturday.

Steve VanWert





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Go to <http://www.3n-out.com/IronThong/main.htm> to view the current issue.

Articles, including for sale items, can be submitted at any time. Send them to the editor at stevewert@hughes.net.

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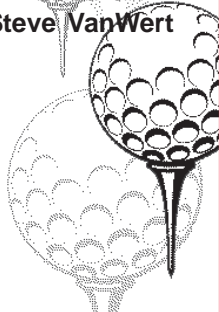
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Jokes of the Month

1 Sam and Jesse head out to the golf course for a quick nine holes. On the first tee, Sam turns to Jesse and says, "What do you say we make this time worth something. Play you for \$5?"

Jesse agrees, and they start their rounds.

It's a great game, and the two friends reach the No. 9 tee box with Jesse ahead by one stroke. After Sam hits a great drive, right down the middle, Jesse steps up and promptly hooks a ball into deep rough and trees.

"C'mon," Jesse says to Sam, "help me find my ball. I'll look in this patch of trees, and you look around over there."

They look and look and look, but no ball can be found. The five-minute time limit on searching for lost balls is about to run out. Jesse gets desperate. He gives a quick glance over to Sam to see if he is looking, then swiftly reaches into his pocket and drops a new ball into the rough.

"Found my ball!" Jesse shouts out triumphantly.

Sam looks at his friend with great disappointment.

"After all the years we've been friends," Sam says, "you'd cheat me at golf for a measly five bucks?"

"What do you mean cheat?" Jesse asks indignantly. "I found my ball sitting right here!"

Sam lets out a heavy sigh.

"And you'd lie to me, too? All for a tiny little sum of money? You'd cheat me and lie to me, for what? For five bucks? I can't believe you'd stoop so low."

"Well what makes you so sure I'm cheating and lying, anyway?" Jesse asks.

"Because," Sam replies, "I've been standing on your ball for the last five minutes!"



2 Tom was a man of faith, and a man of the golf course. He played golf every Sunday religiously, but only after attending church services.

Tom was getting on in years, and one day after feeling ill, he said to his wife, "I sure hope there is golf in the afterlife. I feel terrible!"

His wife told him not to overreact with talk about the afterlife.

"Go to church and say a little prayer," she suggested, "and you'll feel better."

So Tom headed to church. As he kneeled at the pew, Tom whispered a prayer: "Oh Lord, thank you for everything - my health, my wife and my golf game. I hope that when I reach Heaven I can still play golf."

As soon as he finished, a voice thundered: "Tom, this is the Lord. I hear you and will answer your question. Do you want the good news or the bad news first?"

Tom was startled.

"Well, give me the good news," he said.

The Lord replied, "The good news is that in Heaven, we have thousands of championship golf courses, play is never slow, it's always free and you will never lose a golf ball."

Tom was ecstatic, "That's wonderful! You've answered my prayer! But what is the bad news?"

The Lord replied, "You tee off tomorrow at 9 a.m."



Learn the 6-8-10 method to improve your chip shots

From Mel Sole, Ritson-Sole Golf Schools

The golden rule in chipping is: Fly the ball as little as possible and roll the ball as much as possible. With that in mind, it is important to understand the air-time/ground-time ratios of shots hit with different clubs. The selection of the correct club is vital. You can chip with anything from a 3-iron to a sand wedge depending on the situation, but you must know the following formulas (also illustrated in chart above) to decide which club is required.

When you chip with a 10-iron (the pitching wedge), the ball will fly half the distance to the hole and roll half the distance. When you chip with an 8-iron the ball will fly 1/3 of the distance and roll 2/3. When you chip with a 6-iron the ball will fly 1/4 of the distance and roll 3/4.

These formulas are based on a normal paced, level green (a situation we don't often find on the course), so if you are going uphill you would need to go up one club, and downhill requires going down one club.

If the green is fast you again will need to go down one club and if the green is slow you will go up one club. I know this may sound confusing at first, but once you understand the basic formula, it really is just common sense.

Always try to land the ball about 3 feet onto the putting surface and let the ball roll the rest of the way.

At the address position the weight is on the front foot, with the ball position in

the middle of the feet. The hands are then slightly ahead of the ball.

Keep a solid left wrist

The most important aspect of chipping (besides choosing the right club) is to make sure that the left wrist (right wrist for left-handers) does not break down during the chipping motion.

The moment the wrist breaks down two things happen:

1. The loft on the club changes, therefore changing the trajectory that in turn affects the roll of the ball. Inconsistent distances will result.

2. The arm breaks down as well, causing bladed shots that go screaming across the green.

To ensure that neither of these things happen, work on keeping your arm straight and your wrist firm during the shot.

If you find this difficult to achieve in practice try this: Take a thick rubber band and place it around your wrist. Slide the butt end of the club under the elastic band, keeping the butt end of the club close to the wrist.

This will give you the correct feel when chipping the ball.

If you wish to lower your handicap, miss a few sessions on the driving range, and head for the chipping green instead.

You'll love the results to your game - and your opponents won't!

About the Author

Mel Sole is a former South African Tour player with about 30 years of teaching experience in South Africa, Canada and the U.S.

He is the co-founder of Ritson-Sole Golf Schools, which is rated by "Golf" magazine one of the 25 best golf schools in the U.S. Mel's home course is Pawleys Plantation in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Other Ritson-Sole Golf Schools are located in Wilmington, N.C., Atlanta, Blue Springs, Mo., Harrisburg, Pa., and San Sebastian de Amola, Mexico.

Visit the Ritson-Sole Web site for many more tips from Mel.



*A Luke Samuel Goodyear Mystery by Steve VanWert***MURDER ON THE 13TH GREEN****Chapter Three – The Irregulars**

Two hours later, Luke was sitting in his comfortable arm chair at the VIP Lounge.

He and his friends were deep in a meeting of the Griffon Lakes Irregulars. The who, you ask? Well, Sherlock Holmes had a group of neighborhood kids called the Baker Street Irregulars to help him out with his cases. Luke has the Griffon Lakes Irregulars. But they're not exactly named after the road, like Sherlock's were. The only road leading up to the main clubhouse is named "Griffon Lakes Boulevard," but the Griffon Lakes Boulevard Irregulars sounded too damn ritzy to Luke, so they deferred to their present moniker.

The Irregulars were much like their name, an irregular group of friends, golfers and family members who found themselves gravitating to both Luke and the VIP Lounge. Sometimes many, sometimes few, but always willing to help out, especially if it meant someone was buying a round.

They were discussing the afternoon's events, vigorously. Luke had just made the point that even if Hartly Haroldson was a cheating pig, he still won the match.

Rudy Rodriguez, who owns the Summitview National Bank and does business with just about everyone in town, disagreed. "We ought to declare Skipper the winner by default," he insisted. "Hartly cheated. Poor Phil Philo didn't drop that bag. Hartly knocked it out of his hand."

There was a murmur of agreement from the rest of the dozen or so denizens of the VIP Lounge.

"But nobody saw him do anything," argued Horace Chamberlain. "As tournament director, I can't declare a forfeit without proof."

It was Rob Harlan's turn to speak. Rob owns the fastest growing business in Summitview, "Uncle Robbie's Video Emporium," with branch stores on all four corners of town. "Let's get Phil in here and ask him," he said.

The murmurs were getting louder. Mob rule is fascinating, unless you're in front of the mob. Club pro Nick Adena stood up. "Putts tells me Phil is so scared, he's jumped in his pick-up and let out toward Montgomery. Didn't even collect his winnings from Putts."

"Winnings?" It was Horace who asked.

Nick was a little embarrassed. "Yea. You know Putts keeps a little book for anyone who wants to put a couple down on one of the players. Nothing big. Just local money. Phil bet a 10-spot on Hartly."

The murmur changed pitch a little. Horace cleared his throat. "Well, I'm certainly not against a little wagering now and then, but it doesn't look good when a player or caddie bets on himself."

"Well, shit," Rudy remarked, "Phil might have dropped the damn thing just to protect his bet."

Nick nodded. "Could be, although I doubt that he'd have split without collecting. But it does muddy the case."

Niles Bonnano, the local postmaster, just threw up his hands. "Hell," he said, "Hartly Haroldson is still a cheat."

"WHO YOU CALLIN' A CHEAT, BANANA-BRAIN?"

Hartly, with Cassy Cassenberg, Luke's ex, attached to his shoulder, had just entered the room. To be honest, Hartly seldom just entered a room. He invaded, like marines at Omaha Beach.

Niles stood stock still, his hands still up in the air. He looked like the wrong end of a hold-up. "We-we, uh, we were just discussing today's matches," he stammered.

Hartly stood in the center of the room, looking like a thundercloud with freckles. "Who says I cheated?"

"Sit down, Hartly, and have a beer," Luke said. "Even you realize that unfortunate incident on number nine looked bad. Right?"

Hartly considered that. "Yea," he agreed, "it didn't look good. But you guys gotta believe me, I just leaned up against the bag. Phil dropped it like a goddamn atom bomb. I damn near fell on my can!" He looked around at everyone. "Come on. I didn't need to win the hole, all I had to do was half-it!"

Hartly actually sounded convincing now that everyone knew about Phil's bet. They couldn't prove anything anyway. The subject was about closed.

Horace walked over to Hartly and patted him on his free shoulder. "Let's have a good, clean match next Sunday," he said. "Everyone will forget about today."

The murmur was less enthusiastic, but it still murmured. Hartly seemed relieved. "Hell," he said, almost as loud as his usual tone of lung, er voice, "let me buy everyone a beer, then."

That was always enough to sway this crowd. Amidst choruses of "yea, I'll have a Bud", and "make mine a Miller," Hartly strode to the bar and dropped a wad of bills on the counter big enough to choke his date. Er, I'm sorry, that was catty. It wasn't big enough to choke his date.

"Drinks are on me," he exclaimed again, "for the next two hours." He patted the bills affectionately. "Phil's not the only smart guy to

bet on me today!"

Luke wondered for a fleeting moment how Hartly knew about Phil's bet, but figured he must have heard the Irregulars talking before he burst in. Luke shrugged.

Hartly passed right by Luke, with Cassy in tow, on his way to the door. He came as close as he could without actually bumping Luke. "Loser," he said.

"Yea," Luke agreed, "but at least I've got good taste in women."

Cassy smiled an icy smile. "What woman is that?" she asked, mockingly.

Luke frowned. Actually, he hadn't dated much since their divorce. Still waiting for the perfect golfer's better half. He ignored Cassy and looked at Hartly. "How's your girl and my money?" he asked.

Cassy's smile faded on that one.

"Fuck you," Hartly said, and kept walking.

An hour later, Hartly and Cassy, driving her Mercedes, pulled into the brick drive at the Cassenberg castle, er, mansion, er, family estate. They left their keys with Benny, the Japanese butler/best boy and climbed the 20-odd steps to the main entrance. Cash had named his mansion "Conandria" after some Greek or Roman ruin, but Luke always called it "Conundrum," because the whole family was a riddle to him.

Benny let them in and Cassy plopped down on an over-stuffed chair in the sitting room. Cash was standing at the fireplace, sipping a brandy and smoking a long, green cigar. It matched perfectly with his lime velvet smoking jacket, Italian linen shirt and lemon gabardine pants. His avocado alligator shoes completed the ensemble. He looked vaguely like a tutti-frutti popsicle. His tone was cold, as well.

"I understand you almost lost your match today, Hartly," said the old man.

Hartly crossed his beefy arms in front of him. "Hell," he said, "I was just resting for next Sunday."

Cassy was fitting a cigarette into a foot-long holder. "It looked to me like you choked," she remarked.

Hartly steamed. Cash walked over and sat on the loveseat facing them. "You must learn to control your temper, Hartly, if you wish to succeed in life."

"Gee, thanks," Hartly replied. He mimicked Cash's artificial, nasal tones by pinching his nose. "You must learn to control your temper, you shit-head," he said in a sing-song voice, "or you'll never succeed in life."

Cassy began to chuckle. Cash did not. "For someone relying on my generosity, you certainly are sarcastic," he intoned haughtily, his manicured fingers cupping his Van Dyke goatee.

"Oh, can the routine," said Hartly. "I had to eat crow once today already."

"Apology accepted," said Cash, flicking cigar ash on a thousand dollar throw rug.

Why can't these rich types buy an ashtray?

Cassy rose, walked over to Hartly and waved her cigarette in front of his face. "Light me," she ordered.

"Light yourself," he said.

Cassy responded by reaching down and patting his, uh, pockets. "No, no lighter there," she cooed, "nor there, but what's this over here ..."

Hartly grabbed her hand. "Stop that. Your father's right there."

Cassy smiled. She turned to her father. "Do you have a light for me?"

Cash shook like a one-dollar bill on a charity Christmas tree full of 20s. "There's a lighter on the mantel," he croaked.

Cassy glided over to the fireplace, lit her imported Gaulois, and took a deep drag. She exhaled grandly and watched it drift across the huge room to mix incestuously with her father's cigar smoke.

I'm not suggesting anything immoral here, I'm just trying to wax poetic.

She looked at Hartly. "Members of this family have varying sums of money invested in your run at the club championship this year," she told him. "Are you going to choke on us again?"

Hartly began to pace across the rug, grinding Cash's ashes into the expensive pile. "I did not choke!" he yelled. "But I did lose my concentration when that fading little left-to-righter holed out on one and shook me up some."

"Some?" She exclaimed. "You folded up like cardboard box, you corrugated piece of shit."

Cash waved his hand, the one with the drink, slopping his brandy to mix with the ash on the Berber. "It's next week that will make the big difference. Tell me the truth, Hartly. Can you beat Bruce Benning on Sunday?"

Hartly stopped pacing. "I can beat him any Sunday."

"Can you beat him this Sunday? I need a guarantee, and so do my associates. How often have you beaten him?"

"A few times. More than anyone else."

Cash shook his head. "Not good enough. I said I need a guarantee."

Hartly threw up his arms in frustration. "How can I guarantee that? I've been hitting hundreds of damn golf balls off the practice tee. I've been chipping, putting, practicing sand shots. I've never played better in my whole life than I am right now. I haven't posted a score over par in a month! I know I can beat him."

Cassy glanced at her father and then back at Hartly. "You look tired, dear. Why don't you go to the blue guest bedroom and lay down? I'll join you there in a bit."

Hartly sighed, and left, just like a trained dog. Cassy and Cash watched him leave.

"That's not much of a guarantee," Cash remarked, as the big red-head, shoulders slumping, headed down the cavernous hall. "Why couldn't you get yourself involved with

Benning, go suck the life out of him? At least you'd be prostituting yourself for a Cro-Magnon, not a Neanderthal."

Cassy laughed out loud. "Why, daddy dear," she said soothingly, "if I was bewitching Bruce Benning instead of Hartly Haroldson, there'd be no line for you and your associates, and me, to bet, would there? And besides, he's a big guy all over ... "

Cash ignored her remark, at least outwardly, and stared at his cigar end, watching intently as the accumulated ash hid the glow. "Do you realize how much money we're talking about here? Putts told me yesterday that Adena's brother is willing to cover a cool million if we bet it on Hartly."

"Can we cover it if we lose?"

"Hell, no ... not in cash!"

"Then Hartly better win next Sunday." She sidled over closer to Cash and leaned on him, just a little. She whispered in his ear. "Are we going to help him just a bit?"

Cash reached for the telephone on the end table next to him. "You can count on it, my dear."

Cassy smiled as the old man dialed the phone. "If we're involved in anything shady, can we put the shaft to my darling ex while we're at it?"

It was Cash's turn to smile. "Wouldn't that be nice?" he agreed.

"You do your thing, dear," Cassy said, heading for the hall. "I have an appointment with Hartly. You keep up your end of the bargain, daddy, and I'll keep mine up ... I mean, up mine."

Cash didn't hear her off-color remark. He was talking on the phone. The sound of her heels on the hallway tile were just loud enough to keep Cash from hearing the slightly perceptible "click" as someone picked up the extension phone.

Next month, chapter 4: "The Match"

Golf rule of the Month



Q Should the rake be placed inside or outside the bunker? When you're finished raking a bunker, what do you do with the rake? Do you place it inside or outside the bunker? Are there rules or guidelines that govern the placement of rakes?

A It's a common question among golfers, because no matter where you place that rake — inside or outside the bunker — it will still be in a position to influence golf balls rolling its way.

So what's the rule? Well, there is no rule, which, of course, is what leads to the confusion. Although in Decision Misc./2 (see the Miscellaneous Decisions section of The Rules of Golf and the Decisions on the Rules of Golf on usga.com), the USGA does state, "Ultimately, it is a matter for the Committee to decide where it wishes rakes to be placed."

It's likely that your golf club or course has such a decision in place, so the first thing to do is to ask the golf course for its policy on rake placement. If they have one, then simply follow that policy.

And if the course does not have a policy, or you are unable to find anyone who knows what it is? While there aren't any official rules about rake placement, there are rules of thumb and guidelines provided by the USGA in Decision Misc./2.

The USGA states in that decision:

"There is not a perfect answer for the position of rakes, but on balance it is felt there is less likelihood of an advantage or disadvantage to the player if rakes are placed outside of bunkers."

True, a rake placed outside a bunker might cause a ball to careen into the bunker, while a rake that is already in the bunker might cause

a ball to careen out of the bunker.

Continuing with Decision Misc./2:

"It may be argued that there is more likelihood of a ball being deflected into or kept out of a bunker if the rake is placed outside the bunker. It could also be argued that if the rake is in the bunker it is most unlikely that the ball will be deflected out of the bunker.

"However, in practice, players who leave rakes in bunkers frequently leave them at the side which tends to stop a ball rolling into the flat part of the bunker, resulting in a much more difficult shot than would otherwise have been the case. This is most prevalent at a course where the bunkers are small. When the ball comes to rest on or against a rake in the bunker and the player must proceed under Rule 24-1, it may not be possible to replace the ball on the same spot or find a spot in the bunker which is not nearer the hole - see Decision 20-3d/2."

But what about placing the rakes in the middle of the bunker, where they won't be able to stop a ball on the bunker's sloping sides?

Decision Misc./2:

"If rakes are left in the middle of the bunker the only way to position them is to throw them into the bunker and this causes damage to the surface. Also, if a rake is in the middle of a large bunker it is either not used or the player is obliged to rake a large area of the bunker resulting in unnecessary delay.

"Therefore, after considering all these aspects, it is recommended that rakes should be left outside bunkers in areas where they are least likely to affect the movement of the ball."

The Golf Course Superintendents Association of America further recommends that rakes outside the bunker be placed laying flat on the ground (tines up) and parallel to the hole's direction of play.

So: Follow the guidelines in place at the golf course or in place for your tournament. If such guidelines are not in place, or you are unable to learn what they are, then place rakes outside bunkers, parallel to the direction of play on that hole.

Iron Thong member profile

Mike Linares



NAME: Mike Linares

NICKNAME: I don't I have one

HANDICAP: 29

CLUBS IN MY BAG: Nike Ignite 9.5 Driver (I just put the driver back in my bag, because for the longest time I forgot how to hit the damn thing...some of you know what I'm talking about). Callaway 2 & 3 Heavenwoods, Callaway Fusion Irons, DeLaCruz 52 & 56 wedges, an old Spalding Chipper I had cut down and regripped, and a DeLaCruz Bolero putter

MY HISTORY OF PLAYING GOLF:

I bought my first set of clubs from Sears about 20 years ago, and once or twice a year I would attempt to make contact with the little white ball. I'm not talking hitting it straight either, I just wanted to make contact...

Two years ago I got into the "full swing" of things and became a golf addict, playing 3 - 4 times a month with Jesse, Big John and Scary Jerry. After joining the Iron Thongers in November 05, my addiction became more intense...I learned and played by the rules, I read golf books and magazines, studied the "golf swing", and everything else I could find that was associated with the game...and continue doing so.

MY GREATEST MOMENT WHILE PLAYING GOLF:

It hasn't happened yet and I'm confident IT WILL HAPPEN. There will be two greatest moments in my golf game, the first will be when I get a hole in one, the second will be when I shoot par.

WHAT I LIKE ABOUT BEING AN IRON THONGER:

I able to feed my addiction every Saturday while, to quote Sam, "sharing good space with friends".

THE BEST AND WORSE PARTS OF MY GOLF GAME:

The worst part of my game is my driving and my mental game (when it's off), the best part is my short game and my mental game (when it's on)...