

# Golf Insider

By T.J. TOMASI

IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR GAME

## Preventing the PULL

### ABOUT THE WRITER

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### BIRDIES AND BOGIES

## A little more golf, a little less 'celebs'

Jeff Babineau, deputy editor for Golf World, commented on the first day of the recent Bob Hope Desert Classic as follows: "Judging simply by the amount of airtime Golf Channel gave certain players, and not having seen a scoreboard, I'm guessing George Lopez has to be leading — by at least three shots."

And it got worse as the tournament went on until, on the last nine holes, where the action should speak for itself, Lopez was there to speak for it.

Golf isn't that funny and neither are the celebrities the networks tout. You're safe from the boredom bug when you follow a celeb in person because you can simply leave and follow some else, but when you're forced to watch Ray Romano or George Lopez trying to be funny for hours on end, the boredom index is off the charts.



LOPEZ

The problem is that most of the celebs are "celebs," meaning that their "fame" needs a bit of explaining: "Here we are with Tom Christian, star of the off-Broadway musical 'Get the Hammer, Mama. There's a Fly on Papa's Head.'" Or "Let's go out to 16 where Johnny Ant, the saxophonist for the Dead Mackerals, is getting ready to play his seventh shot."

While there are a few true celebrities, such as Clint Eastwood and Oscar de la Hoya, who need little introduction, most need a mini biography for identification. Here are a few who were in the field:

- Joe Kernan, TV host/financial commentator
- Craig T. Nelson, actor
- Burt Rutan, creator of SpaceShipOne orbital rocket plane
- Boris Said, race car driver
- Mossimo Giannulli, fashion designer
- Tom Dreesen, comedian
- Toby Dawson, Olympic skier
- Carson Daly, TV host
- Anthony Anderson, actor/comedian

The point is not that the Hope wasn't exciting this year — it was. And it raised a bunch for charity, it was well-presented by the Golf Channel. It was a very well-run tournament. So why do they have to oversell the celebs?

### DID YOU KNOW?

## Tiger's on a roll

With his victory last week in the Buick Invitational in San Diego, Tiger Woods ran his PGA Tour winning streak to seven. Woods' streak is the second-longest in tour history, behind only Byron Nelson's record 11 in 1945.

### SCHEDULE

#### All times Eastern PGA EUROPEAN TOUR Dubai Desert Classic

- Site: Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- Schedule: Thursday-Sunday
- Course: Emirates Golf Club, Majlis Course (7,264 yards, par 72).
- Purse: \$2.4 million. Winner's share: \$400,000.
- TV: Golf Channel (Thursday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 6:30-8:30 p.m.; Saturday-Sunday, 8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m., 6:30-9 p.m.).

#### PGA TOUR FBR Open

- Site: Scottsdale, Ariz.
- Schedule: Thursday-Sunday
- Course: TPC Scottsdale (7,216 yards, par 71).
- Purse: \$6 million. Winner's share: \$1.06 million.
- TV: Golf Channel (Thursday-Friday, 9-6 p.m., 8:30-11:30 p.m.) and NBC (Saturday-Sunday, 3-6 p.m.).

#### GOLF AUSTRALIA/ALPG TOUR/ LADIES EUROPEAN TOUR Women's Australian Open

- Site: Sydney, Australia.
- Course: Royal Sydney Golf Club (6,275 yards, par 72).
- Purse: \$386,400. Winner's share: TBA.
- TV: None.

#### LPGA TOUR

- Next event: SBS Open at Turtle Bay, Feb. 15-17, Turtle Bay Resort, Palmer Course, Kahuku, Hawaii.

#### CHAMPIONS TOUR

- Next event: Allianz Championship, Feb. 9-11, The Old Course at Broken Sound, Boca Raton, Fla.

#### NATIONWIDE TOUR

- Next event: Jacob's Creek Open, Feb. 15-18, Kooyonga Golf Club, Adelaide, Australia.

### DON'T MISS IT

## A primer on rules, etiquette

If you need to have the rules and etiquette of golf simplified for you, then Don't Miss John Compagnone's new book, aptly titled "Golf Rules & Etiquette Simplified."

He's a veteran golf writer who helps you understand the rules, especially if you're a beginner. He also includes insider tips and strategies, such as avoiding unnecessary penalties, determining when to declare the ball unplayable, and finding relief from water hazards.

The books is published by McGraw Hill and is available for less than \$10 at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).



### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Yep, the streak was a lot of pressure. The best way to deal with pressure is to regulate your breathing. You get excited when you breathe faster, and as you breathe faster you swing faster. That's not good. So you have to slow your walk, and take deep, slow breaths. That lets you keep your rhythm."

Byron Nelson (1912-2006), golfing legend



### ASK THE PRO

Q: I don't have the time to take my clubs to a fitter and check my lies. Is there any way I can do it myself?

— M.W., From the Web

A: Here is a quick way to determine if your lie angle suits you: Draw a half-inch straight line on the ball. At address, position it so the line is vertical and facing the center of your clubface. Hit a shot using a 6-iron and look at the mark the line has left on your clubface. If it is vertical, your lie is correct; if it slants away from you, it's flat and toward you, it's too upright.

To remember which is which, place your left index finger across the middle of your right hand — it represents the line on the ball while your right palm is the clubface. When you tilt your right hand downward so your fingers point at the ground (representing a lie that's too flat), your left index finger moves away from you. It moves toward you when you tilt your hand upward (too upright).

(To Ask the Pro a question about golf, e-mail him at: [TJInsider@aol.com](mailto:TJInsider@aol.com).)

### TEENING OFF

## Mental warning system can help your golf game

There is a "checker" in your brain that gives a final OK to whatever it is you're about to do. "It may act as an alarm system, activating a 'worry circuit' ... a part of the (brain) that helps in switching gears from one thought to another," says Dr. Jeffrey Schwartz, a research scientist at UCLA School of Medicine specializing in the treatment of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).

But the brain can become "stuck in gear" and send bogus messages that something is wrong. When a person is healthy, the checker, or "ringmaster," in your frontal lobe screens out these bogus warnings. However, when the frontal lobe is injured, the person can be afflicted by "tyrannical obsessions," as Schwartz calls them.

Let's say that just before you leave the house you think, "Did I turn the iron off?" which is a valuable "No Signal" that helps you avoid starting a fire. Your ringmaster tells you that you did turn it off, and away you go.

If you're obsessive-compulsive, however, you keep receiving the No Signal. In this case, you can't generate permission to leave the house because you have to keep checking to make sure the iron is off. When your warning system is stuck on No, it becomes almost impossible to function, as your internal world boomerangs back on itself in a reverberating circuit of No's.

The opposite occurs when the checker is for some reason obliterated. Absent a censor, antisocial behavior can result, ranging in severity from unpleasant to sociopathic.

Obviously, the health of our internal warning system is important to the quality of life we lead. By understanding how this message system works, we can improve all aspects of our life, including golf.

All golfers, from high handicappers to PGA Tour pros, experience No Signals — warnings from your brain that something is wrong. While they're not nearly as serious as OCD messages, No Signals can ruin your golf game.

The feeling produced by playing golf in a "state of No," where you're inundated by No Signals, varies from person to person, but it's an anxious feeling about the shot at hand that can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. The fear can cause the bad shot.

Next week, I'll outline how Dr. Schwartz's intervention techniques for OCD patients can be applied to your golf game.

### GOLF SPOKEN HERE

## Apron

The grassy area surrounding the putting surface, aka fringe. The area surrounding the putting green is cut to a height lower than the fairway but not as short as the green itself.



A slow front side "produces" a fast trail side, where the shoulders overtake the hips. When this happens, the club is dragged across the ball, causing the pull. Here I'm holding a shaft against a puller's back shoulder so it stays back and moves down to start the downswing.

## The correct sequence

The correct sequence has a dynamic quality. As soon as your weight hits your front hip joint, the hip is prepared to act as the axis of rotation for your downswing. Now all you have to do is keep everything moving, with no attempt to manipulate the club.

The faster you rotate your core, the more power you generate. This is how you produce the "Golden Sequence," where the lead hip is chased by the lead shoulder, which is chased by the hands, which "in turn" are chased by the clubhead, on and aim/alignment until the ball goes to target.



With me guiding his back shoulder, this student rotates his left side sooner and more aggressively while his back shoulder moves down, not around, setting up the "Golden Sequence." This positions the clubhead behind the shoulders where it belongs.

### GOLF FITNESS

## Get the kinks out

Here are some exercises you can do just before you tee off. As always, please consult your doctor before you try them out.

### Take care of the bends

It's not as bad as it sounds. Bend forward, ever so gently from your waist and grasp your ankles. If you need to, flex your knees, but don't bounce and strain. Let your neck and arms relax.

Now straighten your knees until you feel a comfortable stretch in the backs of your legs. Hold this for 10 to 15 seconds, then let go of your ankles and slowly raise yourself up, bending your knees as you straighten your trunk.

### Is that a body in your trunk?

This move will help loosen the trunk of your body. Standing with your back to a tree or a golf cart, rotate your upper body to the right so you can grab hold of the tree or cart with both hands without moving your feet. Look over your left shoulder as you do this.

You can increase the tension by pulling yourself around a little farther with your hands. Hold for 10 to 15 seconds, then repeat with the other side.

### Most golfers can use a little side action

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and raise your right arm above your head. Keeping your knees slightly flexed, lean to your left and slide your left hand down the outside of your left thigh to just above your knee.

You should feel a comfortable stretch along the right side of your torso. Hold it for 10 to 15 seconds, then repeat on the other side.

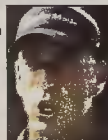
### GOLF BY THE NUMBERS

## 266

The number of yards Corey Pavin averaged off the tee in 2006. Even though he was ranked 196th on the PGA Tour in driving distance, Pavin managed to win the 2006 U.S. Bank Championship and over \$1.3 million.

Also at the bottom of the long-drive charts were money-makers Brad Faxon (195th at 270 yards), who made 13 of 26 cuts and over half a million dollars (\$1.7 million in 2005 and a win at Hartford); Fred Funk (194th at 273 yards), who in '06 made 24 of 28 cuts and won over \$1.5 million; and Paul Goydos (192nd at 274 yards), winner of this year's Sony Open and \$940,000.

With all the frantic hype about the long ball ruining the game, it's nice to take a deep breath and look at the facts now and then.



PAVIN