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You may have already known that the PGA Tour and the Saudi-backed LIV Golf – the two bitter rivals entangled in a tug of war over the ownership of golfers and golfing administration over the last two years – have decided to bury the hatchet and join hands for the greatest good of the game.

EDITOR'S CHOICE



PGA Tour and LIV Golf merge to end golf's 'civil war'

Foreword

Dear readers,

As I write this, the golfing world stands on a crossroads. You may have already known that the PGA Tour and the Saudi-backed LIV Golf – the two bitter rivals entangled in a tug of war over the ownership of golfers and golfing administration over the last two years – have decided to bury the hatchet and join hands for the greatest good of the game.

The development has been greeted with euphoria by some quarters but with skepticism by others. We'll have to keep in mind that this move is part of a bigger geopolitical shift of power as Saudi Arabia looks to turn itself into a global power – not just in the field of sports but also in politics, culture and global finance.

The exodus of top European footballers to Saudi Arabia is only part of that greater scheme. While the golfing world as well as the sporting world continue to skew towards Asian and more specifically Saudi riches, we can only watchand observe.

Stay with The Golf House and enjoy the latest news and updates from the golfing world.

Nazrul Hosen Ayon
Editor

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GOLFER'S LIFE

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GOLFER'S LIFE
JUNE 2023

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The northern coast of Spain certainly lacks the wider reputation among UKgolfers of the Costa del Sol in the south, or the area around Barcelona in the east. Indeed, you will find that relatively few golf club websites in this neck of the Spanish woods offer an English translation, as most would do in the south.

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Better facilities and more tournaments can make a difference

Badal Hossain, the professional golfer who hails from Savar, says that the difference between Indian golf and that of Bangladesh is in the difference in facilities and amount of events played.

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FIFTH MAJOR TRIUMPH THE SWEETEST FOR KOEPKA

Brooks Koepka says the fightback from right knee surgery that sidelined him for most of the past two years has made his fifth major title the most special of all. Koepka outdueled Scottie Scheffler and Viktor Hovland down the back nine at Oak Hill to capture the PGA Championship for his first major victory since 2019.

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"GOLF IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR LIFE NOW"

Nazrul Muhammad Islam, FCA, is the Managing Director and CEO of RunnerLube and Energy Limited. He along with his wife and their two young kids take so much interest in golf, that they cannot think about life without this sport.

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Malaysian golfing team Impressed with Bangladesh's Success

Malaysian golf industry is quite magnanimous. It is one of the best golfing destination in Asia. Many US and European nationals choose Malaysia as a holiday destination for golf.

REAL GOLF DE PEDRENA

The northern coast of Spain certainly lacks the wider reputation among UKgolfers of the Costa del Sol in the south, or the area around Barcelona in the east.
Indeed, you will find that relatively few golf club websites in this neck of the Spanish woods offer an English translation, as most would do in the south.
But what this area boasts that the others can only dream of is an everlasting association with Spain's greatest ever golfing 'export' – the legendary Severiano Ballesteros Sota. The sadly missed maestro learned his game on the beach alongside the course at Pedrena, where the original 18 holes were laid out by none other than Harry Shapland Colt in the 1920s, another golfing legend in the eyes of many.
The rolling parkland layout that he created boasts some magnificent green complexes and stirring vistas, even

SPAIN

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more so again now, as clearing work over the last decade has opened up views across the Bay of Santander once more.
In the early 1990s, Seve himself created a new nine-hole course at the club, with seven holes flanking theRiver Cubas – perhaps even more reason to take your next golfing pilgrimage in this often overlooked part of the country.



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BETTER FACILITIES AND MORE



There are many good players in the Indian Tour who play in the European Tour and PGA Tour. If I play there, it will be good preparation for me.

Q&A

Badal Hossain, the professional golfer who hails from Savar, says that the difference between Indian golf and that of Bangladesh is in the difference in facilities and amount of events played.

Badal, how long have you been playing as a professional?

I turned pro in 2015. Then I went for the Indian Qualifying School in 2018. Covid came then and disrupted my game. And now here I am.

Was the Qualifying School a turning point in your career?

Since there are regular tournaments in PGTI that I can play, it has definitely given me consistency. I'm still learning and improving everyday.

How many Asian Tour events have you participated in?

I've played in five Asian Tour events that have been held in Bangladesh. My best have been 14th position twice.

How many events in India have you played so far?

I played seven tournaments in my first season there, with the best performance being a top-five finish. Finished in top 30 in the other events.

TOURNAMENTS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



BADAL HOSSAIN

PROFESSIONAL GOLFER

"Badal Hossain, the professional golfer who hails from Savar, says that the difference between Indian golf and that of Bangladesh is in the difference in facilities and amount of events played."

What is your target now?
Since I don't have a sponsor now, Indian Tour is my sole focus now and I want to win here. If I get a sponsor, I might go to the Asian Tour Q School.

Do you have any target for the next Asian Tour event in Bangladesh?

There are many good players in the Indian Tour who play in the European Tour and PGA Tour. If I play there, it will be good preparation for me.

What do you think is the basic difference between Bangladeshi players and Indian players?

The facilities there are much better. Any golfer knows what kind of club fitting he needs to go with his swing. There are professional club fitters, trackman, etc. We hardly have a trackman here but there are trackman in every academy in India, which helps them analyse their swing. Then they have a good schedule for tournaments. If we can increase tournaments and stick to a schedule, it will be helpful for us to prepare.

You've come from the Savar Golf Club. Are there other upcoming players there?

There are a few. Solaiman, Muaj, Abdur Rahman – they are playing well. Among the upcoming, there is a boy named Shah Jaman, whom I see potential to become a big golfer in Bangladesh.

Since this is the off-season, how are you spending your time?

I'm practicing with a few players and working on my fitness.

Is there someone in India who gives you tips or advice on your game?

There is a coach at the Chandigarh academy, who has coached Shubhankar Sharma. He gives good tips. The players from Chandigarh are doing well in India. Shubhankar, Ajeetesh Sandhu, Gaganjeet Bhullar – all are from the Chandigarh academy. If anyone wants to correct his game, I would suggest him to go to Chandigarh.







I've played in five Asian Tour events that have been held in Bangladesh. My best have been 14th position twice.





FIFTH MAJOR TRIUMPH

THE SWEETEST FOR KOEPKA

Brooks Koepka says the fightback from right knee surgery that sidelined him for most of the past two years has made his fifth major title the most special of all.

Koepka outdueled Scottie Scheffler and Viktor Hovland down the back nine at Oak Hill to capture the PGA Championship for his first major victory since 2019.

"This one is definitely special," Koepka said. "I think this one is probably the most meaningful of them all with everything that has gone on, all the crazy stuff over the last few years.

"It feels good to be back and to get number five."

Since 1990, only Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson have as many major triumphs as Koepka, who added a third PGA Championship to his two US Open crowns. The 33-year-old American now ranks among the 20 all-time winningest men in major golf history.

"It's crazy. I try not to think of it," he said. "I do care about it. It's just tough to really grasp the situation while you're still in it.

"Right now I'm trying to collect as many of these things as I can. We'll see how it goes."

There were times Koepka doubted if he could continue his career after 2021 right knee surgery that rebuilt his kneecap. He missed most of two seasons during long, painful days of rehabilitation.

"This is probably the sweetest one of them all because of all the hard work that went into this one," said Koepka.

"A lot of blood, sweat and tears went into this one. All the pain. There were a lot of times I couldn't even bend my knee. I've worked my butt off."

Koepka admits he tried to return too fast off the operation, even though he managed a runner-up finish at the 2021



PGA Championship. In all, he has 18 top-10 finishes in 36 major starts.

Koepka also said he never spoke about how difficult and painful his recovery truly was.

"It was a lot worse than I let on to everybody," Koepka said. "It was hard. Cold weather, it was achy. The swelling didn't go down until maybe a couple months ago. That's almost two years. It has been a long road.

"If I couldn't play the way I wanted to play, then I was definitely going to give it up. I mean, the thought definitely kind of crossed my mind."

Koepka, a LIV winner last month in Orlando, said he learned a valuable lesson by, in his words, "choking" in squandering a last-day lead to Jon Rahm at last month's Masters. While he won't say more than it deals with his mindset, the impact was profound.

"I definitely wouldn't have won today if it hadn't been for that," he said, adding, "I'm not going to share. I can't give away all the secrets."

Koepka says he has learned more from more major runner-up finishes than in his five major victories.

"I think failure is how you learn. You get better from it," he said. "You realize what mistakes you've made. Each time I've kind of made an adjustment. It's more mentality than it is anything.

"You're going to play how you play, but mentally you can kind of figure things out, and I'm always trying to get better. Just trying to find that different little edge just to poke and try inside my head.

"Really, I think the big key is just being open and honest with yourself and if you can do that you'll be miles ahead of everybody else."



NICKLAUS CALLS MCILROY'S MAJOR DROUGHT 'A MYSTERY'

Rory McIlroy may be one of the game's greatest players but the Northern Irishman has not won a major title in nearly nine years, a barren run in the elite events that has left golfing great Jack Nicklaus puzzled.

The 83-year-old Nicklaus was at a loss to explain how McIlroy has not celebrated a major since winning his fourth at the 2014 PGA Championship.

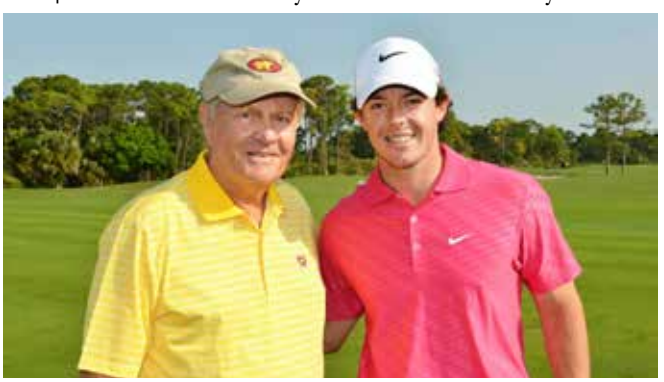
"I mean, he is, as far as talent, he's as talented a player as there is in the game of golf," said Nicklaus. "Why he hasn't won in nine years? Kind of a mystery to a lot of people because he is so good."

McIlroy missed the cut at the 2023 Masters, where he was seeking the final leg of the career Grand Slam, and then took a break to focus on his mental wellbeing following a taxing year in which he served as an unofficial spokesman for the PGA Tour in its battle with LIV Golf.

The 34-year-old Northern Irishman, in his second event back from the break, finished seventh at the PGA Championship and now looks to build off that at the Memorial ahead of his next shot at major glory in the June 15-18 US Open.

Nicklaus, who won a record 18 major championships during his storied career, said he spoke with McIlroy and was unsure how to explain why the golfer is stuck at four majors.

"I don't know really know what to make of it. Because he's very confident. He works very hard at it. He's a good student of the game. He practices a lot," said Nicklaus.



"I don't know whether his is a constant lack of being able to keep that concentration for the whole thing or not, because sometimes he is the par, par, par, double, 8.

"He does that sometimes. And I said, 'Why, Rory? Why does that happen?' And ... he doesn't know."

Nicklaus went three years without a major between 1967 and 1970 - a drought by his lofty standards - a dry spell during which he still played well but was not logging the necessary practice hours as his family became more of a priority.

"It's a matter of -- we all go through periods. Rory may be going through a little bit of that period," said Nicklaus, who went on to collect seven majors over the next five years, starting with the 1970 British Open.

"He's going to wake up one morning and say ... 'Hey, I better, you know, get on the stick here and start winning some more majors', because he's certainly going to win some more. I can't believe that he's not.

"And sometimes we all have to focus, focus on what we have to do and so forth and to get there."



PGA TOUR AND LIV GOLF
MERGE TO END GOLF'S 'CIVIL WAR'

The PGA Tour and DP World Tour announced that they have merged their commercial operations with the Saudi-backed LIV Golf and ended all litigation, bringing to a close the sport's bitter two-year rift.

In a bombshell agreement that caught the golf world by surprise, the US-based PGA Tour said they had signed an agreement that combines its activities with the Saudi financiers' golf-related businesses and those of the DP World Tour to form "a new collectively owned, for-profit entity".

LIV Golf was launched in October 2021 and lured top PGA Tour talent with record $25 million purses and money guarantees. The competition is currently in its second season.

The PGA Tour responded to the emergence of a rival tour by banning LIV players while the DP World Tour has handed out heavy fines to its players.

The rift had led to a series of lawsuits and caused acrimony between players such as major winners Phil Mickelson and Brooks Koepka, who signed lucrative deals with LIV, and those such as Rory McIlroy and Tiger Woods, who remained loyal to the PGA Tour.

"After two years of disruption and distraction, this is a historic day for the game we all know and love," said PGA Tour commissioner Jay Monahan.

"This transformational partnership recognizes the immeasurable strength of the PGA Tour's history, legacy and pro-competitive model and combines with it the DP World Tour and LIV – including the team golf concept – to create an organization that will benefit golf's players, commercial and charitable partners and fans," he added.

The name of the new merged entity and the precise structure of the tours has yet to be announced but the PGA Tour said that the parties had agreed to "establish a fair and objective process for any players who desire to re-apply for membership with the PGA Tour or the DP World Tour following the completion of the 2023 season".

The Board of Directors of the new commercial entity will have the Saudi Public Investment Fund (PIF) governor Yasir Al-Rumayyan as chairman and Monahan as Chief Executive Officer.

There was noticeably no mention of LIV chief executive Greg Norman in the statements. Norman's combative approach to the conflict had seen him recently snubbed by Augusta National who did not offer him an invite to April's Masters tournament.

In November, McIlroy, who was the most prominent backer of the PGA Tour amongst the players, said that Norman was an obstacle to any deal between the two parties.

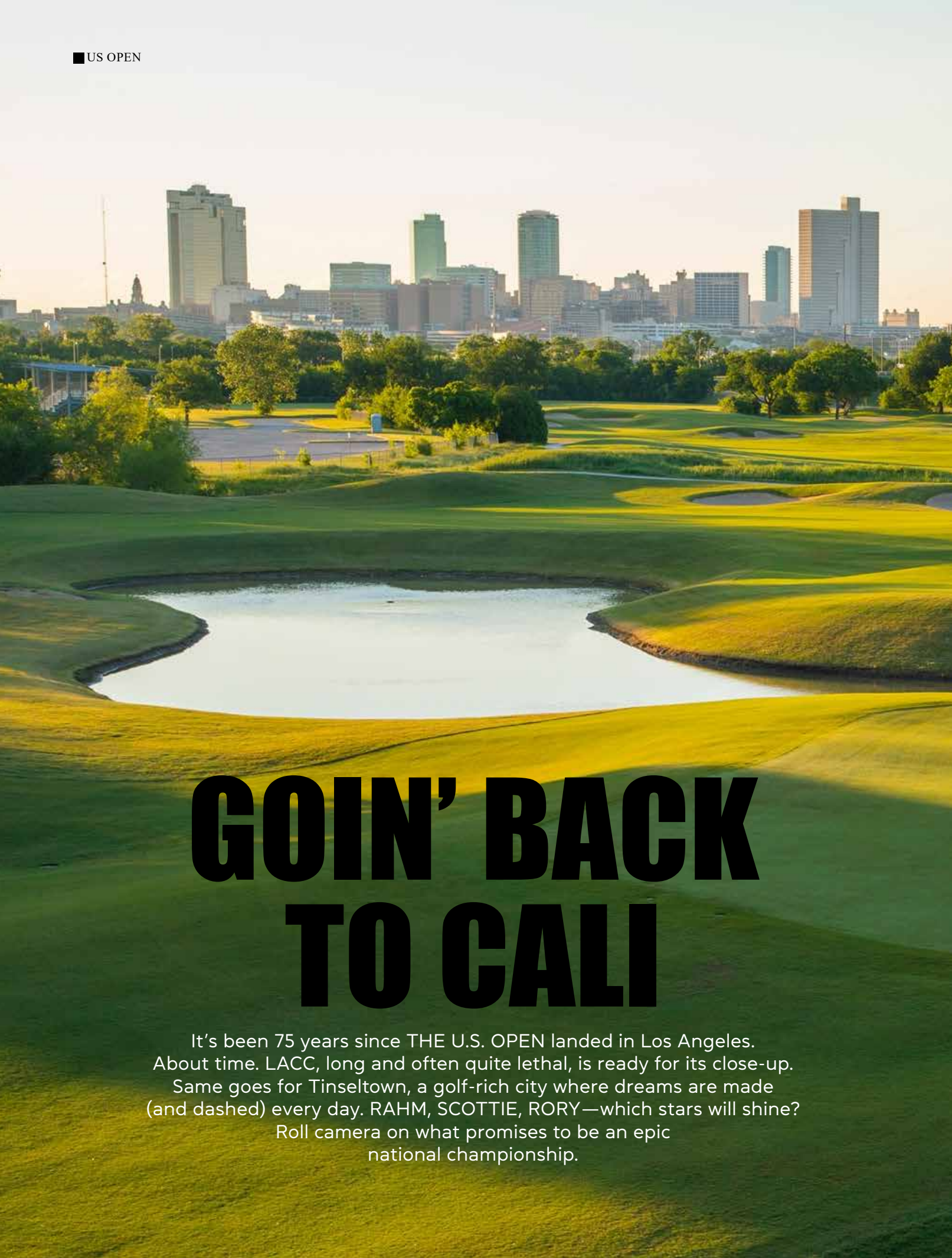
"I think Greg needs to go. I think he just needs to exit stage left," said the Northern Irishman, "No one is going to talk unless there's an adult in the room that can actually try to mend fences."

It was unclear if the announcement would impact on LIV's current season. The tour's next event is on June 30 at Valderrama in Spain. The PGA Tour statement said that the team element, introduced by LIV, would be part of the future plans.

"Today is a very exciting day for this special game and the people it touches around the world," said Al-Rumayyan.

"We are proud to partner with the PGA TOUR to leverage PIF's unparallelled success and track record of unlocking value and bringing innovation and global best practices to business and sectors worldwide.

"There is no question that the LIV model has been positively transformative for golf. We believe there are opportunities for the game to evolve while also maintaining its storied history and tradition. This partnership represents the best opportunity to extend and increase the impact of golf for all," he said.



GOIN' BACK TO CALI

It's been 75 years since THE U.S. OPEN landed in Los Angeles. About time. LACC, long and often quite lethal, is ready for its close-up. Same goes for Tinseltown, a golf-rich city where dreams are made (and dashed) every day. RAHM, SCOTTIE, RORY—which stars will shine? Roll camera on what promises to be an epic national championship.

THE BATTLE FOR *LOS ANGELES*

For a city that puts a premium on chill (they don't call it El Lay for nothing), there's an intensely competitive edge to the place. That killer instinct will surface at Los Angeles Country Club, where the drama about to unfold is called the U.S. Open. The fighting will be fierce, and the biggest unanswered question is: Who'll be the leading man?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The U.S. Open's June return marks its first stop in Los Angeles in 75 years. But the U.S. Open isn't just in Los Angeles. The U.S. Open is Los Angeles. This is the City of Dreams and the City of Broken Dreams, where starry-eyed hopefuls have flocked for decades, ignoring incredibly long odds to chase even the briefest moment in the spotlight.

It's unlikely coincidental that this year's Open set a record for entries. A remarkable 10,187 golfers signed up for a chance to compete in the national championship—this author included—thinking optimistic thoughts and visualizing procaliber golf shots, one after the next after the next, all the way to LACC.

"In Los Angeles," Denzel Washington once said, "everyone is a star." Jack Kerouac called it "the loneliest and most brutal of American cities."

Maybe they're both right. Incredibly, every scratch golfer is just an application and three good rounds from playing in the U.S. Open, which means it's the tournament for those who dream. But once they're there? Reality sets in. Competitors face a course pushed to its limit: the firmest greens, the longest rough, the narrowest fairways, the toughest test. Stay a dreamer too long and you'll miss your chance at becoming a contender. So who's likely to emerge from this year's brawl in Beverly Hills? Let's run through the players with the most compelling cases.

THE FAVORITES

Jon Rahm has become the standard against which the rest of the golf world is measured. The 28-year-old Spaniard already owns a Southern California U.S. Open, thanks to a jawdropping two-birdie finish at the 2021 edition contested down I-5 at Torrey Pines. He owns another two SoCal wins in 2023 alone, after cruising to victory at the American Express in Palm Springs and the Genesis Invitational at Riviera, less than 10 miles from LACC.

Rahm enters this year's U.S. Open as a champ in full; he's now the new owner of a Masters green jacket and has a firm grasp on the World No. 1 ranking too. Many top pros have a superpower; they've made it because they're elite irons players or big-time drivers or ridiculous putters. Rahm has simplified that process by becoming elite at every facet of the game. He leads the PGA Tour in scoring average, in birdie average, in Total Strokes Gained. Rahm has grown accustomed to hot starts too—he leads the PGA Tour in both firstand second-round scoring average. He uses the weekend for bug-swatting, waving away anyone bold enough to still be hanging around. Assuming he doesn't get stuck in L.A. traffic, he'll walk onto the first tee as the tournament favorite.

Scottie Scheffler won't rank far behind. In 2022, Scheffler won four times by mid-April and went on to earn more singleseason money than any player in PGA Tour history. This year? The numbers tell you he's been even better. He defended his title at golf 's biggest party, the WM Phoenix Open. A month later he won the PGA Tour's flagship event, the Players Championship, by five shots. A T10 at the Masters marked his 11th consecutive worldwide finish inside the top 12, cementing the idea that this guy just never plays poorly. Scheffler came up one shot shy last year at Brookline; the only surprising thing this year would be if he wasn't in contention come Sunday afternoon.

THE FOUR-MAJOR CLUB

At first glance, the Tuesday afternoon Masters practice-round pairing of Rory McIlroy and Brooks Koepka was a shock to the system. The de facto PGA Tour spokesman getting chummy with arguably LIV's greatest asset? On the surface, the cheery Ulsterman and surly Floridian made an odd couple. But their walk 'round Augusta National was a reminder that they're a perfect match.

McIlroy and Koepka are the only two men younger than Tiger Woods to have won four major championships. They're bonded by the pursuit of greatness and the loneliness that comes with achieving some measure of it. Their majors came in bunches, and when they were reeling 'em off it seemed like they'd never stop. But then they did.

At last year's Masters Koepka seemed to bottom out, missing the cut and admitting he didn't see how he could hang with the likes of Scheffler. Just days after a 55th-place finish at the 2022 U.S. Open—a tournament he's won twice since 2017—Koepka signed with LIV, signaling an unofficial end to his stretch atop the game.

This year's Masters came just weeks removed from McIlroy's latest stint at World No. 1 but marked a different sort of low point; he'd practically taken up residence at Augusta in the lead-up to the tournament, intent on a full preparation for his quest to secure the career Grand Slam. Instead, his putter betrayed him; he missed the cut and spent the next several weeks safely out of the public eye.Need evidence that both players still possess the game to contend at a major? McIlroy led midway through Sunday's final round at last year's Open Championship before Cameron Smith whizzed past him, riding his red-hot putter over the Old Course like a souped-up golf cart. Koepka held a two-shot lead in the final round of this year's Masters, but when he faltered on the front nine, Rahm pounced.

They're bound by success and scar tissue too. They'll head to Los Angeles bound by their quest for more.

THE CALIFORNIA KIDS

It's fitting that America's national championship returns to So Cal just as its pro progeny are having a moment. Okay, it's not exactly new for Golden Staters to populate the top of the World Ranking—you've likely heard of Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson—but a new generation is in its prime. Four pros who grew up and attended college in California have their sights set on contention.

Collin Morikawa is the youngest but also most decorated of the bunch; the 26-year-old from L.A. County owns a PGA Championship (which he won in 2020 at San Francisco's TPC Harding Park, closer to his alma mater Cal-Berkeley) and an Open Championship (which he secured in 2021, though slightly farther from home at Royal St. George's in Kent, England). He called 2022 "frustrating" by his standards but contended in Hawaii, San Diego, L.A. and Augusta to begin his 2023, showing encouraging signs with a retooled short game.

Like Morikawa, Max Homa grew up in L.A. County and went to Cal-Berkeley, but he predated his protégé by a half decade and took at least that long to find his footing on Tour before an incredible ascension to the top five in the world earlier this spring. The only knock on Homa is that he hasn't quite done it in a major yet; he has no top 10s and just one finish better than T40. The counternarrative is that he hasn't played in many majors since he became the new-andimproved version of himself; that Homa has been particularly unbeatable in California, where he's claimed four of his six Tour wins, including the 2021 Genesis, where he received the winner's trophy from Woods, his childhood hero. Need more good vibes? Homa owns L.A. Country Club's course record, thanks to a nine-under 61 he fired as a Cal senior.

Then there's the pair of Patrick Cantlay and Xander Schauffele. They went to high school in neighboring counties—Cantlay in Orange County, Schauffele in San Diego—but have since moved east to Jupiter, Fla. They play together every Tuesday on Tour. They form a team at the Presidents Cup, the Ryder Cup and even the Zurich Classic. Cantlay has the slightest edge in World Ranking (No. 4 to Schauffele's No. 5), PGA Tour wins (eight to Schauffele's seven) and career earnings (Cantlay's No. 22 on the all-time money list with $37.5 million; Schauffele's No. 27 with $34.6 mil), but he's a year older too. Both players are bursting at the seams with talent, but neither has a major championship to show for it.

This would be a fitting week for that to change.








The Cali kids (clockwise from top left): Homa, Cantlay, Morikawa and Schauffele. Opposite: LACC's hole No. 3.

THE FRENEMIES

That was the moniker assigned to Jordan Spieth and Justin Thomas in the first episode of Netflix's PGA Tour docuseries Full Swing, and with good reason: While JT and Spieth remain close pals on and off the course, their résumés are starting to look remarkably similar as they stare down 30th birthdays and the next decade of their professional careers.

Spieth owned two majors and six PGA Tour victories before Thomas had ever won on Tour. But in the years since securing his third major—the Open Championship in 2017—Spieth has just two PGA Tour wins. Thomas has racked up two majors and 11 Tour wins in the same time frame.

Still, Thomas has struggled to find his footing since last year's PGA Championship triumph, while Spieth is playing his most consistent golf in a very long time. Thomas missed the cut at the Masters—albeit in horrific conditions—while Spieth notched a T4 and lost in a playoff at the following week's RBC Heritage, surpassing his pal in the World Ranking in the process. If either of them wins at LACC, he'd regain the upper hand—and probably have to pick up the next dinner check.

THE DEFENDING CHAMP

We sat down with Matt Fitzpatrick for a talk (p. 17), and he thinks that U.S. Open tests were built for a player like him. "When the weather's bad and the scoring's not great, the bogeys start adding up if you don't adjust your game plan, and a lot of guys don't necessarily do that," he says. This is L.A., so we're not counting on bad weather. But we're anticipating a tough test.

Why not the guy who, at Brookline in '22, proved he could ace it?

The LIV guys (clockwise from top left): Koepka, Johnson, Mickelson and Smith.








THE LIV GUYS

While we should have seen Koepka's Masters near-win coming, LIV's other contenders came out of left field. Phil Mickelson's T2 was remarkable, not just because he's 52 years old but because he'd shown very few signs of major-level golf in the two years since his (also remarkable) 2021 PGA Championship win. Patrick Reed rose to the occasion, too, finishing T4 alongside Spieth, his former Ryder Cup teammate.

Both Mickelson and Reed are in the field at LACC, and we'll hardly rule them out—but their renegade league has other more likely contenders. Dustin Johnson deserves attention as the winner of one U.S. Open and the almost winner of a handful more; Joaquín Niemann blitzed the field at Riviera Country Club last year, and we'd be foolish to ignore Cam Smith, who remains the Saudi circuit's highest-ranked player.

It's also worth noting that while roughly a dozen LIV pros will auto-qualify, some, including Sergio García and Matthew Wolff, will have to compete for entry via Final Qualifying events, and others—Louis Oosthuizen, Paul Casey, Charles Howell III, Ian Poulter, Bubba Watson and Lee Westwood among them—aren't even going to bother. Their golfing priorities have changed with the landscape. LIV pros' presence at Augusta National felt significant. Their absence at LACC will too

THE HAVEN'T-YETS

There's a group of pros still defined by what we think they could do rather than what they've already done. Good news: Plenty of 'em are in proper form entering this year's summer season.

After zero top 10s in his first 12 majors, Viktor Hovland finished T4 at the Open and T7 at the Masters; the next step is winning a major. Tony Finau put a stop to any can'twin chatter with three wins in seven starts to close out 2022; the next step is winning a major. Sam Burns has proven he can win on tough courses (at the Valspar) and over top competition (at the WGC-Match Play); the next step is winning a major. Sungjae Im has established himself as a mainstay in the world top 20; the next step is winning a majorCameron Young has yet to win on the PGA Tour, but he's finished runner-up six different times, and the U.S. Open is the only major in which he hasn't contended. Why shouldn't the next step be winning a major?

THE DREAMERS

Name-checking this many players will make me look even dumber if I've left out the eventual winner, but that's certainly a possibility. Why shouldn't it be a British breakout victory from Tyrrell Hatton or Tommy Fleetwood? A coronation for young Tom Kim? A return to glory for major champs Shane Lowry or Hideki Matsuyama? A comeback-completer for one of two resurgent stars: Rickie Fowler or Jason Day? A hometown California dreamer like Sahith Theegala, who was born in Orange County, went to Pepperdine and still can't believe he's here? Perhaps it'll even be an open qualifier, propelled by good play and good timing and good fortune. One thing we do know is that by week's end we'll crown a champion. That's the key to the U.S. Open—and to Los Angeles itself. Thousands will pursue but never fulfill their dreams. Still, there's honor in trying, in walking a path of probable failure with the hope that you'll be the one to succeed.

The thrill of it all is that someone will.

The Northern Irishman continues to deliver at the highest level in regular events, but Majors still elude him. Fergus Bisset considers the excellence and exasperation of **Rory McIlro**

MAJO QUES

TO ANSWER .



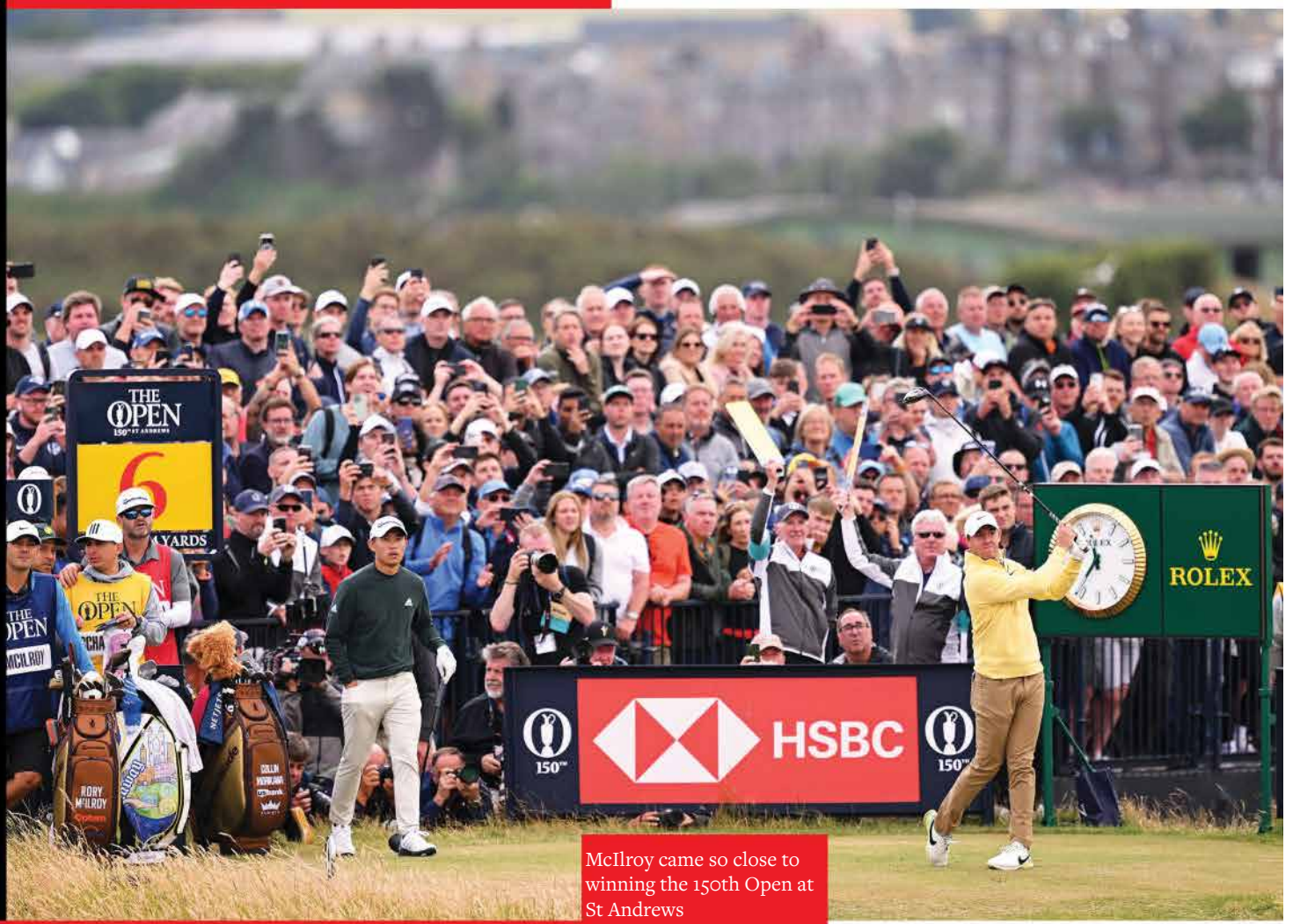

OR
TIONS

Golf's firmament is currently illuminated by a sparkling array of stars. In the men's game, Jon Rahm and Scottie Scheffler have recently dazzled, but your author would be among the many pundits who continue to believe that if and when Rory McIlroy
plays his best golf, his star shines brightest. Nobody else in the pro game has the ability to hit such a selection of shots from tee to green. He can drive the ball better than almost everyone out there, pound irons shots into orbit and display a touch around the putting surfaces that seems almost preternatural.

The stats confirm his superior ability. On the PGA Tour last year, he was first in Strokes Gained: Total and second in Strokes Gained: Tee-to-Green. And, for those who doubt his putting, he didn't miss a single putt all season from three feet and in!

Whether blasting it 350 yards or holing out from bunkers, Rory produces thrilling and compelling golf.

He's so good that every time a big event comes around, he's a favourite. From a competitive point of view, over the last 12 months Rory has both excelled and flattered to deceive. Viewed from a purely professional perspective, he has been hugely effective. Since successfully defending the RBC Canadian Open last June, he has won a further three times in Official



McIlroy came so close to winning the 150th Open at St Andrews

World Golf Ranking (OWGR) tournaments (at the time of writing). He led the DP World Tour Rankings for a fourth time last year and won the FedExCup for a third time. He reclaimed World No.1 for a spell and made close to £30 million prize money through 2022.

This year, he won the Dubai Desert Classic for a third time, was runner-up in the Arnold Palmer Invitational and narrowly lost in the semi-finals of the WGC Match Play. Amazing stuff. But he is still without a Major since 2014 and at the two biggest stroke-play events of the first part of 2023, The Players and The Masters, he missed the cut in both with something to spare. In the latter of those two tournaments, one Rory so desperately wants to win to complete the Career Grand Slam, he looked all at sea – mistakes compounding mistakes and shots being frittered in a way that would seem impossible for such a brilliant player. Why are there these two sides to the on-course McIlroy: the Rory who cruises to victories, propelled on an inexorable tide of talent, and the Rory who ties himself in knots and sputters out without threatening?

The issue is not a golfing one. His golf can, and has, stood up to scrutiny, and results, earnings and stats show his game is in a great place. The issues are not on the fairways and greens, but found on a far smaller strip of prime golfing real-estate – the six inches between the ears. Golf is a hugely mental game and the smallest niggle in that department can easily be enough to prevent a player, even a player of Rory's calibre, from delivering to full potential on the grandest stages.

Too much pressure, too much expectation, the build-up of missed opportunities, the impact of off-course politics... these are the challenges for Rory to overcome if he's going to firmly establish himself in his rightful place as the best in the world by winning more Majors.



Would Tiger in his pomp have agreed to an in-round interview at Augusta?

STRAYING OFF COURSE

Rory has always been visible and vocal in his off-course relations with the press and his dealings with governing bodies. As an impetuous, hot-blooded younger man, he occasionally overstepped the mark with his comments, like those on his feelings towards the Ryder Cup – "an exhibition" – and the Olympics: "I don't know if there's much to look forward to." In both cases, he rowed back. He did so very strongly on the Ryder Cup. After defeat in 2021, he was very emotional and said: "It's by far the best experience in golf." Rory wears his heart on his sleeve and speaks honestly. It's often endearing but must at times be distracting for the Northern Irishman. It can't help his focus to be justifying or defending a stance on wider issues within the game when preparing for Majors or other big events.



"Over the last 12 months, he has both excelled and flattered to deceive"

►



Rory is working with sports psychologist Dr Bob Rotella

Over the last two years, and through the emergence of LIV Golf, McIlroy has been something of a poster boy for the PGA Tour. He was elected chairman of the PGA Tour advisory committee in 2021.

He assumed a role as unofficial spokesperson for the established golfing ecosystem as LIV emerged last season, he attended lengthy board meetings deciding the future of the PGA Tour and has worked closely with commissioner Jay Monahan, championing the newly revamped, bigger-money PGA Tour, its elevated events and revised FedExCup format.

Then, together with Tiger Woods, he announced the 2024 launch of the tech-filled TGL – a golf league with a virtual course and tech-infused, short-game complex. In short: he's been busy.

Whether you agree with his stance on the future of golf or not, Rory's efforts to become involved in, and fight for his beliefs on, what is best for the game are admirable.

His willingness to stand up and be counted has earned him a great deal of kudos, even if it may have riled some LIV members and some rank-and-file PGA Tour players, who perhaps feel they may be left behind by a circuit offering increased rewards to the top stars.But what about the level to which these extra-curricular efforts disrupt the playing focus of the 34-year-old? How can he be at the very top of his game if he's sitting in a board room when he could be on the putting green, or if he's thinking about promoting a new venture when he should be concentrating on mindfulness and competitive mental preparation? Surely, with fewer distractions, Rory's Major chances would be improved. Rory went into this year's Masters on good form, once again fancied to end his nine-year Major drought. He had narrowly missed out at the WGC Match Play and, although he missed the cut at The Players, he'd been runner-up at the Arnold Palmer.

INSIDE THE NUMBERS

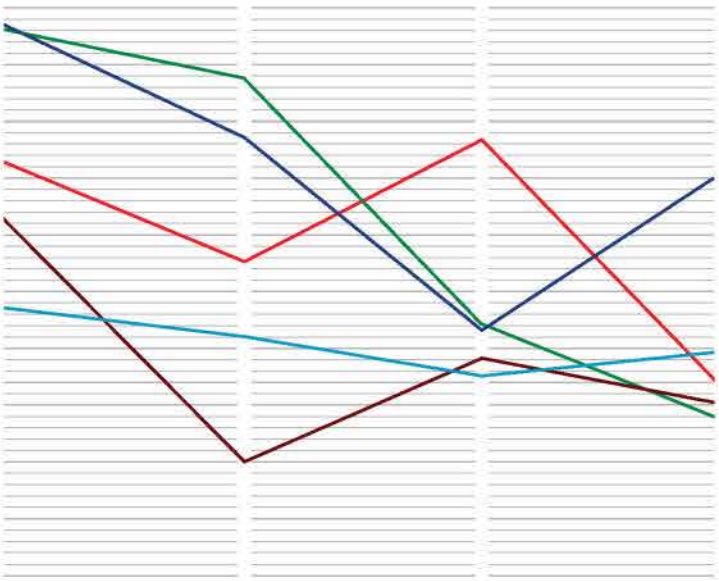
Expectations were high, both from him and the golf-viewing public, that he could finally get over the line at Augusta and complete the Grand Slam. But all too soon, it was clear that the world-beating version of Rory had failed to turn up again. He laboured through round one to a level-par 72.

The round included an in-round interview as he walked up the 9th hole... surely a player truly focused on winning a Major Championship would not have agreed to such a gimmick, even if it was an Augusta first. Would Tiger have done it in his pomp? It's hard to imagine. Needing fireworks to get back in the mix, Rory capitulated in round two, carding a careerworst round at Augusta, 77. Again, too many distractions and too much pressure.

This year's Masters may have been a bit of a disaster, but Rory's Major performances since his last win in 2014 have actually been highly impressive by almost anybody's standards. He has 17 top-ten finishes in the last 31 Majors he's contested. He makes the top ten more than half the time. That's pretty incredible. And he's come close – last year's Open being a good example. But, for all his relative success, he hasn't been able to get the job done in the big four events. Why not? The answer could lie in how he gets out of the blocks.

From 2015 to 2023, Rory's average first-round score in a Major is 71.71. During the same period, the average first-round score from Major winners is 68 exactly. Rory has been giving, on average, the

Scoring average: 2015 - 2022/23



The Masters Total **70.22**

US PGA Total **70.27**

The Masters Total **70.22**

The Masters Total **70.22**

The Masters Total **70.22**



person who goes on to win each Major a 3.7-shot head start after round one. In The Masters, since 2015, Rory has broken 70 only once in round one; in the US PGA he's also only beaten 70 once. He has been repeatedly playing himself out of Majors before he has a chance to get involved. Yes, there have been exceptions, but there have been too many instances when he's simply left himself too much to do to come back. And first-round stats also show why Rory continues to win on tou but not in Majors. On the PGA Tour from 2015 to 2022, the average of Rory's yearly first round averages was 69.89. For all his PGA



"Poor first-round scoring in Major Championships has significantly hurt his chances of winning"

Tour rounds during that time, his average was 69.51 – just 0.38 difference. In Majors, his average first round was 71.71 against an overall Major scoring average of 70.55 – a difference of 1.16. So, he lost 0.78 of a shot more against his own standard in the first round of Majors compared with regular PGA Tour events. At the very highest level, 0.78 of a shot is enormous. Poor first-round scoring in Majors has significantly hurt his chances of winning.

Of course, such is the quality of McIlroy that these tats could be redundant by the time you read this, depending on how he performs in the US PGA .



McIlroy hoisted his first and only Claret Jug at Royal Liverpool in 2014

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

Rory's overall scoring ability (the best on last year's PGA Tour) demonstrates clearly that the issues he struggles with are more on the mental than physical side of things. His ongoing work with eminent sports psychologist Dr Bob Rotella shows he recognises the fact. Rory himself has admitted to negative thoughts and "scar tissue" surrounding recent Major disappointments.

Dr Bob was at Augusta to help Rory out. His input was clearly not enough on that occasion, but working hard on self-belief and just relaxing into Majors is the way to go for Rory.

It's something even us amateur golfers can relate to. We feel the pressure more in the Saturday medal than in a bounce game and tend to tighten up as a result.

Rory clearly feels that added pressure in Majors compared with regular tour events. He must find a way to embrace the extra excitement rather than be agitated and thwarted by it.

It seems a bit flippant to say, but Rory also needs a bit of luck. He needs to get over the line again and the Major floodgates could reopen for him. If a few more key putts had dropped for him rather than Cam Smith in the final round at St Andrews last year, he'd have Major number five secured, the monkey would have jumped down from his back and the Major pressure, which he was clearly feeling at Augusta, would have been diminished.And he could do himself a favour by focusing more on the golf again – those seven-hour board meetings and difficult discussions about the future of the PGA Tour can't be beneficial.

Rory must quite enjoy the political side of things, but the more he has to worry about in those regards, the more the nagging in the back of his head when he ought to be focusing on delivering his absolute best performance at Augusta or St Andrews. It's inevitable that with more media attention in the build-up to Majors, he faces more questions on those off-course topics and feels extra, unwanted stress as a result.

For European golf, we need Rory on top form. We need him winning Majors again, we need him to become talismanic in the Ryder Cup and we need that carefree and free-flowing Rory who blitzed to four Major titles in the first half of the 2010s. That player is still in there, as the stats and the PGA and DP World Tour results confirm. If Rory just focuses a little more on Rory, he'll get back to Major winning ways.

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MINE ALL MINE

Thanks to online gear-building widgets, you can get any club from the major gear players with your own distinct flair. It's more than customization; it's full-on personalization



It wasn't long ago that the most personalized adjustment a golfer could make to their club was a basic grip change. Club builders, with some hands-on experience and the right tools, could get creative and add stamping or change the paint fill, but that was about it.

Today, modern technology and streamlined manufacturing processes have made it possible to personalize clubs from almost any equipment manufacturer with just a few clicks on your computer or phone. In two or three weeks, you can own everything from a custom-stamped wedge to a driver or putter pieced together with your exact specs. If you can dream it, they can build it.

TaylorMade has been a leader in this evolution, and their My Personalization program includes MyStealth2 drivers, MySpider putters, MyHi-Toe and MyMG3 wedges and, most recently, MySymbol custom TP5 golf balls.

TaylorMade's club personalization program began back in 2019 with the launch of the original MySpider, which allowed golfers to customize the putter with everything from sight lines to body and insert colors.

In 2021, TaylorMade introduced the Sim2 driver, built on a platform of four separate components crafted together to form the head, opening up an entirely new world of possibilities. The driver program has been a huge success and carries on to this day with the Stealth 2 Plus model, which offers two different body colors, nine face colors, six back ring colors, as well as crown, finish and logo options. Altogether, there are nearly 900 color combinations alone for one club.

MySpider also continues on with the newest Spider GT and GTX models with an almost endless combination of color options.

In 2018, Callaway, Odyssey and Toulon pushed the envelope of consumer personalization with the Callaway Customs program. Callaway goes really deep into personalization with Jaws wedges and Toulon Garage putters. The custom wedge program allows golfers to pick from any Jaws wedge and customize finish, stamping, paint and cavity medallion colors.

You can do even more with the Toulon Garage putter line by selecting from different head and neck styles. Depending on the putter, you can add stamping, paint fill and various finishes. Even shaft type is a custom option.

When it comes to customization on the PGA Tour, one brand stands above the rest, and that's Vokey. The artist who customizes their wedges on Tour is none other than Bob Vokey's right-hand man, Aaron Dill.

Dill started with Titleist in 2005, but it wasn't until 2012, when the Vokey Tour rep started working with Rickie Fowler, that wedge stamping started to gain traction. Some fun designs on Fowler's wedge, based around the popular song "Call Me Maybe," went viral. Personalization on Tour exploded after that.

You might not have access to Dill, but thanks to Titleist's Vokey WedgeWorks program, anyone has access to an impressive number of wedge personalization options that include eight stamping styles, 12 paint colors, exclusive engravings, grind work, Vokey-only ferrules and even laser etching on the steel shaft. PING also is strong in the space. In their online portal, you can build your own Glide Forged Pro wedges with stamps, paint fill and six different laser-etched graphics. But PING putters are a whole different story, thanks to the PLD (Putter Lab Design) program. What started as an in-house initiative to fit the best players in the world slowly evolved into a whole line of putters that stretch from retail models all the way to entirely built-from-scratch creations for golfers who go through the PLD custom-fitting process.

A PLD fitting is truly a one-of-a-kind experience that no other manufacturer offers direct to the consumer. The end result is a club that's specifically created for you based on putting stroke, aim style, finish preference and weight.

It certainly appears this customization and personalization trend will only continue to grow larger with more and more options for you to choose from. So, whether it's your driver, wedges, putter, balls or all of the above, you can have fun with your gear, show off your creativity and carry a set of clubs as unique as you are.

Just about every major equipment manufacturer has jumped aboard the personalization bandwagon to provide customers with the choices they desire to create a truly individualized set of equipment.


Callaway
JAWS RAW




GLIDE
BITE
PRO


Callaway




GLIDE
JM
JM
JM
JM
JM
PRO


Callaway
JAWS RAW




GLIDE
PRO


Callaway
JAWS RAW




GLIDE
TOM

Best 2023 golf watches





A golf watch can become a trusted companion that provides GPS distances and strategy-enhancing information, all coming in a wearable package many golfers find more convenient than a rangefinder. We tested the latest models to determine where each excels.

Styling/design

On the whole, screen sizes and general footprints have become smaller this year in a bid to intrude less on your eye line. This is especially the case with the minimalist SkyCaddie LX2, although some will argue it detracts from the experience should you opt to invest in the hole maps feature. The GolfBuddy Aim W12 has also slimmed down compared with its predecessor, boosting its appeal on and away from the course. Along with the Shot Scope V3, these watches are still somewhat function over form, whereas the Tag Heuer Connected Calibre E4 Golf Edition and Voice Caddie T9 add wow factor to the visual package. The Garmin Approach S62 and Bushnell Ion Elite also have a more modern look akin to a fitness watch, enhancing the shelf appeal. But for all-round aesthetic prowess, it's hard to look past the T9. It boasts a lightweight feel and a shiny silver bezel.

"THE EXCELLENT NEW FEATURES ON GOLF WATCHES ARE MAKING HANDHELD DEVICES OBSOLETE"

Ease of use

The ability to just turn on the watch and head straight for the 1st tee is highly underrated, and most of these devices fit this bill to a degree. To maximise their potential, most partner with an accompanying app, which takes time, but it's not essential. With the Shot Scope V3, it naturally takes extra time to set up the tags in the grips of your clubs, but once done, the experience with the watch is straightforward. Nearly all of these watches have touchscreens which are responsive, especially on the T9 and LX2, with the latter being particularly easy to navigate helped by the more basic functionality. But in terms



Bushnell Ion Elite



Garmin Approach S62



GolfBuddy Aim W12



SkyCaddie Aim W12



SkyCaddie V3

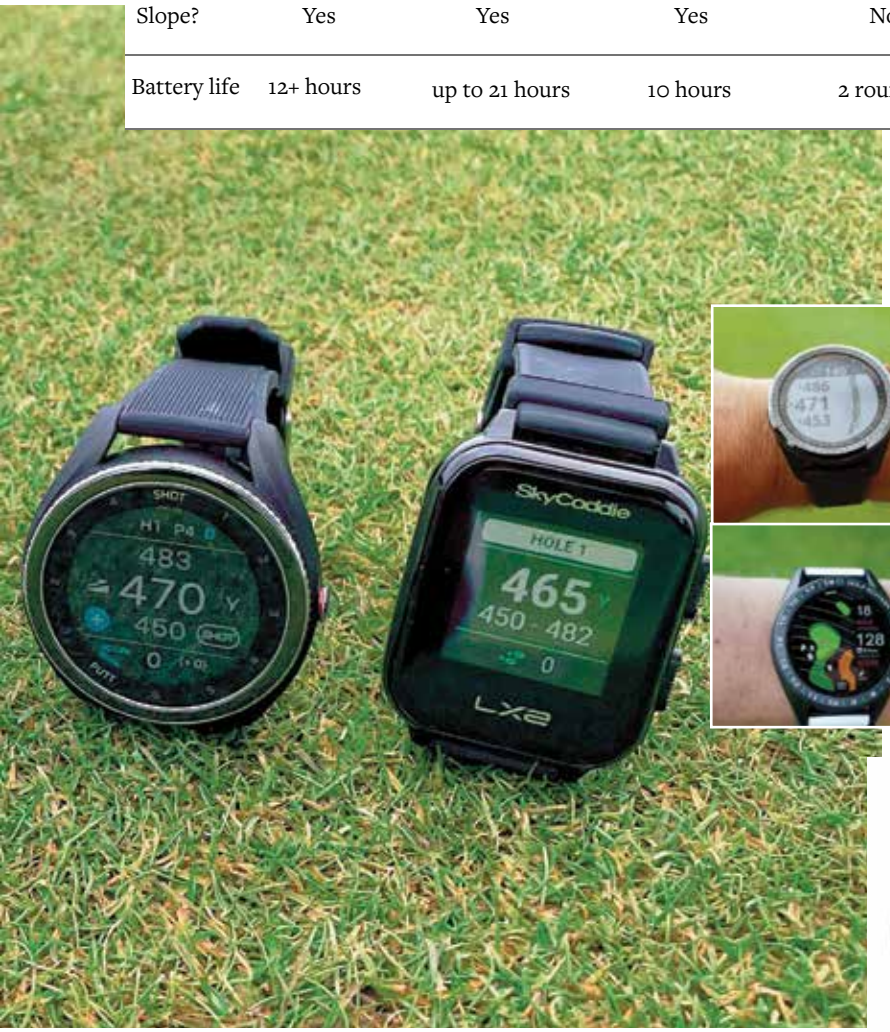


SkyCaddie Connected Calibre E4 Golf Edition



Voice Caddie T9

Weight	38g	61g	51g	57g	41g	82g	49g
Slope?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes
Battery life	12+ hours	up to 21 hours	10 hours	2 rounds	10+ hours	1 day	27 holes





of user-friendliness, the Bushnell Ion Elite really stands out. The sizeable display and obvious icons help you easily access the plethora of features – it requires very little familiarisation time and genuinely enhances your enjoyment of the product.

Features

Slope (compensating for changes in elevation) is becoming more prominent, with the Ion Elite, Approach S62, Aim W12 and T9 all offering it. The T9 certainly ha plenty of unique features, including green undulation heat maps and Putt View, which shows the distance and elevation change to the pin from a selected point on the green. For shot tracking and performance analysis, the Shot Scope V3 is excellent, and it also provides distances to hazards. Reach a new tee and the GolfBuddy Aim V12 will flash up a flyover of what lies ahead. It's also fully waterproof and shows green undulations. The Tag Heuer certainly stands out here by automatically tracking tee shots and plotting your performance off every tee in the app. It also includes a ball marker integrated into the strap. But despite not being 'new', the Garmin Approach S62 continues to offer the best array of useful functionality, notably the Virtual Caddie that recommends clubs for upcoming shots, the Pin Pointer feature and the comprehensive (if a little dated visually) hole maps.

Value

There are two standout options for value – the first being the Bushnell Ion Elite. For under £200, you get a suite of features many more expensive watches don't offer in a stylish, versatile package. But for a lower price, one can't help but feel you get a bit more from the Shot Scope V3. The insights it offers into your play, including Strokes Gained broken down by areas of the game and any ability level, provide a crystal- clear view of what you need to work on in your practice sessions.

VERDICT

Choosing your favourite will come down to how much functionality you would utilise, but all things considered, you could make a case for the Bushnell Ion Elite ticking the most boxes. Stylish, feature-packed, accurate and coming in under £200, there's an awful lot to like, regardless of your age, ability or requirements

"GOLF IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR LIFE NOW"



Nazrul Muhammad Islam, FCA, is the Managing Director and CEO of RunnerLube and Energy Limited. He along with his wife and their two young kids take so much interest in golf, that they cannot think about life without this sport.

Q&A

Mr. Nazrul, How did introduction to Golf happened in your life?

Back in 2002, MrTipu Sultan, the then member of the finance committee of this club, brought me here. We went to the range and I hit a few balls. It was very difficult but I found it very interesting and thought I should start playing this game. But it ended there. Then during COVID, I started playing at Army Golf Club along with my family. Things got interesting from there.

I started playing at Army Golf Club along with my family. Things got interesting from there.


Callaway
GOLF



Most of the time we play together, sometimes we play separately too.

Mrs. Nazrul, how wasyour reaction when he asked you to join him?

Initially I was very surprised. I didn't know if I would be able to play, but then I started enjoying the game as we came to the club with the whole family.

What do you enjoy about family golf with your kids?

Our kids enjoy it a lot. They were only three and four and half when they were introduced to golf. They like it because it's a game where you need to show a lot of good qualities, and they are learning everyday.

Golf can be played for a long time. Do you agree with this assertion?

Golf is a game which requires you to be very accurate and demonstrate highest level of patience too. It's a game where you can have a good time in a good environment. It's a game which one can continue for a long time whether he's a professional or an amateur.

In today's world when the internet and television occupy a large part of our daily life, how does golf find its place?

If you want to keep children away from the tab and the cell phone, bringing them to the golf course is the best option.

How do you two get along in golf?
Most of the time we play together, sometimes we play separately too. Now we all enjoy being at the golf course. Now this is part of our life. We can't think about our life without golf.

Mrs. Nazul, how do you plan on influencing other women to play golf?

Actually, I play with my family and I'm enjoying my time. This place is amazing. So, any woman can do the same. I would ask them to come and enjoy the game and the place.









Our kids enjoy it a lot. They were only three and four and half when they were introduced to golf.



Golf is a game that requires you to be very accurate and demonstrate the highest level of patience too.









Passionate Golfer as the name goes is a group of golfers with a high passion for golf. Some of them are very serious golfers while some play for fun.





What do you enjoy most about golf?

The game itself is something we should enjoy and can enjoy. There are 18 holes and every hole comes with a different challenge. Every shot needs to be accurate. You need to be careful about your direction and swing and so many other things. And then there is the bond that you develop with your fellow golfers over time, which is invaluable.

How many courses have you played in so far?

I played in four courses with my family. I've played in Australia and some other countries.

How about the golfing community and clubs in Dhaka such as Passionate Golf Club etc.?

Passionate Golfer as the name goes is a group of golfers with high passion about golf. Some of them are very serious golfers while some play for fun. They are really enjoying golfing in this country. They have a good plan to take golf to somewhere.

What lesson, if any, have you learned from this game?

We've learnt so many lessons. First of all, there are etiquettes that we have to follow. Dress code, attitude, pace of play, approach with other players – all these things we've learnt along the way. Then of course you develop passion and patience through this game. We have a lot of good memories also, some of which are associated with our kids. They have their schools and other extracurricular activities, yet they find time to come here. They come here and feel fresh no matter how hard it is for them at times. There are many memories which we are collecting each day.

Do you have any messages for couples who are not playing golf yet?

There are a few. There's a saying that golf is a rich man's game, but that's not true. There are clubs where membership is not that expensive. You can come with your family and spend some good time here. If you come with your wife, it will be easier to bring the kids here. I think it's a very good game where one can come with his or her spouse or with the entire family.

Golf 's "wee ice mon" DOMINATED IN HIS PRIME, winning anywhere and everywhere. But, true to a Tinseltown script, HIS SUCCESS IN SO-CAL was a THRILLER. Roll camera: Here's Ben in L.A. at his best

HOLLYWOOD HOGAN



BY MICHAEL CORCORAN

DESPITEthemany sobriquets assigned him by the press during his peak years as a player, Ben Hogan was a half inch taller than the average U.S. male at the time (five foot eight and a half inches).

He was, however, noticeably leaner than most and described variously by newspapermen as "the tiny Texan," "golf 's mighty mite," "little" and "wee." Owing to the singular intensity with which he pursued the game, he was also said to possess the "eyes and nerve of a professional gambler." One writer referred to him as "the frigid midget," and another said he was about "as soft as a hydrant." When all was done and said, Ben Hogan would set a still unrivaled standard for ball-striking excellence among golf 's all-time greats and win nine major championships between 1946 and 1953 (including eight in just 11 starts from '48 to '53). At the close of his career, Hogan had won 64 PGA Tour events—and he lit it up in the City of Angels, site of this year's U.S. Open, like no other place.

Ben Hogan arrived at what is now considered his first official PGA Tour event as a 19-year-old high school dropout. In and around Fort Worth, Texas, he'd earned a reputation as a bit of a stick. In the first week of January 1932, however, he was in the field for the Los Angeles Open, a stop on a loosely organized

Above: 75 years ago, Ben Hogan held the U.S. Open trophy for the first time. After his 1948 win at Riviera Country Club, the course became known as Hogan's Alley. Left: His first L.A. Open crown came at Hillcrest CC, in 1942—the same course he made his PGA Tour debut on a decade earlier.



Left: Hogan turned pro at age 17, around the same time this photo was taken. Below: Hogan at the L.A. Open prior to World War II, going super old-school with the smoke. Opposite: After nearly being killed when his car was hit by a bus in 1949, Hogan spent two months in the hospital. He returned to competition at the 1950 L.A. Open, where he lost in a playoff to Sam Snead. Act II of the Hogan legend had begun.

tour that was considered one of the "big money" events on the "winter circuit."It's doubtful anyone who turned out at Hillcrest Country Club in L.A. would have recognized or even heard of Hogan.

He certainly wouldn't have appeared on a path to becoming a legend.

He weighed about 130 pounds, and, before quitting school to pursue a career in golf, he wasn't even considered the best player in Fort Worth, let alone Texas. To be fair, the local competition did include his fellow looper at the nine-hole Glen Garden Country Club, Byron Nelson, along with Jack Grout—who later would become Jack Nicklaus' swing coach—and Dick Metz, who won 10 Tour events in his career, including eight before Hogan recorded even one. In fact, Hogan wasn't even considered the best amateur player in Fort Worth before he turned pro, having "received a decisive beating at the hands of Joe Ballard in the [1929] city amateur finals," according to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. To describe Hogan's professional accomplishments prior to the '32 L.A. Open as ordinary would be to overstate.



Golfdom would be turned on its end in 1930, the year 17-year-old Bantam Ben (another moniker) threw his lot in with the pros—but not by Hogan. The part of the world that cared about golf was focused on Bobby Jones' run for the Grand Slam. Hogan teed it up for the first time as a pro in February at the Texas Open in San Antonio. He opened with rounds of 78-75 and withdrew.

There is evidence Hogan may have briefly reconsidered the wisdom of trying to make a living at golf. According to the April 1,1930, edition of the Star-Telegram, "Efforts of Ben Hogan, youthful city golf star, to play in the city amateur aren't likely to meet with favor of this city's fairway scalpers. Hogan, who recently competed as a professional in the Texas Open at San Antonio, has announced he will seek to play as an amateur this year." "I didn't receive any prize money in the tournament and feel I am still an amateur," said Hogan. Such thoughts were fleeting, it seems. By June 1930, Hogan was listed by the Star-Telegram as one of "five Fort Worth pros seeking the four places allotted the southern district for the national open at Interlachen in July," along with Nelson, who would attempt to qualify as an amateur. Hogan and Nelson both failed to advance.

Up to his arrival at Hillcrest, Hogan's professional success had been local and limited to the types of barnstorming exhibition matches prevalent at the time, where a duo of world-renowned players would take on two yokels. In Hogan's case, that meant days like one in Fort Worth in November 1931, when he and Ted Longworth tackled Walter Hagen and Joe Kirkwood. (Kirkwood, an Australian, toured the world widely with both Hagen and Gene Sarazen. He was an excellent player and a big draw at exhibitions because he was golf's first trick-shot artist of any repute.) According to the Star-Telegram, "Great golf by Ben Hogan at Ridglea Country Club" carried the day against the more famous players. Hogan shot 72 and "dropped birdies on the first two holes to give the locals a lead they never relinquished. All the round Hogan drove brilliantly, and his approaches were deadly."

At Hillcrest in January 1932, however, something seemed to click for Hogan. The following year, the Star-Telegram informed



IT WAS AT RIVIERA THAT HOGAN CEMENTED HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOLF IN L.A., WINNING TWO L.A. OPENS AND ONE U.S. OPEN THERE IN 18 MONTHS.

the hometown faithful that "wee Benny Hogan" had triumphed in an 18-hole playoff for the L.A. Open at Hillcrest, overcoming Jimmy Thomson, a "broad-shouldered blond from Del Monte."

The Los Angeles Times reported that "Hogan had four birdies as his iron shots rifled down the fairways," and "the slim, ice-nerved dynamo took down $3,500 and $400 more as his 25% cut of playoff gate."

Hogan needed a birdie at the final hole to pull off the win, his first in a "big money" tournament. The hole played at 500 yards even, and Hogan said, "I figured Jimmy might reach that green in two and probably would have a birdie, so it looked like I'd better do the same." Both came up short on 2-iron second shots, but "then Hogan selected a wedge for his third shot, hit it and was immediately cut off from the green by a wave of charging humanity that fought for vantage points. The ball rolled dead for the cup, stopping just eight inches beyond."

Unable to see the outcome of the shot through the 3,500 According to the Star-Telegram's Flem R. Hall, Hogan would have won the L.A. Open's "undivided second prize if he hadn't had a bad third round. After getting a 71 and 72 on the first two tours, he ran into bad luck, collected a 79 and then finished with a fine 69. A 72 on the third round would have shoved him into something like $1,500. As it was, he received only $50. An expensive third round." The following week, at the Agua Caliente Open in Tijuana, Hogan finished T6 in one of the richest tournaments of the era (a $15,000 purse). "Hogan in Money" read the Star-Telegram headline. "Ben Hogan, young Fort Worth professional, finished among the money winners with a total of 295, which netted him $200.

He led several Texans in the tournament." The $250 he won in those back-to-back weeks was the most prize money Hogan would haul in until 1937. Whatever it was that felt right about playing in Los Angeles stuck with Hogan. He played in the L.A. Open on and off in the ensuing years, finishing T6 in 1939 at Griffith Park's Wilson Course and T10 at Los Angeles Country Club in 1940—the year Ben Hogan finally became Ben Hogan by winning his first four individual tournaments.

In 1941, Hogan took third at the L.A. Open at Riviera, with Bing Crosby and 1940 Heisman Trophy winner Tommy Harmon in his gallery. or so bodies swarming around him, Hogan said, "I thought it would be pretty close. It just about had to be. But I was glad to see it up there like that."

After the win, Hogan apologized to reporters for what he feared was faulty grammar. "You see, I used to play hooky from school to play in tournaments," he said. The writers agreed no apology was necessary.

From that point on, Hogan owned L.A. In 1946, he finished second in the L.A. Open at Riviera and won the inaugural Golden State Open at California Country Club. It was at Riviera that Hogan cemented his relationship with golf in L.A., winning two L.A. Opens and one U.S. Open there in 18 months. The third of those wins, the 1948 U.S. Open, was a record-setting eight-under performance for the national championship that went unmatched until Nicklaus tied it in 1980 and Tiger Woods finally broke it in 2000.

To round out his L.A. résumé, Hogan also won the 1948 Glendale Open and the 1949 Long Beach Open. With success, Hogan became a favorite of writers. No one mentioned how little he was anymore. Instead, they wrote things such as "his perfect teeth are set in a strong, square jaw, his eyes are clear and friendly, and, in fact, he passed several screen tests in Hollywood." The titans of Tinseltown always like a good underdog story, and the man of many monikers certainly fit the bill.

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During a recent interview, Aurupa Dutta, founder and architect of Arutaas, underlined her commitment to turning her clients' aspirations into a tangible reality through her project approach. She goes to great lengths to ensure that every client's dream is brought to life in the most creative manner conceivable. According to her, while clients may struggle with generating actual themes, art or concepts, they still possess the power of dreaming and yearning.



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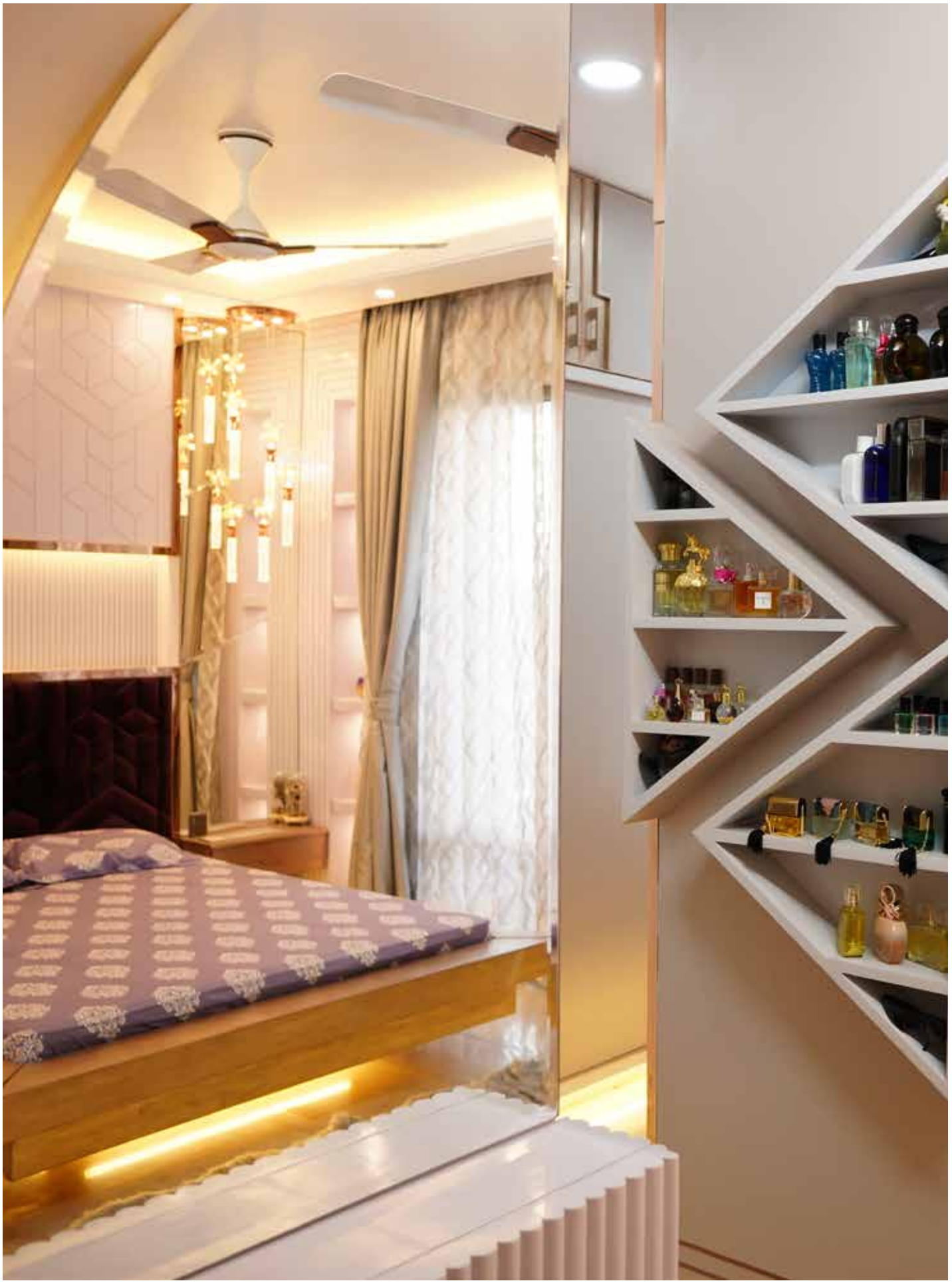



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Savar Golf Club president and area commander of Savar zone, Major General Mohammad Shahinul Haque witnessed the closing session as the chief guest and distributed prizes among the winners. Western Engineering Pvt Ltd's chairman Bashir Ahmed was present as the special guest. Apart from them, Savar Golf Club's vice presidents and members were present at the event.










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A high power delegation from Malaysian Golf Junior Association (MGJA) including its President Dr Hj. Irmohizam Bin Ibrahim and Secretary General Saiful Azwandy visited Bangladesh Golf Federation, Kurmitolla Golf Club and Bangladesh Golf Academy on May 30, 2023. The goodwill visit was focused on mutual exchange of programs for development of junior golf.

Both countries' golfing bodies identified some possible working areas like A). Mutual exchange of junior golf teams in golf tournaments., B). Exchange of training programs., C). Sending coaches from Malaysia on demand and so on.
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