



THE THONG ADJUSTER



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Page 2

“How I got the golf habit”

Page 3

Golf rule of the month

Pages 4-5

Golf Tips -- Get a grip

Pages 6-14

Chapter 12 -- “Murder on the 13th Green.”

Page 14

Now that’s what I call a golf cart!

The Putter speaks

A word from the editor

Memorial Day

As you all read this, the Memorial Day holiday will be over. Some of us Thongers played in holiday tournaments. A couple of us, Mike Fisk and I, went as far away as Myrtle Beach, S. C., for the annual Retired Military Golf Classic. Some of us stayed at home and celebrated the holiday with our families, barbecuing and lifting a long neck or three.

Either way, the best time of our golfing season is now upon us and it’s time for all of our semi-active members to polish off the clubs and start showing up at the first tee. A group as large as ours should fill four or five tee times every Saturday. Five or six would be even better! The more the merrier. After all, this is our time to share good time together.

New members

We have quite a few new members. John Hancock, Steve Schlemmer, Robert Bernsen, Bernie Goodwin, Jim Harrison and Dick Denise all joined recently. Steve Moring returned from a self-imposed hiatus, as well. Welcome to the Iron Thong!

Old members

We’ve got a few old members whom we haven’t seen much of lately. George Ramirez, Sam and Anthony Pierce and Ricky Trigilio -- where are you?

What, no Profile page?

You may have noticed that there hasn’t been a Profile Page lately in the Thong Adjuster. Why? No bios filled out, that’s why! Especially you new members, go to the homepage and fill out a bio and send me a copy, along with a photo. I’ll make you famous.

That’s all for now. Hit ‘em straight!
See ya Saturday.

Steve VanWert





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How I got the golf habit . . . er, addiction

By Frank Fitzpatrick
 Philadelphia Inquirer Columnist

My name is Frank, and I'm a golfaholic.

This is odd because I have no game. I slice more regularly than Ron Popeil. I've hit more skulls than Oscar De La Hoya.

And yet I am powerless in golf's interlocking grip.

I spend the days between rounds in painful withdrawal, craving another tee time or a pair of FootJoys. I'm in a state of constant denial, lying to my wife that the only reason I golf three times a week is because I'm writing a story on poa annua.

Anyway, I believe I've finally hit rock bottom.

Just days ago, I narrowly avoided arrest as I cruised North Philadelphia's Badlands in search of a Pro V1. Last winter, I nearly overdosed, playing 108 holes in three days. They say that when they found me, I was unconscious and muttering "flat plane from shoulder to ball."

I know exactly when this addiction was born. My father, you see, was my enabler.

When I was 14, he let me caddy for him at Cobbs Creek. When we got to the 17th hole, a secluded par-3 with an elevated tee, he allowed me to play the hole. I took out his 3-wood. That's when it happened.

If only I had done then as I have done ever since, launch a pathetic slice into the woods, I might have been spared this lifelong misery. Instead, I somehow landed the ball on the green. Worse, I two-putted for a par.

Days later, a neighborhood friend and I were teeing it up at Karakung. I don't remember much about the round other than my cholesterol-like score, which was still less than the number of balls I'd lost on the first hole alone.

No matter, soon I was feeding my habit at Paxon Hollow Golf Club two, three, four times a week. I went from a starter set to Pings to TaylorMades in the blink of an eye. I'd take money from my mother's purse and head for some seedy driving range.

Over the years, I've kicked the habit from time to time.

Once a decade or so I yield to the hopeless reality of my bogeymania and Nixonian swing and melt down the clubs. And when the kids were growing up, I was simply too busy to jump off the wagon.

But now the monkey is back.

I'm lost again in the addiction's hazards -- not to mention its ponds, woods, creeks and traps. If I don't get help soon, I might wind up in Pinehurst or, worse yet, Myrtle Beach.

So, please, if you know of any local Golfers Anonymous chapters, let me know.

I'm willing to turn to a higher power.

Like maybe an r7 driver with a 425-cc clubhead that offers exceptionally high MOI and consistently long, straight results.

Golf rule of the Month

Q Your shot hits another ball at rest. What's the ruling?

A It's not all that uncommon. Player A and Player B are out for a round. Player A has already played his shot and his ball has come to rest up ahead. Player B takes his stroke and when his ball hits the ground, it rolls right into Player A's ball. Both balls careen away.

What's the ruling?

Depends on where the balls were before the fateful shot was struck: were both balls already on the green, or were neither or just one of the balls on the green?

Scenario 1: Neither ball, or just one ball, on the green

This could mean the shot in question was a tee shot, or an approach played into a green, or any other scenario other than when both balls were on the green prior to making the stroke.

For example, your partner hits a tee shot, then you hit yours, and your ball hits your partner's ball in the fairway.

Or your partner is on the green, you hit an approach shot, and your ball hits your partner's on the green.

This is covered in Rule 18-5, Ball at Rest Moved by Another Ball. There is no penalty to either player as long as this procedure is followed: The person whose shot struck the ball at rest plays his ball as it lies; the person whose ball was moved returns the ball to its original position.

Failure to replace the ball that was moved to its original spot; or moving the ball that did the striking (rather than playing it as it lies) results in loss of hole in match play or a 2-stroke penalty in stroke play.

Scenario 2: Both balls on putting green

"Both balls on putting green" means on the putting green prior to the stroke in question.

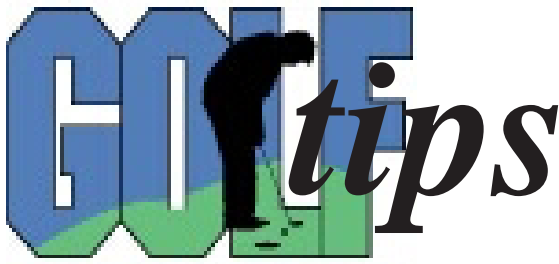
The ruling here is covered in Rule 19-5a.

From the green, Player A hits his putt, but the ball strikes the ball of Player B, who was also on the green. In match play there is no penalty. In stroke play, it's a 2-stroke penalty to the player whose ball was in motion when the balls collided.

Repeat: It's not a penalty against the player whose ball was at rest; the penalty is against the player who struck the putt.

The player whose ball was at rest replaces it to its original position; the player whose ball was in motion plays it as it lies.

Important: This applies only to balls that are holed. If you declared a lost ball and put a second ball into play, only to discover your first ball in the deep rough (or anywhere other than in the hole), the provisions of Rule 27 apply. "Once the first ball is lost according to the definition of 'lost ball' you cannot play it if you find it afterwards."



Four keys to hitting a 460cc driver

From Kevin Downey, Innovex Golf

The key to hitting the ball farther with the modern driver and golf ball (which spins much less off of a flat face than balls of the past) is high launch combined with a low spin rate. Our goal is to get enough spin to achieve lift, while minimizing (hopefully eliminating) drag.

Assuming that you have a driver with enough loft, here are four things that you can do to increase launch and decrease spin rate, thus increasing your distance off the tee:

Tee the ball higher

The old adage has always been that the top of the driver should be about halfway up the ball when it is teed up. However, with a 460cc driver, I like to see you set the ball high enough on a peg such that the top of the driver is no more than one-third of the way up the ball. Of course, this means that the standard 2 1/8-inch tee will not be long enough to accommodate.

You will need a tee at least 3 inches in length, but likely a little longer than this.

Move the ball forward in your stance

(Towards your left foot for a right-handed golfer)

The notion of playing the ball off of your left heel is no longer valid. We want to hit the ball on the upswing, thus increasing launch angle and decreasing the ball's spin rate. In order to do this, we must move the ball forward in our stance.

For some golfers, it will be enough to play the ball off of your big toe, while for others it may be necessary to move the ball all the way up so that it is positioned outside of your left foot. Experiment with different ball positions – but, whatever you do, move the ball forward in your stance!

Set up to hit the ball on the center of the face

Most golfers set their driver on the ground at address. This results in a high percentage of driver shots being hit on the heel-side of the face, especially when we tee the ball higher.

Test yourself this way: The next time you are at the range and set up to hit your driver, once in the address position stretch your arms out and move the club up to the ball's height. Notice



How to rip that 460cc driver Continued from page 4

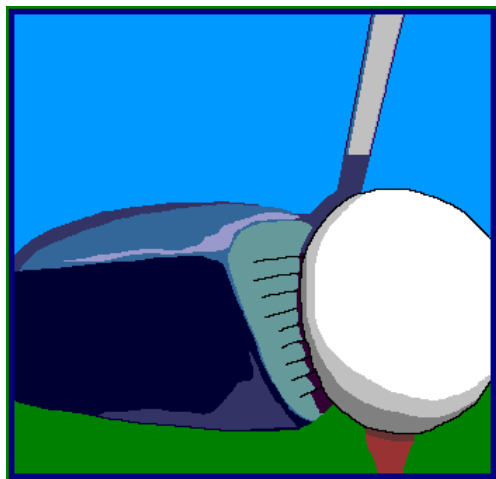
where the ball is going to contact the face of your driver? On the heel side — or possibly the hosel — of your driver.

This is a very common problem for golfers — and it's an awkward adjustment. The solution is very simple, however. Instead of setting your driver behind the ball such that the center of the face is aligned with the ball, move backwards a couple of inches (towards your back) such that the toe of your driver is aligned with the ball. Now do the test again. Stretch out your arms and pick the club up to the ball's height. Is the ball aligned with the center of the driver face? If so, put the club back down and fire! If not, keep moving back until it is.

Don't worry that once you set the driver down it doesn't align with the ball. The ball isn't on the ground - it's three inches above the ground!

Hit the ball on the upswing

The driver is now a specialty club, much like a putter. Our set-up, ball position — everything is different from any other club in the bag. You shouldn't be hitting the ball at the bottom — or apex — of the golf swing like a fairway wood. The ball should be struck past this point, on the upswing. This will lead to a higher launch angle and lower spin rate — which is how we are going to hit the ball farther than we ever have before.



About the author

Kevin Downey began his career in the golf industry as a club professional, but later turned to the equipment side. After working with Slazenger and Callaway, Downey launched Innovex Golf in 2004. He is also the author of the book, "The Art and Science of Breaking 90: A Guide to Modern Golf Course Strategy and Equipment."

A Luke Samuel Goodyear Mystery by Steve VanWert**MURDER ON THE 13TH GREEN****Chapter 12 -- Practice with Hartly**

Seven or eight hours earlier, after watching Pauly's Ford Pinto chug away, Luke headed for Griffon Lakes. It was another hot August day, so he pulled into the parking lot, left the car unlocked as always, and hurried to the VIP Lounge for a cold one. Some of the guys were there. Skipper and Rudy and, thankfully, Ellen. They all waved as he approached.

Ellen smiled. "Well, get a good night's sleep?"

"Oh crap," Luke thought, "she doesn't know about Cassy, does she?" Another stray thought banged in his cranium. Had their relationship advanced to the point he should be guilty about Cassy? Maybe so. He thought he should tell her somehow, but couldn't think of a good way to start. So he kinda chuckled, said, "Sure, don't I always?" He quickly put a buck on the counter and ordered a Mich Light. She didn't seem to be shying away, so he figured his secret was safe. They all kinda bantered about the usual small talk.

On the TV, Ben Crenshaw was giving some putting tips. "Keep the hands together on the club. Your hands should work as if they were one. Do not break your wrists on the take away ... and so on, and so on." "Shit," remarked Luke. "Ben Crenshaw can make 10 footers with a hockey stick. While standing on roller skates. During an earthquake."

As Luke was finishing his brew, he looked out the lounge window and spied Hartly on the driving range. Luke needed to talk to him, so it looked like a good time to work on his swing.

"I'm gonna go hit a few striped balls," he said to the gang. "Be back in a little while."

Luke stopped at the car, put on his spikes, grabbed his bag and headed to the range. Luckily, Hartly was the only one there. Luke dropped two tokens into the machine, gathered up the balls and took the space next to, guess who, old Hartly.

"How you doing, big red?" Luke asked.

Hartly looked over at him. And spit. Or is that "spat?" I may have to give this story to a teenager with SpellCheck.

Hartly gave Luke his normal hate look. "Listen, you little piece of a son-of-a-bitch," he started. Hartly sometimes gets his metaphors mixed up.

"I heard about you attacking Cassy," he continued. "You're just lucky she don't want to press charges, you pervert."

Luke put his hands up in the air. "Whoa, Hartly, that's not what happened at all. You know my ex better than that. You really think I attacked her?"

Hartly spit again. "I don't wanna talk about it. Just hit your goddamn balls."

He took a vicious swing with a three-wood and almost broke the ball in two. It went bouncing off to the right, the cover splitting further with every bounce.

For a second, Luke pictured his head doing the same thing. He took a deep gulp of air, leaned on his club and nonchalantly said, "So, Hartly, I hear that Cash owns all your car lots."

Hartly swung hard again, but this time missed the ball completely. He glared at Luke

in surprise. "Where did you hear that?"

"Oh, doesn't matter, I hear things. Is it true?"

The big redhead just stood there. He wasn't about to fess up right away. "What's it to ya?"

"Well," Luke replied, "it just seems to me that if Cash owns your lots, he might have some undue influence over your actions during, say, the championship match?"

"Listen, shit head," Hartly growled, "I'm the one who refused a concession, remember?"

"Yea, and I also remember Cash not looking too happy about it, either. 'Course, I'm willing to give you the benefit of the doubt, even if Inspector Devlin doesn't."

"What's Devlin got to do with it?" Hartly looked surprised. "There's no evidence against me. Shit, I didn't wanna see Bruce dead any more than you did. I wanted to beat him."

"Well," Luke said off-handedly, as he turned to tee up a practice ball, "you're probably safe from Devlin, as long as he doesn't find about the personal loan due next month."

"Shit!" Hartly yelled. "Shit! Damn! Puke! How the hell did you find out about that?"

Luke turned around again, mindful that Hartly still had a three-wood in his hand. "\$25,000, huh Hartly? Due on the first? Have you got the balloon payment, Hartly?" Luke may have sounded brave, but he unconsciously backed away from the big redhead a few steps, just in case.

Hartly's upper lip actually curled back from his teeth, like a vampire or something. He looked like a big red orangutan. Then, his shoulders slumped a little. "Not yet," he said, under his breath.

"Not yet? Will you have it on the first?"

"Maybe."

Luke laughed. "You bet on yourself again, did you, Hartly?"

"Yea, enough to pay Cash."

"Let's see, that would be \$2,500 at 10-to-

one, wouldn't it?"

"I guess."

"Where'd you get the \$2,500?"

"I'm late on the lot payment this month."

Luke looked at Hartly and found himself considering the poor, sun burnt Goliath in a slightly different light. He saw a guy seduced by Cassy's charms and Cash's money. Hartly was always gonna be an obnoxious shit, but at least he had a reason.

"Look, Hartly, Devlin don't know about the lots or the loan, as far as I know. But if he does find out, you're gonna be under even more suspicion than you already are concerning Bruce's death."

Hartly looked at Luke, a little fear in his eyes. "Shit, Luke, I didn't have nothing to do with killing Bruce."

It was time to play more cards. "You didn't know about the poison on his ball?"

Hartly shook his head. "Not until the 11th fairway, I swear. Cash came over and told me not to worry, that since I was such a fuck-up, he'd taken care of it. I had no idea until then. And even then I didn't know it was poison! I swear!"

"I believe you, Hartly," Luke said. And he actually did. "You're a lotta things, Hartly, but I don't think you're a murderer."

"Thanks, buddy," Hartly said, and patted Luke's shoulder.

"Of course, you got terrible taste in women," Luke said as he picked up his bag.

Hartly actually smiled. "Fuck you," he said.

"I may need to ask you some questions later," Luke said, and walked back to the clubhouse parking lot.

When he got back to the clubhouse, Skipper and Rudy were just teeing it up on the first tee box. "Come play 18," yelled Rudy.

"Dollar a hole, automatic press on two-down?" Luke asked.

"Give us a break," said Skipper, "there are three of us here. Let's play a round of wolf."

"Dollar a hole, two on slop, with carry-overs?" Luke asked again.

"Yea, yea," laughed Rudy, "just tee the goddamn ball up. We've already hit."

For the next four hours or so, Luke was finally able to relax. After the game, which Skipper managed to win after going wolf on a four hole carry-over and winning 32 bucks on a sandy birdie, they all sat at the lounge for a while. Ellen sat on the arm of Luke's chair, the Greater Something-or-Other Open was on TV, a cold Mich Light was in Luke's hand, and everything was almost right with the world. About four in the afternoon, Luke picked up his clubs and decided to put them back in his car.

Ellen, still sitting on the chair arm, settled down into the chair itself as Luke began walking away. At the door, he turned and flashed her an embarrassed smile, trying vainly to keep the Irregulars from noticing.

"See you in awhile?"

She smiled back, not bothering to conceal her feelings. "Try to keep me away," she said.

As he disappeared through the door, Ski-Doo wandered by and leaned over Ellen's shoulder. Conspiratorially, she whispered, "Things getting kinda serious, are they?"

Ellen laughed. "Things have been serious on my end for a long time," she said. She looked up at Ski-Doo. "You don't know how long I've loved that man."

"Well," Ski-Doo straightened up, "he's quite a catch. I know I've tried to give him a hint or two the last couple of years myself. But he hasn't been interested. I think that Cassenberg girl scared him away from women for good. At least until you showed up. Again."

Ski-Doo started to return to her post behind the bar, but turned back one last time. "Has he recognized you, yet?"

Ellen shook her head. "No, and I hope he doesn't. I don't want him to remember me that

way. As far as our Luke Samuel is concerned, I materialized out of thin air just a few days ago."

Ellen got up, reached her arms over her head and stretched. Ski-Doo whistled as her blouse rode up, showing off a tanned and flat stomach. "Don't worry," she said, "your secret is safe."

Ellen waved and headed out of the lounge and down the hallway. As she passed her father's office, she leaned in the open door and said, "Good day or bad?"

Horace looked up from his desk and waved her in. "Ellen, darling, sit down. You brighten up the day, so how could it be bad? What have you been doing today?"

Smiling, she walked in and sat down in one of the overstuffed chairs ringed Horace's big, mahogany desk. She put her hands behind her head and leaned back.

"I was just relaxing in the lounge with my true love," she said.

Horace leaned back in his chair, as well. "And how is our intrepid Mr. Goodyear today?"

Ellen sighed. "Gorgeous."

Horace watched her face, recognized the mixture of excitement and happiness there. It was getting difficult to remember how she'd been in the past.

"Well," he said, "being in love surely brings a glow to you that wasn't there before. So, after all this time, you're finally catching up to Mr. Perfect, eh?"

Ellen nodded, and smiled again.

"You've come a long way," he said.

"We've traveled it together," she said. "I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you." She returned her hands to her lap. "Seriously, Daddy, you don't know how much this means to me. Just being with you these days. I didn't know you for such a long time."

"I think you just didn't know yourself," he said. "Finally getting out on your own did you a world of good. I don't know how much I had to

do with it.”

“Oh, Daddy, you’ve been the one who encouraged me to change my life, that’s all. If it weren’t for you, I’d still be a homely, unhappy, fat ...”

Horace stopped her. “Unhappy, definitely. Fat, well, perhaps. But homely, no never. There was always a beautiful woman hiding in that desperate young girl. You just had to learn to smile for her to come out.”

They sat quietly for a moment. Then Horace said, “Are you going to tell him how long you’ve chased after him?”

Ellen laughed. “Maybe. But then I’d have to tell him everything, about the tears I’d cried, washed down with too much ice cream, about the loneliness I’ve felt, washed down with more ice cream and the distrust and self-loathing, and ...”

“Washed down with more ice cream?”

“And later swept away with much worse alternatives, including some things I haven’t even told you about, Daddy.”

Horace walked around his desk, pulled over one of the chairs next to her, sat on the edge and put his arms around her shoulders. Ellen leaned into him.

“There are some things about you I really don’t need or want to know,” he said. “But they don’t matter. You’ve managed to slay your demons, and I’m proud of you.” Ellen leaned up and kissed his cheek. “I’m just glad you’ve forgiven me for abandoning you and leaving you with that terrible woman,” he said.

Horace could only imagine how she must have felt. She was 17 years old when the marriage broke up for good, but Horace hadn’t really been there much for a couple of years prior. True, there wasn’t a lot of arguing, no real yelling or name calling, just an oppressive blanket of betrayal and injured egos. Ellen was growing into a slim, athletic teen when things started to come apart at the seams. Ellen had found respite in food and

books and solitude, gaining weight and losing friends in a self-destructive race.

When her mother finally left and moved to Atlanta, Ellen went with her and had to try to fit into a completely different society with unfamiliar places and unfriendly strangers. To be fair, Horace thought he’d still remain a part of her life, but his ex-wife kept them apart, intercepting his every letter and returning his every package. When Ellen graduated from high school, she stayed at home, convinced that the world outside was a callous, unwelcome place, without a father.

Even if the law was on his side, the reality was that he never saw Ellen again until seven years later, when she suddenly appeared at Griffin Lakes. She’d finally decided to change her life and was attending Florida State. And a long screaming conversation with her mother convinced her that her father had been making the attempt to communicate, even if she had never heard the first word.

But she was a mess. With her father’s help, she began to improve. A rigid diet, an exhaustive swimming and exercise program, and a renewed sense of self-worth slowly began to pay dividends. Horace bought her new clothes, arranged for some badly-needed dental work, and convinced her to take up golf. Even though Ellen was living at college, she stopped by to see him whenever she could, especially on holidays and during the summer. Little by little, Ellen healed, both physically and emotionally. And during one of those summers, she first laid eyes on Luke Samuel Goodyear.

It was a revelation, a defining moment in her life. And even though Luke didn’t pay any attention to her, she knew she had a goal in life. She was in love. After that day, the pounds began to fall away, and a few years later the ugly duckling had become a swan, a raven-haired cover girl of a swan, one who drew men’s eyes and interest just by walking

into a room. But it was only Luke she wanted. And now it looked like her dream was coming true. He had finally noticed her, big time.

As Horace and Ellen sat together, the quiet was broken by a knock on his open door. Horace looked up to see Inspector Devlin standing there.

"Not interrupting anything, am I?"

Horace stood up and waved Devlin in.

"Shut the door behind you, will you, Inspector? Thanks."

Devlin did as he was asked and, making a slight bow to Ellen, sat on the chair Horace just left. Horace returned to his chair behind the desk. Ellen sat up straight.

"You wanted to talk to me about something," said the inspector.

"Yes," Horace said. "I feel we need to come to an understanding about your relationship with my private investigator on this Benning case."

Devlin groaned. "Goodyear," he lamented.

After a few minutes of sincere talk that wasn't going anywhere, Ellen decided it was time to leave the men alone. "If you'll excuse me," she said, getting up and heading for the door, "I'll leave you to discuss this between yourselves. I realize my presence here may be keeping the conversation a tad more cordial, but I think that without me here, you might get something accomplished."

Meanwhile, Luke had made it to the parking lot and was putting his clubs in his truck. While he was standing by his semi-sports car, Pauly's beat-up Pinto pulled in, the horn honking loudly.

"Damn, Pauly," Luke yelled, "I'm right here."

But Pauly couldn't hear him. Even from 40 feet away, the radio blasting in Pauly's old Pinto drowned Luke out. But what the hell was he listening to? Pauly was obviously tuned to the Pensacola Classical Music station. It surprised the shit out of Luke. Pauly just isn't the type of person you'd picture lost

in the haunting variances of a Mozart violin concerto; he seemed much more likely the type to be concentrating on not losing his place during "Ninety-Nine Bottles of Beer on the Wall."

Pauly screeched to a stop, turned down the volume, and leaned out his window. "Here," he said, handing Luke a roll of undeveloped film, "here's what you wanted from Chem-Morrow Inc., as promised."

Luke took the roll and looked in Pauly's car. "I see you've charmed another vicious guard dog."

Pauly laughed. "Maynard? He's a transplanted Saturn Springs mutt. Decided he'd like it here in Summitview better, so he hitched a ride."

"What's on the film?" Luke asked.

"An invoice. For 10 ounces of Verminite delivered to Griffon Lakes Golf Course, ordered by one Pernel O'Shea, along with his usual order of acetone, in July this year."

Luke whistled. "Take the rest of the day off and buy this big hooter some dog food." He handed Pauly a 50. "Holiday bonus," he said, and dropped the roll of film back in Pauly's hand. "Get this developed for me, too, okay?"

"Thanks, chief," Pauly said, pocketing the bill and the film, "I'll get back to you later."

He drove away, spewing smoke from his exhaust, violins filling the late afternoon air. He'd probably burned half a 50 on gas for that mini-tank, but he would never had said so.

Luke returned to the clubhouse and headed down to Horace's office to make a report. He passed Ellen in the hallway, barely brushing against her as he passed. She smiled and stuck out her tongue at him. Luke tried not to chuckle, but couldn't help it.

"Road hog," Ellen whispered.

"Woman driver," he replied, watching her derriere as she headed toward the lounge. When he pushed open Horace's door, Devlin was there.

“Don’t you ever knock, Goodyear?” Devlin asked.

“Nice to see you again, too,” Luke Samuel replied. “I’ll just leave you two to talk.” He started to turn away, quickly.

Horace stood up. “No, no, wait a minute, Luke,” he said. “The good inspector and I have been discussing the Benning case, and I believe you should be a part of it.”

Luke turned again and sat down on one of Horace’s easy chairs. The room smelled of tension, with a hint of Ellen’s perfume mixed in. He looked at Devlin. Devlin looked at him. Horace looked at both of them, and shook his head.

“Luke,” he began, “I have reiterated to Inspector Devlin that Griffon Lakes Golf Course wishes you to be in its employ as an investigator on this case. I have suggested to him, as I am now suggesting to you, that the two of you should cooperate to solve this murder. What do you think?”

“What does he think?” Luke Samuel said, pointing to the sawed-off junior G-Man.

“I have agreed, although not enthusiastically,” replied Devlin.

“Okay,” Luke said, “I’ll tell you what I’ve found out, but first I want to know a couple of things about your involvement in this case.”

Devlin smiled, inscrutably. “I’ll tell you as much as I am allowed.”

“Deal,” Luke said, sliding to the front of his chair.

“What do you want to know?”

“You’re on this case because of Roland Adena’s involvement with Putts O’Shea’s gambling operation, right?”

“Very good, Mr. Goodyear,” Devlin replied, “that is true. I was sent here by Washington when we received word from an informant that Roland Adena had personally okayed a rather large bet on this match.”

“\$100,000 at 10-to-one?”

A quick blink was all that signified Devlin’s

surprise. “Very good, again. I can see that you haven’t heeded my requests to keep out of the investigation.”

“Did you expect me to?”

“I rather expected not,” he replied. “Let me continue. I was here, hopefully, to nab Adena or his henchmen when the payoff occurred, either to Mr. Adena or to Mr. Cassenberg. I was as surprised as everyone else when Mr. Benning was murdered. I believe that Mr. Adena was taken by surprise, also. It isn’t often that he underestimates anyone as much as he apparently did with Mr. Cassenberg.”

“But this wouldn’t help a drug case against Roland Adena, would it?”

Devlin shook his head, sadly. “No, but I’m afraid we just haven’t been able to prove Mr. Adena’s part in the drug trafficking in this state as of yet. He has far too many friends willing to cover for him. The same goes for his prostitution and other illegal schemes, but at least we hoped we could get him on a gaming charge. If we could only convict him and give him real jail time, we might be able to break some of the loyalty in his organization. And then close him down for good.”

“So when the murder happened, county deferred to you right away.”

“That’s right. But I haven’t been able to garner very much information. I have the feeling you have been much more successful.”

Luke nodded. “But don’t I still have a murder charge on my head? I’m very uncomfortable revealing information that may have been compiled, well, semi-legally when under such legal restraints, you understand.”

Devlin looked at Horace for a second, and then focused back on Luke. “You have never been seriously considered a suspect in this case, or in the murder of Tyler Braddock, Mr. Goodyear.” Devlin smiled to himself. “Actually, you were never charged at all. We just held you for a couple of days to keep you out of the way. I apologize.”

Luke stared. "That's illegal!"

"No, Luke, it's not," replied Horace, "just not very friendly."

"I see," Luke grumbled, "but what's the problem now? You find you can't make a charge stick here, either?"

Devlin's smile dissipated. "Not without those gambling books, which you so cleverly allowed Putts O'Shea to destroy, or at least remove from your possession."

"You got me there," Luke said. "I let that one get away."

"Without more proof regarding the murder weapon and motive, we can't get a conviction on the murder case, either."

"Damn. All right, this is what I know. Bruce was killed by Tyler Braddock directly, although planned and carried out by Putts O'Shea under the direction of Cash Cassenberg. I don't know if Cash actually wanted Bruce dead, or just underestimated the potency of the poison, but I do know that Cash and his friends wanted Bruce to lose that match. Personally, I always suspect the worse until proven wrong.

"Bruce was killed by a solution of a synthetic poison named Verminite and water used by Tyler to wash Bruce's golf ball. The solution was kept in a small blue bucket about six inches long with a foam rubber top, both of which have since disappeared. Bruce had a well-known habit of holding his golf ball in his mouth and he ingested the poison that way.

"Cash wanted Bruce to lose because he had bet \$100,000 on Hartly to win the match at 10-to-one. Cash needed \$1 million dollars to put down as a down payment on a \$10 million dollar note to purchase Summit Airport. He had proof that a major international airport will probably be built there sometime in the future, at which time his initial investment will be returned many, many times over. Am I losing anyone?"

Luke glanced at Devlin, whose mouth was

hanging open.

Luke continued. "Cash wanted Bruce dead because Bruce was the owner of the Summit Airport property and was holding out for a much larger sale, one that would include future percentages. Cash figured that he would be able to coerce Bruce's widow, who apparently doesn't know about the property, into selling at a more reasonable figure. It was a classic 'kill two birds with one stone' killing. And that's why I tend to think it was intentional.

"I stumbled into the truth at the caddieshack. I didn't know that Putts was there, apparently having snuck in sometime while Tyler and I were, uh, discussing the merits of the case. I left Tyler to turn himself in, at which time Putts killed him and tried to set me up as a patsy.

"I found the gambling books kept by Putts hidden in a false bottom in a drawer in his filing cabinet, but Putts has now hidden them away, I'm sure. I don't think he's destroyed them; I think he's keeping them as insurance against Roland Adena and Cash Cassenberg. Anyway, the poison was purchased from Chem-Morrow Pharmaceuticals, Inc., in Saturn Springs, Florida, along with Putts' usual order of acetone for cleaning clubs. I have a copy of the invoice. But that doesn't directly tie Cash into the murder, although the Chem-Morrow plant leases its building from Conandria Development Company, owned by Cash Cassenberg. Is everyone following along okay?" Luke slid back into chair, momentarily out of breath.

"Amazing," said Devlin. "Hm-m-m. Chem-Morrow Pharmaceuticals. That wouldn't be the same chemical plant that I just saw an incident report on, would it?"

Damn, Luke thought, that was quick. He held up his hands to signify that he knew nothing about it.

"Right," Devlin nodded. "I suspected as much. Do you have any proof of the airport

expansion?"

Luke smiled. "In a safe deposit box at Summitview National Bank."

"Incredible," said Devlin.

"Also, Hartly Haroldson, who could have won the match if he'd accepted Bruce's concession offer on number five tee box, is in debt to Conandria Development Company because they own all of his car lots. In addition, he owes a personal loan to Cash for \$25,000 that is due the first of next month. He doesn't have the money to pay it, but bet \$2,500 on himself in the final match, also at 10-to-one. He got the \$2,500 by not paying his lot rent this month. However, he didn't know about the poisoning until Cash told him on number 11 fairway. Even then, Cash only told him that Bruce would get too sick to play.

"Now, Hartly, as everyone knows, has been seeing Cassy Cassenberg, my ex-wife, and has been spending a lot of time at the Cassenberg house. I found an address book with Roland Adena's name and number there. Hartly may have seen or heard them speak to Roland at some time, but I don't know for sure."

"Anything else?" asked Horace.

Luke frowned. "Only if you don't ask for the source of this part. Agreed?"

Horace and Devlin nodded "yes."

"Roland Adena is Nick Adena's older brother, as you probably know. A year or so ago, when the current caddie master here at Griffon Lakes retired, Roland blackmailed Nick into hiring Putts O'Shea, who is one of Roland's men. Putts brought along Tyler Braddock, and together they set up the sports gambling book at the caddie shack. Roland backs the gambling with money derived from his drug and other illegal activities."

"Blackmail?" asked Devlin.

"That's the part I won't tell you. I promised."

Horace sat back in his chair and sighed, looking every bit as old as his years. "I sup-

pose it might have something to do with Nick and Eloise?" he asked, sadly.

It was Luke's turn to be surprised. He thought for a moment, then nodded his head in agreement. "I-I'm sorry, Horace, but it does. How long have you known?"

"Oh, for quite some time. More than a year. I just decided not to make a scene about it. Nick is really quite a fine young man. And I do care for Eloise very deeply. It would do none of us any good to make the affair public. But I see now if I had acted as a man, Bruce might still be alive."

"Horace," Luke said, "it's not your fault in any way that Bruce was murdered."

"Goodyear is right, Mr. Chamberlain," agreed Devlin, "it certainly is not your fault."

"Perhaps not," Horace wiped his eyes with his handkerchief, "but what do we do now?"

Devlin stood up and started pacing the room. "Well, Goodyear," he said, "you have discovered far more than I had imagined. You have done a fine job. Our problem now is that we can't prove enough to make a case. Either case. I am open to suggestions."

Luke sat up in the chair again. An idea that had been bouncing around in the dark recesses of his brain began to form itself into words. "Gentlemen," he began, "what's the one thing that's holding up the payment of the gambling bets?" He glanced at his apt audience of two. They waited for him to answer his own question. "There's no winner declared yet. Both sides are waiting for you to make a decision, Horace. So everything is on hold."

"Agreed."

"Let's say you declare Hartly the winner. Roland will have to pay Cash his \$1 million, but I doubt if he'll do it in any way that Inspector Devlin or the DEA will ever witness. He's more than a little skittish at this point, I'm sure."

"That's true," agreed Devlin.

"Let's say you declare that there is no

winner. Then no one will get paid. Roland will return all the money bet, or simply mark it off the logs; we'll never catch Putts or Cash, and Bruce's murder will have been for nothing."

"So what else can we do?" asked Horace. "Aren't those the only two choices?"

Luke was hoping someone would ask. "No. There's one more. Hartly conceded Bruce's last putt, remember? Since the match was technically even when Bruce died, declare that it has to be played over between Hartly and the next qualified player, the one who Bruce defeated in the semis. Me. That's what you'd do if something had happened to Bruce between matches, isn't it?"

"Yes, I suppose so," said Horace. "But that will still negate the bets, wouldn't it? No offense, Luke, but I doubt if Roland will guarantee 10-to-one odds on you over Hartly."

"Touché," Luke Samuel said. "But Roland doesn't know me from Adam. As a matter of fact, the only way he knows anything about the comparative book on players from this club is from what Putts and his brother tell him. Now, Nick doesn't know that his affair with Eloise is out in the open. He thinks he still owes me for keeping it quiet. I think I can convince him to convince Roland that I'm a 10-to-one favorite."

"But why would Putts agree?" asked Devlin.

"Because he's got money on Hartly, too. Putts will be more than glad to let Roland guarantee lopsided odds. He'll figure it's money in the bank."

"Perhaps," said Horace. "But, no offense again, Luke, but Hartly will beat you like a stepchild."

"Oh, I think I can get big Hartly to cooperate, at least enough to make it a close match."

Horace frowned, "But what happens if he does and the outcome of the match is in question, say by the 16th or 17th hole?"

"I'll answer that one," interrupted Devlin. "At match day, either Roland will attempt to kill Hartly, or Cash will attempt to kill Luke, depending on who is winning. We'll get one of them for, hopefully, attempted murder."

Horace looked stunned. He looked Luke in the eye. "Are you willing to take that kind of chance?"

"Hey," Luke shrugged, "I love a good game."

They remained in Horace's office for a while longer, defining their plans and making preparations. They decided the match would be played on Saturday the 28th, so both Cash and Roland would have some time to prepare, but not long enough to prepare successfully, they hoped. Horace called an open council meeting for Sunday afternoon, three days away.

Luke had a couple of phone calls of his own to make, so he bid adieu. "Damn," he thought to himself on the way out of Horace's office, "some people will do anything for a chance to win a tournament." Luke laughed as he hurried out, but it was a nervous laugh.

Next month: Chapter 13 -- Sunday.



Now that's what I call a golf cart!