



THE THONG ADJUSTER



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Page 1

A word from the editor

Page 2

Just 'fore' laughs

Page 3

FAQs: mulligans

Pages 4-5

Warm up to a better golf score

Pages 6-7

Top 10 golf novels

Page 8

Golf in the news; the swimming putter

The Putter speaks

A word from the editor

Happy Halloween!

As Tiger and Frowning Golf Ball (both are Halloween masks) look down from the top of this page, we welcome October and the fall and winter season for the ITG. Temperatures are beginning to go down a little, some precipitation may drop on our noggins now and then, and generally it's one of the best times in the year to play GOLF!

Some reminders

Dues for the second half of the year are due now. It's only \$20 and that's cheap, especially considering what you get for your money. Paying your dues is the first step to make you eligible to play in our next Iron Thong Golf Tournament, which will be sometime in March 2009. Get your money in to Mike Linares, our Treasurer, or any other officer of the club.

Bios, anyone?

Also, we haven't had any inputs for bios from anyone in a while. Take a look at the Bios section of our webpage and send me your information -- and have some fun with it! You'll not only get your ugly mug (I mean, pretty face) on the webpage, you'll also find yourself honored in the Thong Adjuster. Hurry up and grab your 15 minutes of fame! Send your bio information to me at stevevanwert@hughes.net.

That's all for now --see you on the course!
Steve





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

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

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Just 'fore' laughs



“When do you think this oversize craze will end?”



*“Okay, fine!
You can build
a putting
green in the
back yard.”*



FAQ

Frequently Asked Questions about Golf

How did the word “Mulligan” acquire its golf meaning?

“Mulligan,” in its golf sense, is a relatively new word, but was in common use on golf courses by at least the 1940s. And there are many, many stories about the birth of the golf term “mulligan” ... and it’s quite possible that none of them are true.

Because nobody really knows how mulligan acquired its golf meaning (a mulligan, of course, is a “do-over” - hit a bad shot, take a mulligan and try again). All we have are those stories. And we’ll tell a few of them here.

The USGA Museum offers several possible explanations. In one, a fellow by the name of David Mulligan frequented St. Lambert Country Club in Montreal, Quebec, during the 1920s. Mulligan let it rip off the tee one day, wasn’t happy with the results, re-teeed, and hit again. According to the story, he called it a “correction shot,” but his partners thought a better name was needed and dubbed it a “mulligan.”

Mulligan was a prominent businessman - owning multiple hotels - the term was more likely to catch on. But that’s only if you believe this version. Which, alas, does not have any hard evidence to support it. (The USGA Web Site actually provides two other alternate versions of the David Mulligan story - the origins of “mulligan” are so mysterious that the same story winds up with three different versions!)

Another story cited by the USGA is of a John “Buddy” Mulligan, known for replaying poor shots at Essex Fells Country Clubs in N.J.

Another interesting theory is related by the Web site, StraightDope.com. Responding to a question about the origins of “mulligan” (a common Irish name and, remember, the Northeastern U.S. was heavily Irish in the early part of the 20th Century), StraightDope.com replied, “Another origin theory ties to the period when Irish-Americans were joining fancy country clubs and were derided as incompetent golfers. That would make the term basically an ethnic slur that caught on, like ‘Indian summer’ or ‘Dutch treat.’”

The “Dictionary of Word and Phrase Origins” offers a more prosaic explanation. It postulates the word derives from saloons that, back in the day, would place a free bottle of booze on the bar for customers to dip into. That free bottle was called, according to the book, a Mulligan. The term was adapted to the golf course to denote a “freebie” to be used by golfers.



Warm up to a better golf score

From Michael Lamanna

Proper warmup is essential for peak performance in any sport. If you attend any professional sporting event you always see athletes going through a pre-game warmup, and pro golfers are no different. By the time tour professionals step to the first tee, they are fully prepared to make their best swings from the opening tee shot.

Most amateurs, however, get “warmed up” by dashing from their cars to the pro shop to check in, then running to the first tee, all within five minutes or so. Usually this is followed by unsteady play for the first five holes and ends up with another disappointing round. In my opinion, with this style of warmup, golfers are making bogies before they ever step on the course. To avoid this syndrome I recommend the following routine:

- Get to the course early. You need enough time to take care of your business in the golf shop, use the restroom, change your shoes, etc. It is important that you do not feel rushed, so allow time to complete this entire warmup period at a leisurely pace. Remember, your warmup routine sets the tempo for the day, so move slowly and relax. I recommend that you arrive at the course a minimum of one hour before your tee time.

- Begin warming up on the putting green. Putting is 43-percent of golf and the putting stroke is the slowest and smoothest of all strokes in golf. By spending time warming up on the green first, you will not only be prepared for the speed of the greens but you will also be starting the day with smooth, deliberate tempo. It makes no sense to visit the range first and get stretched out and limbered up for the opening drive, then stand for 15 minutes nearly motionless on the putting green.

Spend the first five minutes putting to a tee or a coin from twenty, thirty and forty feet and from a variety of angles. Watch the ball and pay attention to how much the ball rolls. Speed control is critical in putting and time spent judging pace will pay off on the course. Many students often complain that the greens on the course are not the same as the practice greens. The only difference between the two is the pressure to perform. The practice green is cut at the same height with the same mower and is usually constructed in the same manner as the greens on the course. The putts you roll on the course count and the pressure to perform makes the greens seem different.

You should then spend another five minutes or so rolling putts to a tee or coin from ten feet in to three feet. Do not putt at the cup. You never want to see the ball miss the hole, so just use a tee or coin. Also, if you roll putts at a small target like a tee or coin, the hole will seem huge and, therefore, your confidence level will be high. Confidence is vital to good putting.



A step-by-step guide to preparing for your round

Finally, spend a few minutes hitting 25 six-inch putts that run straight up hill. You will make all 25 in a row and this will set you up with the perfect image: the ball rolling in the hole every time.

- Spend 10 minutes hitting chips around the green with a tee as a target. To determine how much the ball will roll you must test the firmness of the greens. On hard greens the ball tends to roll more than on soft greens. Also, different types of rough make the ball react differently when the ball hits the green. Spending time around the green will give you some ideas that will help you choose the best greenside shots during the round, and where to land the ball on the putting surface.

Begin your full swing warmup with stretching. Stretching can improve your range of motion by up to 17-percent. It also helps you avoid injury and it helps relieve chronic joint pain. Dr. Frank Jobe outlines the best pre-round stretching program in "Exercise Guide to Better Golf." This portion of your warmup should take approximately 15 minutes.

- Walk slowly to the practice tee and begin your full swing warmup with short wedge shots. You should use a short tee for all your shots on the range. This will help you contact the ball crisply, which will breed confidence. Beginning with wedge shots also helps you start your routine with smooth tempo and rhythm.

After hitting 10 wedges or so, begin working from your short irons up to the long irons and woods. Make each swing rhythmic and swing with complete balance control. Your last few full swings should be with the club you intend to use on the first tee, usually a 3- or 5-wood. Save the last five balls for some smooth, short wedge shots, or make full, slow-motion swings that only go 50 to 100 yards with your driver (the Fred Couples Drill). This will help you reinforce the controlled rhythm and balance that you will use on the course.

- Time your routine so that at its completion, you can stroll to the first tee just in time for your group's assigned time. You never want to stand around for more than a few minutes after warmup. If there is a delay, stand to the side of the tee and make slow swings and stretch to stay loose.

Remember: If you fail to warm up properly you are setting yourself up to fail when you play. Take the time to warm up for peak performance and better scores.

Michael Lamanna is Director of Instruction at The Academy at La Cantera, part of the Westin La Cantera Resort (home of the PGA Texas Open) in San Antonio, Tex. Lamanna was previously Director of Schools at PGA Tour Academy, part of World Golf Village, in St. Augustine, Fla.

Top **10** golf novels

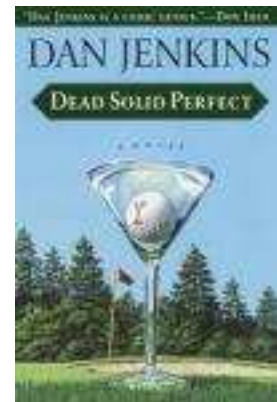
There have been many great works of fiction written about golf over the years, probably more than most people realize. Our own personal tastes run more to the irreverent than the reverent (explaining why, for example, "The Legend of Bagger Vance" doesn't make our list), and there is a thriving sub-genre of golf mysteries out there. Here are a few selections of what we believe are the best golf novels.

1. "The Greatest Player Who Never Lived: A Golf Story"

J. Michael Veron's book tells the tale of a mysterious golf phenom from the 1930s who survives a murder rap with the help of Bobby Jones, and plays a series of secret matches against the best golfers of the time. Amazon.com's review of the book states: "The novel is filled with lots of good golf, and with good writing about golf's enigmatic hold on those captivated by the game. But Veron, a Harvard-educated lawyer, aims beyond golf here - and holes it."

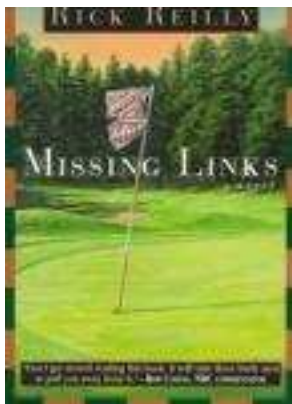
2. "Dead Solid Perfect"

The most famous novel ever written about golf, this Dan Jenkins romp owes part of its fame to the made-for-HBO movie that starred Randy Quaid. Newsweek wrote in its review of the book, "This is vintage Jenkins - profane, outrageous, and sharp-eyed in its parody of the overblown world of big-time golf. It is also distinguished by a climactic golf match that may be the funniest scene he's ever written."



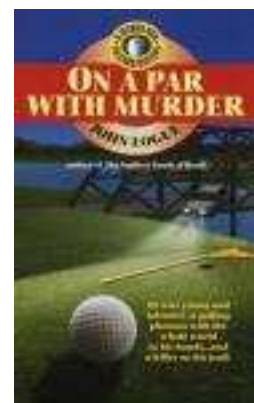
3. "Missing Links"

Rick Reilly is a well-known sports journalist through his longtime work with "Sports Illustrated." He's also penned some terrific nonfiction books about golf. This is his first golf novel and it pokes fun at the dream of recreational golfers everywhere to join the snooty country club. In this case, it's the denizens of Ponkoquogue Municipal Golf Links and Deli who want to move up to the Mayflower Club.



4. "On a Par with Murder"

Author John Logue has written a series of mystery novels in golf settings known as the Morris and Sullivan Series. This is the fifth book in that series, and it's set at Shinnecock Hills. No, it doesn't involve the mystery of the greens conditions at the 2004 U.S. Open. It's a murder mystery that incorporates plenty of golf history and trivia.



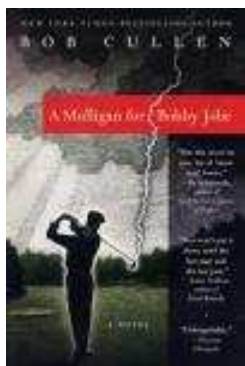


5. "The Green"

Author Troon McAllister has written a bundle of golf novels recently, and "The Green" is the one that started it all. It's something like the "Rocky" of golf: an unknown golf hustler winds up playing on the U.S. Ryder Cup team.

6. "Fast Greens"

This novel was self-published in the mid-1990s and garnered such great reviews that it was picked up by a major publisher and even optioned for a movie. It's a coming-of-age story set against the backdrop of an ultra-important West Texas golf match.

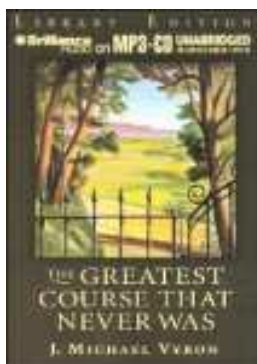
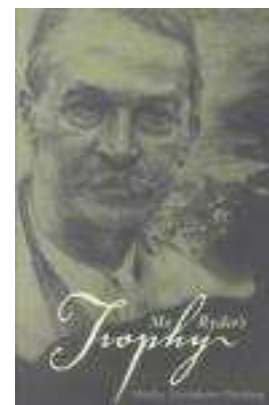


7. "A Mulligan for Bobby Jobe: A Novel"

"Publishers Weekly" wrote about author Robert Cullen's book: "Few sports inspire more preposterous fictional premises than golf, and the one that drives Cullen's first golf novel is a real beauty." A beauty, indeed. The story involves a pro golfer who is struck blind, his beautiful rehab therapist, and their collaboration on his unlikely comeback.

8. "Mr. Ryder's Trophy"

This book is a bit more contemplative than most on this list. The author is Shirley Dusingberre Durham, and one of her novel's main characters is the ghost of Samuel Ryder, the man whose name graces the Ryder Cup. The book is a creative rumination on sportsmanship and the true meaning of competitions such as the Ryder Cup.



9. "The Greatest Course that Never Was"

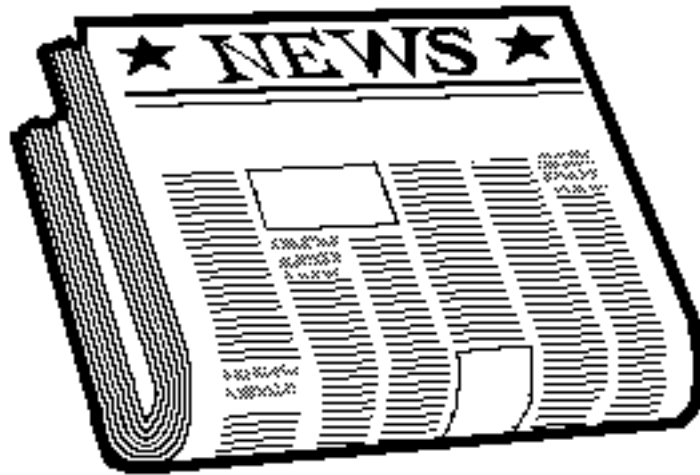
This is J. Michael Veron's follow-up to "The Greatest Player Who Never Lived," the No. 1 selection on our list. One of the main characters returns, lawyer Charley Hunter (who works in Bobby Jones' old law firm), and this time he gets involved in solving a mystery whose tale is told to him by an old caddie from Augusta National named Moonlight McIntyre.

10. "The Foursome"

Another entry from Troon McAllister, "The Foursome" is a satire of a high-stakes, high-altitude foursome whose escalating gambling habit threatens their friendships.



Golf in the



Forget 'fore'; Nevada golfer yells 'fire'

RENO, Nevada (AP) — A golfer's attempt to get out of the rough and back on the fairway started a grass fire in Reno, Nevada, that burned about 20 acres near a golf course, officials said.

The golfer had knocked his ball into dry grass beyond the course on Monday afternoon, officials said. When he tried to play back to the fairway, his club struck something that created a spark.

"He was totally honest about it," said Reno Battalion Chief Curtis Johnson.

About 50 firefighters responded to the blaze as it spread through tinder-dry grass, and engine trucks were brought in to protect nearby homes.

No buildings were damaged and no one was injured, officials said.

