



Hough's It?

Happy happy, and I hope you all had a great festive season and holiday, or at least found a little time to get in a few extra rounds of golf whilst Jo'burg was quiet, and I can only hope that playing more rounds is in your plans for the coming year.

We had a busy month at Houghton, with just over 3500 rounds being played, what with the sunrise 9-hole option and the reciprocal arrangements between ourselves and most of our neighbours, and with our track in superb condition, we found quite a few visitors booking repeat rounds after their initial one at Houghton.

Updates from the golfing world

So, while a lot of you were away, there's been quite a bit happening in the golfing world, so I'd like to get you caught up on some things:

1. **Our annual hollow-tining and sanding of the greens** started on Wed 2nd of Jan, and already by this past weekend, the greens were showing signs of a faster than usual recovery, so we hope to be almost back to normal this weekend, if not, then definitely by next week.

2. Although the last quarter of 2018 saw us getting only about 65% of rain compared to the same period the previous year, our course was pristine, enabling us to do away with placing, although **lift, clean and replace** soon followed the really good rains. We then started getting rain from Sunday the 29th of December, and the fairways got remarkably softer. January's rainfall is already almost double of that of last January's numbers though, so things are looking up for the remainder of the season. Stuart also managed the course unbelievably well during the 2 heatwaves: the first one over Christmas and Boxing Day, and the other one which we're in right now!



This tree went down across the access road in Monday afternoon's storm

3. To repair damage to the lining of the dam on the 7th hole, **the water levels were taken down to expose the area necessary to fix**, and at the moment, the water is pretty low. Most of the fish in the dam were relocated, and we're hoping to get the lining sorted out quickly so that we can re-fill the dam ASAP.

4. **The rules changed!** Now you can putt with the flagstick in, as Bryson DeChambeau and many others were doing in Hawaii, using the pin as a backstop, and you must drop the ball now from knee height. I saw that quite a few Tour Pros said this new dropping action was weird and ridiculous, but I'll tell you what was really crazy: it was the way we used to drop the ball quite a few years ago, when we had to face the hole and drop the ball over our shoulders! So if you put things into perspective, to me, it's much better than before, and the lower drop height means that the ball shouldn't roll too far away, and not waste more time when re-dropping, hence one of the other changes where the ball must land, and stay, in the relief area.

Also remember, that if the ball lands in the relief area, and then touches your shoe, there is no penalty, and you can carry on and play the ball as it lies. **One of the major themes in the new rules now is 'accidental'**, and that won't cost you anymore. In Hawaii I did see that one of the Tour Pros accidentally kicked his ball whilst searching for it in the rough: 2 weeks ago, that would've been penalised, now no more. BTW, I heard Rory refers, maybe jokingly, to the fact that Tony Finau – who's 6 foot plenty – would be dropping the ball from way higher than Brian Harman – who's 5 foot nothing, and who'd almost be placing it - but that's a proper exaggeration from Rory. I mean, how much higher can Finau's knees be than Harman's?

5. **Padraig Harrington** has been announced as the **European Ryder Cup Captain** for next year's biennial showdown at Whistling Straits. It's expected that Steve Stricker will be his counterpart.

6. Talking of team matches, there's quite a strange situation building up around **The Presidents Cup**, where **Tiger was announced as the US Captain**. He currently sits in 21st position in the US team rankings, and, if he continues playing in the same way as he finished last year, it's pretty certain he'll make the team as a player. So, what then? BTW, Ernie will Captain the International team in Melbin.

7. Some important dates and things to look out for **this year**:

- **The Houghton Hunt:** already running.
- **The Race To Simola:** starts earlier in 2019 with The Players (Mar 16) and ends earlier with The Open (July 20). Houghton are defending **The Bear** this year, and the date for Simola – still to be confirmed - will also be earlier this year, probably around the end of October. And according to the guys from Simola, this year's Jack Nicklaus Champion of Champions will be the best ever!
- **Club Champs: Ladies and Men's C Div** – Sat 23 & Sun 24 Feb.
- **Club Champs: Men's A & B Div** – Sat 2 & Sun 3 March.
- Can Tiger win a Major?
- **The Players:** Mar 14-17 Sawgrass.
- **The Masters:** April 11-14 Augusta.
- **The PGA Champs:** May 16-19 Bethpage Black.
- **The US Open:** June 13-16 Pebble Beach.
- **The Open Championships:** July 18-21 Royal Portrush.
- Look out for Xander Schauffele in 2019!
- Ernie turns 50 in October! Will he tee it up on the Champions Tour?
- **Presidents Cup:** Dec 13-15 Royal Melbourne.
- Major product releases coming up from Callaway soon, and also from Titleist and Srixon.

8. The PGA Tour is back for the West Coast swing in La Quinta, California for the **Desert Classic, with Phil, Justin Rose** (and his new Honma clubs) **and Jon Rahm**, some of the big names in attendance.

The European Tour starts off 3 weeks in the Gulf in Abu Dhabi, with double defending champion, **Tommy Fleetwood**, looking for a 'threepeat' of the HSBC event, but he'll have to keep an eye on three form horses in World #2 **Brooks Koepka**, World #3 **Dustin Johnson**, and rising Euro star **Matt Wallace**.

The 30th edition of the Omega Desert Classic is in Dubai next week, with a brand new event in Saudi Arabia completing the trio of events in the Middle East.

9. Follow [this link](#) for the Euro Tour version of the anonymous Tour Pro survey, what they've done on the PGA Tour side of the pond a few times before.

Wanna play golf with me next Thursday? Gimme a call.

That's about all for this week.

Hope you have a good one.

Kappy

Revealing the lie

It does impact accuracy

Test after test conducted by golf magazines, club fitters, and even those trying to "bust" myths, substantiates the fact that you'll hit more accurate approach shots if your lie angle is a perfect match to your golf swing.



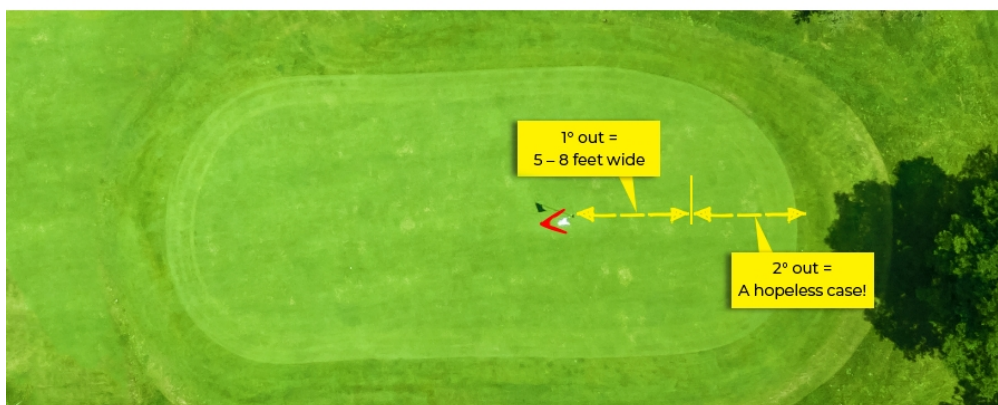
Irons toe down

Strike the ball with the toe slightly down and your ball will go right of the target (right-handers).

Iron heel down

Strike the ball with heel down and your ball will travel left of the target (right-handers).

The mechanics of this are obvious really. Make contact with the turf with the toe of the club and the club face will open. Make contact with the heel and the face closes. It's how imperceptible it feels to most of us, and how large the impact is, that surprises everyone.





Are your clubs telling a lie?

Do you think you've hit a solid shot but missed on one side? Is it your setup; your swing path and face angle; or your lie angle? You'd be blown away to discover how many golfers play with a lie angle that makes the game harder. Make it easier to hit better golf shots.

[Get fitted >](#)

The best for you

An improvement changing your game

If you want to go from experiencing an average golf game to a better golf game, where you take more frustration-free walks down fairways and then step with an excited bounce towards a green full of opportunity after a sweet approach shot:



Then often a small change from steering the golf ball to releasing

When there's a small change, from missing the golf ball to releasing
the clubhead through the golf ball, results in:



*Certainly extra distance.
More than you might
imagine. A surprise
to everyone
you play with.*

*Definitely straighter tee
shots and approach
shots. More fairways
from the tee. More
greens on approach.*

*More solid, more
consistent ball striking.
More satisfaction at
the end of every round.*

*Forget winning. Forget
trophies. Hitting better
golf shots makes the
whole world a better,
happier place.
Golf should be the
therapy for life!*

Get a better experience

What would cause you to smile more often on the golf course? What would give you cause for celebration?
If "greater consistency" of ball striking will help deliver a smile or celebration,

[Contact us >](#)

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