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Saturday, July 12, 2025

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Hough's It

## Tour News



*Hottest golfer on the planet right now: Patrick Cantlay, with girlfriend Nikki*

**Patrick Cantlay's** play this season, especially his wins in the last two weeks at the BMW and Tour Champs, plus of course the \$15m Fedex Cup 'bonus',

have some calling him the Ice Man or Patty Ice for his steely and unwavering play under pressure in both events.

He also held off possibly/probably two of the best golfers in the world in those 2 consecutive weeks. His 6i to 5m into the ultimate green on Sunday had all the hallmarks of bravery under pressure, and he pulled it off straight after Rahm had nearly hit the flagstick with his 5i approach.

He's now had 6 wins on the PGA Tour, including 4 this season, of which 3 have been in the last 4 months, and the first one in this stretch was Jack's Memorial event, but where Jon Rahm was (almost) lapping the field by 6 shots and then had to withdraw after the 3rd round as he'd tested positive for Covid.

Cantlay has had lots to deal with off the course in the last few years, including serious back issues (2013-14) and the death of his best friend and caddy Chris Roth in 2016, but he's persevered and worked very hard, and he's back to the promise he'd shown when ranked #1 amateur in the world from 2011 to 2012, a position he held for a then record of 54 consecutive weeks. It was Jon Rahm who then overtook him and set a new amateur #1 record.

Money aside, the 2 golfers vying for Player of the Year honours will be the very same Rahm and Cantlay – to be announced later this week – so consider this, amongst many other stats:

- Since 1980 on the PGA Tour, only 4 players have played 22 events or less and had 15 or more Top 10 finishes: Tom Watson (1980), Tiger (1999 & 2000), DJ (2016) and Jon Rahm (2021).
- Rahm in strokes gained (SG) stats this season: Scoring average – 1st (69.3), SG total – 1st, SG tee to green – 1st, Top 10's – 1st, birdie average – T1st.
- 2021 Major performances: Rahm: Masters – T5th, PGA – T8th, US Open – Won, Open Champs – T3rd.
- 2021 Major performances: Cantlay: Masters – MC, PGA – T23rd, US Open – T15th, Open Champs – MC.
- Cantlay's 4 wins this season have all seen him beating top players down the stretch: Rahm and JT at the ZOZO, Morikawa at The Memorial, and then BDC and Rahm in the last 2 weeks at the BMW and the Tour Champs.

It's going to be a close call, but I have the Spaniard for his Major win and his

close contention in the others. BDC and Collin Morikawa might also feature in the discussion.

And SA's Garrick Higgo might have a chance in the rookie of the year honours against Will Zalatoris.

## Ryder Cup

Whilst Pádraig Harrington only finalises his last 3 spots after this week's Euro Tour flagship event at Wentworth in the BMW PGA Championships, US Captain Steve Stricker announced his 6 choices yesterday.

Whereas it was looking like the next 6 players on the list (Finau, Schauffele, Spieth, English, Reed & Berger) – after the first 6 who were automatic – would be in line for selection, Stricker has bounced Patrick Reed, who was 11th on the list, off the list, and selected Scottie Sheffler (who was 14th).

Speculation will be rife as to Reed's (dis)ability to be matched with perspective partners because of his general attitude, but the fact remains that he was known as Captain America because of his very good record in matchplay. But the Yanks certainly haven't had anything to be proud of in recent Ryder Cup history, and there's also the fact that Reed was in hospital with double pneumonia until just before the start of last week's Tour Champs, so...go figure.

It looks like a very powerful line-up to me, but with plenty of the Euros featuring prominently lately in the big events, I'm hoping for tight, close and unbelievably pressurised and exciting matches at Whistling Straits.



*Steve Stricker's Team USA*

## Euro Tour

And speaking of the BMW PGA Champs starting at Wentworth today, there'll be a strong SA contingent in Grace, Burmester, Stone, Coetzee, Aiken, Lombard, Bezuidenhout, Harding, Nienaber, Higgo, Van Tonder, Walters & Porteous.

## PGA Tour Qualifying Status

Christiaan Bezuidenhout and Dawie van der Walt both qualified for their PGA Tour cards for next season through their finishes on the Korn Ferry Tour money list and its finals, so now there'll be two more SA golfers who'll be teeing it up more regularly in the States in the new season, which starts already next week in California.

## Houghton Course News

The greens are progressing well after their hollow-tining and sanding last week and should be getting close to normal by later next week. They're now getting cut daily at 3mm, and watered all the time. The 12th green is also quietly going about its growing in, and we're hoping for more warmer weather to help the whole process.

The bunker programme continues at full steam ahead and should be completed by the end of the month. I must say that although I haven't managed to play in quite a while – need to get my priorities sorted out, eh? – looking out from the shop windows and from the veranda, the new edges to the bunkers look so much easier on the eye than ever before.

The fairways and tees are still being watered daily and I still think that the course is greener now at this time of the year than in previous seasons. The bottom line is that we're about 3 weeks away from a pristine golf course, and back to normal golfing business. Maybe that will persuade me to get out on the links!

That's about all for this week. Hope you have a good one.

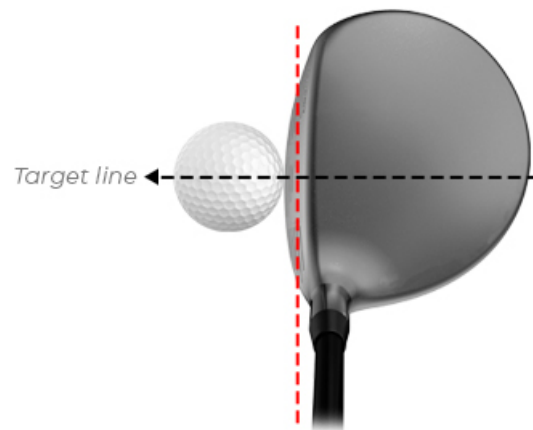
**Kappy**

*No more slice*  
**Not 'right' from the off?**





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## No more slice

Finding the fairway off the tee makes the rest of the hole so much more enjoyable. If losing the ball to the trees or rough because a slice or fade ruins too many of your holes, then let's change that right now.

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**Here's a great exercise**



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rotation of most of our  
golfers, adding  
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speed and distance."*



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