

Talk by Peter Teravainen at the reunion, June 16 and 17, 2001, of the men's golf teams coached by David Paterson

Golf can be a fun game, but if you are going to play it professionally for more than two decades you better have a sense of humor. I posed a question to the foreign Pro's on the Japanese Tour last month and they gave me a lot of help in solving it. I asked, "Which American Professional Golfers have wins on the European, Australian, Asian, Japanese Tours and a Major title?" With all this brain power working on a useless bit of trivia we came up with a player who started his career outside the US and was able to win on these four tours and later a major. Payne Stewart accomplished this feat. I offered myself as another player who had achieved wins on four different tours and a major. We all had a good laugh but everyone on the Japanese Tour considers the Japan Open "The" Japanese Major to win. When you are a player, a ten year exemption gets your attention.

In fact, there is one more player who achieved these wins and he attended Stanford. No, it is not Tiger Woods. I might be wrong, but I'm going to suggest that the cheeseburgers aren't to Tiger's liking in Japan. It was rumored that McDonald's set up a special kitchen for Tiger at the Casio Tournament because there weren't any McDonald's outlets in the area. It didn't help; he finished fifteenth.

Tom Watson won in Japan, Hong Kong, Australia and the Open an amazing five times. In case you are confused, "The Open" is played in Scotland or England, not Oklahoma. In 1980, if there was a world ranking in place, Watson would have been number one. Maybe Tom was showing the arrogance of being the best player in the world or maybe he could see the future when he was paired with a tour rookie in the last round of the 1980 Canadian Open. When the two players introduced themselves on the first tee, Tom sniffed to the rookie, "What Tour do you play on?"

I had never left North America and didn't even have a passport, how could Tom see the future and realize I would leave the U.S. and play on seven different tours around the world? In fact I was a member of five different tours when we played together in Australia many years later. Unfortunately Tom didn't ask me that question again. I was ready to whip out all five tour cards and tell him to take his pick.

1980 was my first full year as a golf professional, and I was on the US PGA Tour but I must say I wasn't ready. One person who deserves a medal was my Tuesday practice round partner, Mike Donald. We lost every single Tuesday but he didn't give up on me. He must have been a little bit relieved I lost my card so he could find a new partner for the practice round money games. In 1981 Mike was rewarded for his patience. His new partner was a rookie by the name of Fred Couples. I caddied for Mike the first two months of 1981 and our first week we finished seventh in Tuscon. That still is my best finish on the US Tour. The start of my international career resulted from a conversation at the score board in the 1981 US Tour School. I missed by one shot and there was no Nike or Buy.com Tour back then. One of the Pro's told me that the European Tour was giving out playing status to the top 15 players who missed out

at the US Tour School.

I got my first passport and nearly got crushed by a huge lorry my first day in England. Now I have more trouble driving on the right side of the road back here in the US. The last 19 years driving in the UK, Australia or Singapore has made me more comfortable on the left side of the road.

After surviving my first day in England, it was off for the first European Tournament the next day in North Africa, the country of Tunisia. The European Tour is truly a global tour. It has tournaments in Asia, Australia, Africa, Middle East and South America. I have to laugh when US Tour players complain it is too much trouble to play outside North America. I remember one player withdrawing from The Open because he couldn't get a seat in first class for the flight to Scotland. My only wish was that there would be ten or more players like him doing the pampered act every year so that there would be more qualifying spots for the people who really wanted to play.

The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, the organizers of The Open, made a horrible mistake this year. Because the middle and lower level US Tour players feel it is not worth the hassle to fly to the UK for qualifying, all they have to do this year is make the tough journey to Chicago to qualify for the Open. I am happy Brad Faxon has spoken out against this. He was one player who wasn't afraid to attempt qualifying in the UK. This will be the first time in 20 years that I won't attempt to qualify. It is estimated that the players who actually journey to the UK will be playing for six spots at each qualifying site, down from 16 spots when I first tried. Ok, no more whining, let's get back to Tunisia.

I learned a lot at Yale, but now I would be starting my advanced degree in Economics. My strongest memory of the week in Tunisia was a waiter at the hotel restaurant asking me if I was a Capitalist. Having a total of \$3,000 of capital didn't stop me from stating that, "Of course I am a Capitalist." Luckily, I didn't get food poisoning that week.

The next three tournaments were in Madrid, Sardinia and Paris. And all roads went through Rome. Keeping expenses down was a major consideration for nearly all the players in the 1980s. The tournament purses were very small. The tour travel agent organized a cheap air ticket on Alitalia so we wasted a lot of time making connections in Rome. On one of the overnight layovers in Rome my roommate was the eccentric, Mac O'Grady. That night he spent hours telling me swing theories from the book "The Golfing Machine." The next day I asked the Travel Agent not to assign us as roommates anymore. Maybe that was a mistake, when Mac made it on the US Tour the other players voted his swing as the best. In the 1990s Mac became a consultant to some of the top players in the game.

Not only did all the players have roommates but we would also have to change to a new roommate on Saturday if our original roommate missed the cut and had to rush to the next tournament to get ready for Monday Qualifying. On one of those Saturday switches I ended up with Tour funnyman David Feherty. He was a very good player but I think he has turned out to be an even better TV announcer and writer.

My roommate in Sardinia and much of my first year on the European Tour was able to

give me an insight into America Civil Rights in the 1960s and how it related to professional golf. The US PGA didn't rescind the "Caucasian only" rule until 1961. My roommate, Rafe Botts, was one of a handful of black professionals who were finally able to play full time on the US Tour in the 1960s. But it still wasn't easy or completely fair. Now we live in a different world. The Supreme Court steps in and changes rules fundamental to running a golf tournament. Where was the Supreme Court 40 years ago when they were truly needed to help make the PGA Tour a fair workplace?

The European Tour was used to run a preseason Tour in Africa called the "Safari Tour." In 1983 I played on this tour in Nigeria, Ivory Coast, Kenya and Zambia. Russell Fisher, a pro from a wealthy background wanted to room with me on this tour. I agreed but I didn't learn why he chose me until later. He spent money very freely the previous year and his family paid all the bills. In the off season, Russell tried to earn some money of his own because his family was cutting back on supporting his golf career. Somehow he bought a lot of shares in the stock market with hardly any money. Unfortunately the share price collapsed and he couldn't pay all the stockbrokers and banks who wanted their money. When a warrant was put out for his arrest he decided it might be a good idea to play the Safari Tour. He figured with me as his roommate he could learn how to travel cheaply. The benefit for me was having Russell as my practice round partner. I finally started to win some money on Tuesdays. Russell would offer putting advice to our opponents on the way to the second tee. Amazingly nobody ever putted well against us.

US Tour player, Jim Thorpe, was playing in the Nigerian Open that year. Nigeria was probably one of the toughest places I have ever played golf. I didn't feel comfortable and the putting surface, a mixture of sand and oil, gave me problems. Both Jim and I decided that we wouldn't be going back to Nigeria.

I had played with Jim's brother Chuck Thorpe, on the minitours in Florida. When Chuck heard I was from Yale he suggested that we work together. He said that with his brains and my bankroll we would form a strong partnership. When I told Chuck the extent of my bankroll, he withdrew the offer. That is still the only business opportunity I ever received because of my Yale connection.

Later that year in Europe I became friends with Kyi Hla Han, a player from Burma, a country that later became known as Myanmar. The Burmese are some of the friendliest people in the world. Kyi Hla invited me to dinner with the Burmese family that he stayed with in London. When Kyi Hla left Europe a few years later to concentrate in Asia, I ended up taking his place with the Burmese family. I don't think I would have survived the ups and downs of the European Tour without the family's support.

Speaking of support, I definitely wouldn't have become one of the answers to the earlier trivia question if it weren't for my wife, Veronica. My first big win in Singapore came weeks after the birth of our daughter, Taina. The Chinese say a baby brings luck. In fact, my biggest win, the 1996 Japan Open only happened because Veronica did all the groundwork that would allow me to get a Japanese visa. I wasn't going to play because I don't have much patience for

government red tape. After I won she told me it was her dream for me to change from Europe to Japan. The Japanese Tour wasn't even on my radar screen until I won the Japan Open. The travel to Europe was starting to wear me out so it was nice to cut my 14 hours commuting time in half.

Even though she has never played golf, Veronica has become quite an expert. I asked her to remember her caddie experiences and I found out she got more conversation out of Nick Faldo than I ever did. In 1989 in a heavy downpour at Monte Carlo, Nick commiserated with her as she was getting wet and her player was rushing on up ahead with the umbrella. Nick asked why she caddied for such a jerk. She replied, "What to do, he's my husband."

Later that summer would be Veronica's last week as a caddie, and what a tournament to finish on The Open at Royal Troon. Early in the week the front of the practice range was used and it had a downhill lie. One player was working on his long irons beside me but was having problems and left the range a little disappointed with his swing. Veronica asked, "Who was that old guy, he nearly fell down after every swing." It was Arnold Palmer.

In the third round we were paired with Jack Nicklaus and I was extremely nervous. Veronica chatted merrily with Jack quite often during the round and told me he is a nice player to be paired with. I smiled weakly and prayed the tightness in my body was not a heart attack about to happen.

In 1991 a U. Penn. alumnus, Michael Bamberger, caddied for me and he produced a pretty good book, "To the Linksland." People have come up to me all over the world and asked me to sign it. One year I was on the first tee at North Berwick in Scotland getting ready to qualify for The Open and an old Yale and his wife ambled out and asked me to sign their favorite book. They enjoyed taking a Scottish holiday every year. The second half of the book captures the feel of Scotland.

I asked Michael not to mention one of my swings in his book. I don't have just one swing. Years ago there was a Boston Red Sox pitcher who had many different types of arm motion when he was throwing the ball. I was once described as the Luis Tiant of professional golf. If that baseball fan was describing me today, maybe I would be called the Hideo Nomo of professional golf. As a Red Sox fan, I am hoping that Nomo stays with the team because once every five days when he is pitching I get to see my Red Sox on TV in Japan.

My most well-known swing even had a name. It was called the "Whiplash," and in hindsight I'm glad Michael ignored my request to keep it out of his book. For the record, my first whiplash was at the Swiss Open in 1982. I received a lot of good natured ribbing over the years from the other players because of this swing that recoiled tremendously from the follow through position.

On TV now I sometimes see a player make a similar swing when he is going for an extra big one. His recoil only comes back halfway so I would name it a "half" whiplash, or a "baby whiplash." Imagine what Tiger will be able to accomplish if he ever learns to do a full whiplash. He might even be able to win in Japan and join the ranks of Stewart, Watson, and Teravainen.

I would like to finish up by saying that my memories of Yale 25 years ago are just as

strong if not stronger than any of my experiences I have had traveling around the world. I loved my time at Yale and especially the experience of being on the Golf Team. It was made even more special because of the wonderful passion the coach had for golf. I would like to give a big Thank You to coach Dave Paterson for sharing his golf passion with me and many other golfers over the last 25 years.

Thanks again Coach.