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**“The Tee Box”©**

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**COMMENTARY . . . . . . . . BY DAVID FAILURETEE**

Blarney! That new Magic 8 Ball I purchased worked like a lucky charm as it guided me to pick Brooks Koepka to win the 2017 U.S. Open. Yes! This prescient prognosticator is back! Let me tell you it was quite an experience being at Erin Hills and I’m compelled to pass along some of my observations and take aways from the week to you.

During the first round on Thursday morning a blimp went down in flames. The good news is the pilot will be OK. The bad news . . this portended what the TV ratings were to be for the FOX telecast. After the ending on Sunday, FOX TV execs were seen boarding a blimp for the return to the Milwaukee airport.

ERIN GO BRAGH! Erin Hills is fantastic, can’t wait to play it sometime. It’s being called a “Heartland” course rather than “Links”, which I like. But, by all means you have to stay out of the bunkers. They’re called “Erosion” bunkers, probably because if you get in one you’ll see your score rapidly erode.

Erin Hills gave the pros a green light with the driver, as opposed to dinking around with long irons and fairway woods off the tee. But, the tradeoff is it led to many more birdies and much lower scores. So, is that a tradeoff you can accept? It is for me.

We’re used to the US Open being a plodding, bogey laden grind fest on a northern, tree lined course with 30 yard wide fairways and 4 inch rough surrounding the greens. For all of you traditionalists, those days are pretty much gone. Get used to it.

So what is going on with the USGA? Well, it is making efforts to rid itself of it’s inflexible, stodgy image. First, there are the new, more user friendly rules starting on 1-1-18, and now we’re seeing kinder, gentler course setups. Will it work? Stay tuned.

How about those new Nike shirts worn by Fowler, Day, and others. The ones with barely any collar. Without even checking I know that Ralph Florin, our fashion guru, is plenty steamed about them. If you have a waist size over 32 inches don’t even think about wearing one. It’ll make you look like a Kewpie Doll at a carnival.

Found plenty of tasty things to eat. My clear favorite was the cheese curd burger. They’re real and they’re spectacular!

I caught some of the FOX TV telecast in the media tent. Joe Buck needs to play more golf. At one point he called a 2 on a par 4 a “Double Eagle”. Also, Brad Faxon needs to ingest some tranquilizers to calm him down during the telecast.

FOX needed something to pump up the TV ratings. Speaking of pumped up, I didn’t see much of Holly Sonders on the telecast. When I did it looked like she was going for the 1970’s French hooker look (remember Irma La Douche?). Yikes! No doubt her rare sightings led to very low TV ratings among the much coveted 20 – 40 year old horny dude demographic. Simple, a horizontal mambo involving Koepka and Sonders at the awards ceremony would definitely have been a ratings booster.

Erin Hills displayed for all to see just how far the pros can hit the ball when allowed to. Incredible! That 300 + yard three wood hit by Justin Thomas on Saturday to the #18 green is probably the best golf shot I’ve witnessed. And remember, I’ve covered in person several of your RIGC events.

So, you say you want to see the pros play a legit three shot par 5. And you want to see them have to hit a 5 iron to the green on a par 4. Just like you have to do. OK, make the par 5 800 yards long and the par 4 600 yards long. No joke.

What’s the future of Erin Hills? Not sure about that. It reopens to the public on July 1. Greens fees of $280, plus another $100 for a caddie. Walking only, no carts. That, and the fact that it will take some effort to get there makes me a little skeptical of it’s success. “If you build it they will come”? Remains to be seen.

**RIGC TEAMS SHINE IN GAM SCRAMBLE AT WABEEK**

Three teams of mostly RIGC members competed at a GAM Scramble Tournament qualifier at Wabeek C.C. on June 19. Those three teams consisted of; Diedrich, Henderson, John Stencel, and Powell, another team consisted of Quintana, Fair, Huizdos, and Dwyer, finally there was the team of Cooper, Siegert, Miller, and Rod’s friend Rich Dagenais. The format was a “Step Aside” scramble in which the player whose shot is selected does not get to hit the next shot, he steps aside. The final scores were as follows (par of 71); Cooper Team 62, Diedrich Team 63, and Quintana Team 70. Now for the BIG NEWS. The Cooper team finished second and the Diedrich team third in the overall standings for the event. That means they get their ticket punched to advance to the GAM Scramble Finals to be held at Tullymore and St. Ives golf courses on September 17 and 18! Tickets to that event will be available on Stub Hub beginning July 1. Congratulations gentlemen, that’s the way to represent your club! And, I’ve heard via the grapevine that a stacked team of RIGC members will try to also gain an invite to the finals by playing in a qualifier at TPC Dearborn in early July. Good luck to those players as well.

**SWEET MUSIC FOR HUSSONG AT METAMORA**

You Rollers made the first visit to Metamora on June 21 an impressive one, at least by the A and B flighters. Good scoring by most of the inhabitants of those flights, and it was Bill Hussong who displayed the most potential for America’s Got Talent as he fired a hot round of 75, net 64 to take the overall net score prize as well as first in the A flight. Excellent playing Bill! An A flighter and a B flighter tied for second with net 65’s, congrats to Solomon and Gary Stencel. Also in the B flight it was Blanton and Kemp taking second with net 71’s. Finally, in the C flight Whitmore took first with his best round of the year, a net 66. Second place was shared by Filak and Schiff with net 70’s. Is it that club members are finally figuring out the quirkiness of Metamora, or was the course just playing easily that day? But, don’t count on it playing easily when it hosts the RIGC Member-Guest in September.

**THREE CLAIM SPOTS IN THE PMMPC FINALS**

Here you go. We now know 3 of the 4 PMMPC Final Four players after the matches at Greystone on June 28. In a battle of two members of the infamous Twin Lakes posse Walenczak prevailed over Kemp 4 and 3. Walenczak stated that he’s still drawing on his experience as the runner-up in the 2016 PMMPC, and he hopes it will carry him to the finals again this year. Kemp said he just wasn’t able to take advantage when Walenczak gave him some openings.

In the second match RIGC rookie Fillion eased past Bonjernoor 2 up. A close match with Bonjernoor battling back from an early deficit, but in the end the unflappable Fillion claimed victory.

The closest match of the day saw Skiragis barely edge out Karam 1 up after one playoff hole. This was a tight match all day with no let up in the pressure. Skiragis said he was able to overcome several missed short putts on the way to victory. Karam indicated he was done in by some crucial errant shots late in the match. The last match to complete the Final Four will be Hagedorn taking on Coffey, another Steady Eddie tough to beat.

So, in the semi finals we’ll see Skiragis versus Fillion, and Walenczak taking on the winner of the Hagedorn vs Coffey match. May I remind you that way back in January, in the very first TEE BOX of 2017, I picked Walenczak to be the PMMPC Champ for 2017. And he definitely has a chance.

**JUG UPDATE**

JUG Czar Miller has asked me to inform you that the next JUG point update will be made as of June 30, and it will be available for viewing on the RIGC web site. Some members made big moves in the competition in June. In the Snead Flight Walenczak, Hussong, and Fair piled up some points, same for Grace, Kemp, and Coffey in the Hogan Flight. And in the Nelson Flight, Dwyer and Whitmore made some noise.

**FAILURETEE TO FRENCH LICK**

You read the headline right. I’m off for a mini vacation to French Lick Resort in Indiana. Two golf courses, a casino, two fancy hotels, and perhaps a Larry Bird sighting in his hometown. Look for a report sometime in the future. DF