



UNDERCOVER TOUR PRO EVEN THE PLAYERS RUN AFOUL OF **AUGUSTA NATIONAL**

I've played in three Masters. I'm comfortable there, but the first time I was definitely on edge. Augusta National is a beautiful place, but, boy, there are some different rules. And you really don't want to get caught breaking one.

If you can keep your name out of the conversation until Sunday, then go out with a bang of birdies and somehow wind up with a Green Jacket, well, that's a good way to do it.

Not that I spend that much time considering my decorum. We're all professionals. We play golf for a living and know how to conduct ourselves in and around a clubhouse. It's not like we're out drinking and smoking all year and then clean it up for a week. Still, there are ways we mess up.

My first Masters, I went a couple weeks early to see the course. My regular caddie was allowed to walk along as a local caddie took us around.

After, we played the Par-3 Course. It was near dusk, and at one of the far tees I said to my caddie, my longtime friend and fellow golf lunatic, "Here, hit one."

The local caddie took the wedge from my hand: "If he hits that ball, I lose my job." Whoa, I

thought, that's excessive. But I believed him.

Obviously, the big thing is the phone. You use it only in the locker room. Every week on the US PGA Tour, I conduct full-length phone conversations on the range, so that's different.

Even if you're waiting on a tee during a practice round, don't sneak the phone out for a quick text. I've seen guys do this, but it's not worth the potential aggravation.

My coach was once thrown out when he took video of my swing with his BlackBerry. We were at the seventh tee box. A security guard removed him from the golf course. He spent the rest of the day checking out the town.

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When my parents came, we had trouble. They flew in when I was playing a practice round, and so my wife and daughter went to pick them up.

Because they had the courtesy car, they could drive right down Magnolia Lane, which was a thrill for my folks.

As soon as they parked, my dad went straight to the merchandise centre. He wanted to be sure he got the best stuff before it sold out. He got \$400 worth of souvenirs. As he was going

through checkout, his card got declined because he was travelling out of state.

He stepped away from the register and took out his phone – going through the player entrance, he hadn't faced security – and began dialling the number on the back of the card. Before he could press "send," two guards grabbed him by the shoulders and ushered him out. They didn't even tell him to put the phone away. They held him in this small room, cellphone jail, and I had to go get him.

My dad's shaken up and felt terrible. When his captors saw I'm a player, there's no sense of sorry for any misunderstanding.

It wasn't like my dad was out on the course taking photos or calling in to a radio show. The vibe was definitely the other way: We should feel bad, and I could expect to hear more about this incident. (I didn't.) The whole thing took about an hour. Because our child is in daycare, the club always gives my wife a beeper. She has never had a problem.

Another system that works great is the little card they give players. It's like your member card. You can eat anywhere, and whatever your family spends, they just send you a bill a few weeks later. It's fantastic. All in, just about every minute you spend at Augusta National is a life highlight. But you will have a few "learning" experiences.

Tons of players have stories just like mine, I'm sure. Nobody talks about them because life's easier when those stories don't get out.

— with Max Adler

Illustration by Sam Island