

editor's
letter

BY
S. MURALI

etirement? I'm still
young. I'm not 40 yet,
I know some of you
think I'm buried
and done but I'm
still right here in
front of you.

— TIGER WOODS

SAVOUR THE GAME OF LIFE

Imagine a week like this, if you will.

Travel to the home of golf in St Andrews, Scotland, to watch the 144th British Open where you meet and shake hands with Tiger Woods, Arnold Palmer, Gary Player, Mark O'Meara and Phil Mickelson.

Take a picture with some of these legends and hold the Claret Jug, while you are at it.

Get a lesson from renowned coach Claude Harmon and play four rounds of golf at some of the most beautiful courses in Scotland.

Hit a career three-wood that somehow flies and runs 328 yards off the tee.

Does that sound like heaven to you? It was to me.

Firstly, covering this year's Open, delays and all, was a real treat.

Although 39-year-old Zach Johnson eventually triumphed, it was a week where the youngsters showed that they are ready to take the game by storm.

From 21-year-old Jordan Spieth, who came within a whisker of winning a third Major on the trot, to 22-year-old Paul Dunne, who slept on Sunday night dreaming of becoming the first amateur since Bobby Jones to win the Open.

And Dunne, who understandably faltered in his final round to finish in a tie for 30th spot, was not alone.

Amateurs Jordan Niebrugge (finished 11-under), Oliver Schneiderjans (9-under) and Ashley Chesters (9-under) all finished in the top-15, making the race for the Silver medal, given to the top amateur, one of the most exciting ever seen in the competition.

On the other end of the spectrum, I had the opportunity to walk alongside Tiger Woods as he played his last six holes of the second round, including the treacherous Road Hole at St Andrews and the wonderful 18th hole, framed by the historic Old Course Hotel.

It was heartening to watch golf's most knowledgeable crowd give Woods the loudest cheer, despite the American missing the cut by seven shots.

Outside the tournament, my Rolex hosts got me a ticket into one of the biggest events of the week, to witness O'Meara, Laura Davies, David Graham and famed designer A.W. Tillinghast gain entry into the World Golf Hall of Fame.

Then I had my swing looked at by Butch Harmon's son Claude, who currently coaches Dustin Johnson and Brooks Koepka.

With his advice in mind, I played some rounds at Scotland's famed links courses along the Fife coast, smiling

even when the wind became so robust it blew my golf ball off the green on one of the holes.

That wind, it must be said, played a significant part in one of the best shots I have ever hit in my life, on a 428-yard par-four hole on the Kittocks Course at Fairmont.

I struck a solid three-wood off the tee, and a combination of a "wee Scottish gale" and a fairway that sloped severely downwards left me with just 100 yards into a green framed by the magnificent Fife coastline.

Of course, I topped my wedge and was lucky to not see it go off the cliff into the sea, but you couldn't erase my smile that day if you had tried.

The highlights aside, my pilgrimage to St Andrews allowed me to reflect on the game like I have never done before.

Golf, according to one of my travel companions and noted golf humourist Clive Agran, "is life".

And more than that, he said, as we played the picturesque Castle Course at St Andrews, "life is golf".

Agran compares our lives to the game of golf, complete with challenges, dangerous hazards to avoid, wonderful moments and a chance to travel it with companions, while playing it

alone, in truth.

Using that analogy, Woods is lost deep in the rough somewhere right now while Spieth (above) narrowly missed making an albatross at the Open on Monday.

Me? You already know about the thrilling three-wood I hit in Scotland, a place I urge all of you to play golf at someday, if you have not done so already.

I suspect it will be a trip to remember, in this wondrous game of life.

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