

IT'S GETTING HOT OUT THERE, SO...

The weather man has spoken.

Things are hot in Singapore and only going to get hotter.

Thanks to El Nino and some other unusual weather phenomenon, the month of March saw temperatures rise to 36 deg C on some days, almost 9 deg C higher than the usual March averages of 27 deg C.

Schools in Malaysia are closing, the reservoirs are drying up and people in the region are collapsing from heatstroke and what do we golfers do?

We keep playing, of course.

We thank the lucky stars that rain is not going to interrupt our Sixes and All Bets will not be Cancelled.

I recently played on a day when even the clouds decided to take shade from the searing heat.

Let us just say that my wife almost didn't recognise me when I got home, thanks to a new shade of dark brown that coloured my skin as a result.

It was almost comical to look at the covered areas of my body in comparison – talk about tan lines!

But how I wish that was all that happened to me that fateful afternoon.

By the time I hit Hole No 15, I suspect I didn't know what I was hitting with my golf clubs.

The ball looked hazy and seemed to be moving even before I hit it. The target looked a sweltering mile away and I was squinting so much from the sun that I had a massive headache.

Did I drink enough water? Maybe not but I tried to and nothing seemed to give me enough relief from the unrelenting heat.

I didn't need a golf expert to tell me that I would not be playing my best golf in such conditions, although the advice is to take an extra club and hit it easy.

Luckily, most of the betting was out of the way – I would have lost my pants otherwise – and my group staggered into the clubhouse for some welcome relief.

All but one of us.

One of my friends, let's call him Fred for now, said he felt nothing from the heat.

"I don't feel hot," he said, insisting that he could go another 18 holes if we all wanted to.

Needless to say, Fred was the fittest of the foursome, peppering his days with regular runs and yoga sessions.

He is also the same guy who is happy to be out with the PSI levels above 200, but that is a story for another day.

My takeaway from that afternoon of torture?

I need to be much better prepared the next time I decide to take on current weather patterns, if I want to enjoy my game.

Or maybe take up night golf. Or maybe, I should just stop playing golf till things cool down.

Nah, that's not going to work.

Illustration by Cei Gulappa



The ardent golfer would play Mount Everest if somebody put a flagstick on top.

— PETE DYE

TIPS FOR STAYING COOL

- **Stay hydrated.**
Start drinking water even before your round starts. Avoid caffeine and alcohol if possible, as they are diuretics. Don't wait till you get thirsty because that could mean you are already dehydrated.
- **Dress right.**
Shorts, loose-fitting cotton t-shirts, light coloured clothing and sunglasses are important. I have switched to wearing a hat, because the cap is not giving me enough protection.
- **Sunblock, several times.**
Yes, once per round might not be enough, say the experts. Also, with the heat we are getting, a sunblock with high sun protection factor is a must.
- **Get some shade.**
Head for the trees in between shots, sit in the buggy when you are waiting your turn and whip out the umbrella when it hits the high 30s. Yes, the umbrella thing can be embarrassing but let's see who's laughing if you still have the energy to sink that winning putt on the 18th hole.
- **Don't push yourself.**
If at any point you are feeling light-headed or dizzy, cut the round short and head back to the clubhouse, like I should have done. Getting a heatstroke is no laughing matter.

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