

## Golf Anecdote, No Politics

Watching the 150th *British Open* on TV this week (they call it "**THE Open**,") I was inspired to relate a golf story I've never committed to print before. It's a true story told to me by one of the participants, who never lied to me or exaggerated any subject except his romantic conquests.

This friend had the enviable job of organizing golf outings for a **FORTUNE 500** human resources and consulting firm. (I can't divulge any names for a variety of reasons, including lawsuits.) In the 1990s, one of the U.S. auto manufacturers wanted to reward its most successful dealerships by sending their owners to *Saint Andrews* for a week of golf, right after the *British Open* that year. My friend was involved in organizing that outing, in which the owners of dealerships from all across the U.S. participated.

The outing was going smoothly until one particular individual strolled into the clubhouse of the **Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews** (Founded in 1754) on the day before the outing was to begin. It was a Friday afternoon, his first day after arriving on his flight, and he was informed that he had a 9:00 a.m. tee time the next day on "*The Old Course*." Perhaps weary from his flight or somewhat intoxicated, he loudly announced so that everyone in the clubhouse could hear, "**I DIDN'T COME 4,000 F\*CKING MILES TO PLAY ANY OLD COURSE, I WANNA PLAY THE NEW COURSE!**"

My friend immediately stepped in and saved the day. He took the guy aside, introduced himself, and stated the following (*paraphrase*): "**We can get you on the 'New Course' if you like, but it's 300 years old. You see, the Old Course is where golf began 800 years ago, and a lot of people think there's a whole lot of tradition associated with that. It's why your Tee Time had to be booked four years in advance.**"

I'm told the guy was Sicilian, with the obligatory unbuttoned shirt, prominent chest hair, and lots of gold necklaces. I'm also told that afterwards, he was ribbed relentlessly by his fellow dealers and was so humiliated that there wasn't another peep heard out of him for the remainder of the outing.

Earl Holt