



**“I want to throw a brick at the television every time I hear a player or caddie say ‘we.’”**

# Prince of Peeves

I love this game. Co-opting, and slightly bending, the wisdom of the old “Saturday Night Live” character Chico Escuela: “Golf has been very, very good to me.” But as much as I love it, there are things *about* it which make me crazy. (Show me somebody who doesn’t have a conflicted relationship with golf and I’ll show you someone who doesn’t play.)

For instance:

I want to throw a brick at the television every time I hear a player or caddie say “*we*,” as in: “*We* had about 165 yards with a back-right pin and a right-to-left wind so *we* just hit a little 7-iron.”

Listen, no one has more respect for Tour caddies than I do. The best of them really know their stuff and can be absolutely indispensable, but please... I’ve never seen a shot struck with any more than two hands on the club. Unless we’re talking the Ryder Cup or something, golf is an individual game. Can you imagine a baseball player saying: “*We* hit a 3 & 2 fastball...” and that IS a team game. Stop it!

And while we’re on the subject of the spoken word, how many times have you heard a player say: “I hit it good” or “I played good”? Did everybody in golf go to the Jethro Bodene School of grammar? The English translation would actually be: I played *well*, or I hit it *well*. The creeping acceptance of this one makes me want to snap a Scotty Cameron over someone’s head.

I love the fact that golf is a game of integrity, but the way scorekeeping is handled at the highest level of competition —i.e., the PGA Tour — is absurd. Roberto De Vicenzo tied Bob Goalby over 72 holes at the 1968 Masters, but because De Vicenzo signed a card which indicated he had scored one shot higher, Goalby won. Crazy me. I thought the

idea was to determine who was the best at golf... not numbers.

“It is kind of Draconian the way we handle things sometimes,” says Paul Goydos, winner of the 2007 Sony Open on the PGA Tour. “If you think about it, with Shotlink and the walking scorers with computers nowadays, why would anybody [on Tour] even need to turn in a card?”

Good point, but Goydos says his biggest particular dislike about the game he loves is tedium.

“I hate practice rounds,” he says. They’re kind of like studying in school. I never minded taking the tests, I just really disliked studying.”

Interesting analogy from a guy who at one time earned a living as a teacher of math and science.

You can choose your poison when it comes to some of golf’s other pet peeves:

- “Cart-path only” golf sends some people over the edge
- For others, it’s the age-old debate: why isn’t a divot ground under repair?
- Then there’s the perspective of a person who actually makes a living at this crazy game: “I hate packing on Fridays,” says Jeff Sluman.

Of course, most of us don’t have to worry about missing the cut, but I think the wisest perspective on golf’s blemishes comes from my late father. He detested cheating and had no tolerance for those guilty of the practice. I can almost hear him say it now: “Golf is a game of integrity.”

Which is ironic. A discussion of what’s wrong with the game eventually circles us right back to an understanding of why it’s such a great way to spend time in the first place. ■