



Penalties and Points

by John Bozzo

PGA: More than just a tourney

Don't listen to anyone or believe anything you've read.

No matter what you've heard, there is no golf tournament at Oakland Hills Country Club in Bloomfield Township this week.

That information can be attributed to a very high authority, William A. Prew. He is a member of the executive committee of Oakland Hills Country Club.

Between bites of a club sandwich at Peabody's Restaurant a month ago, Prew drew a subtle distinction between the PGA Championship, which will be held at Oakland Hills this week, and other golf events.

"This is a championship, not a tournament," Prew said. "There are tournaments held every week. There is only one championship."

Actually, Bill was a little over-enthusiastic. Those club sandwiches must really be great. He momentarily forgot about one other "small event," the Tournament Players Championship.

In addition to those two champion-

ships, there are a couple of "Classics" and a few "Opens," while the remaining professional golf events are called tournaments. (Oops, excuse me, I forgot the Colonial Invitation. My salad was good, too.)

BEYOND THE semantics, there is something a little more special about the PGA than other golf events. That's what Bill Prew was talking about.

It has to be considered one of the top four events in golf, along with the U.S. Open, British Open and Masters. That alone should rank the PGA among the top 15 or 20 sports events in the world.

For one week, Oakland Hills Country Club and the entire Detroit metropolitan area will own center stage in the sports world.

Plenty has been written about the amount of money a Super Bowl or Republican Convention will bring into the area. What kind of economic shot in the arm will the PGA Championship be?

A big shot, if history is any indication. One year ago, Mark Cox, executive director of the PGA, said that the 1972 tournament (excuse me, "championship") held at Oakland Hills was the biggest moneymaker of any PGA championship held to date.

Oakland Hills was able to build an addition to its already fabulous clubhouse with the profits realized from hosting the PGA Championship.

BESIDES THE money, there is prestige. Oakland Hills people claim they weren't upset when Golf Digest left their vaunted 16th hole off the list of best golf holes.

However, they must still be smarting somewhat. Another fine PGA tourney at Oakland Hills — one where the course conquers the pros and not vice-versa — could raise Oakland Hills back to its former position in the prestige rankings.

PGA officials are predicting scores close to par. They flatly state no golfer will bring the course to its knees with a 72-hole score amounting to 12

or 14 under par, like that seen in other "tournaments."

The PGA is the official championship of the Professional Golfers' Association. Any pro golfer registered with the association can qualify for, and win, the event. Normally, only the touring pros compete in the big golf events.

This kind of American ("anyone can be president") Dream philosophy is appealing.

One other interesting note is that, back in 1972, the PGA was the only nationally prominent event in the Detroit area. Since then our Renaissance Center has been built, and we will have the Super Bowl and Republican Convention.

But it's nice to have the PGA.

Personally, I hope Gary Player slices at least one drive on the 16th hole. I bet he can't repeat that blind shot over the trees and the water and to within a few feet of the pin. This reporter lost every golf ball he owned trying to repeat that feat one day.

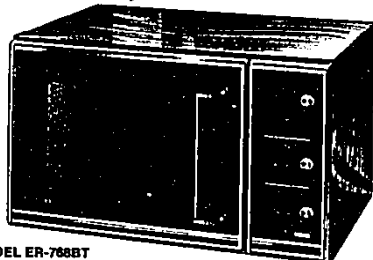
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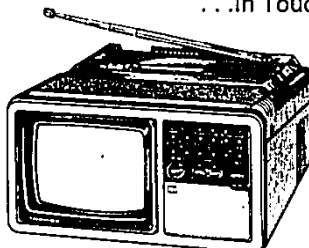
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