

Eyes front?

Know the best way to see the PGA

By DOUG FUNKE

After acquiring your ticket to the PGA Championship and finding a place to park near the course, your next task — and perhaps biggest challenge — is to see as much of the unfolding tournament drama as possible . . . along with 20,000 other daily spectators.

Because action is continuous in so many different locations on the 7,018-yard course, it takes real effort and a great deal of luck to be in the right place at the right time.

Then, too, there are all those other people with the same goal as you.

Jim Wartens, news director of the Professional Golfers Association in Lake Park, Fla., says that from his experience there are three basic ways to view a tournament.

"You can pick a favorite player and follow him through 18 holes," said Wartens. "It takes someone in pretty good physical shape to walk 18 holes, but it gives you insight into the particular personality of a player."

The more popular and skillful players — Jack Nicklaus, Lee Trevino, Tom Watson, Gary Player and Arnold

Palmer — will draw throngs of followers.

It doesn't take a mathematician to realize that the greater number of people occupying an area, the less chance of each individual getting a good view.

ANOTHER WAY to watch the action, according to Wartens, is "to select a particularly difficult hole — a long par 5 for example — where the better player may gamble with an iron to the green.

"You catch all the players coming through and see who is conservative and who is particularly adept at coming close," said Wartens.

The third basic way to spend your day at the tournament is "to position yourself on the course where more than one hole can be watched," said Wartens.

"Like at Augusta National (site of the Masters Tournament in Augusta, Ga.), by standing on a hill above the second green you can see the second green, the seventh green and the eighth tee."

How does Wartens prefer to watch a tournament?

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— Jim Wartens

"I like to go around the whole course," he said. "I might follow a player like Sam Snead for nine holes and walk the entire 18 to see what the course looks like."

GARY WHITENER, tournament chairman of the Michigan PGA and golf pro at Whispering Willows in Livonia, suggested an idea which might have eluded golf enthusiasts and veteran spectators in the past.

"I'd rather spend the majority of time at the practice range," said Whitener. "That's where they really work on their swing, and you can get an education."

"Even some of the better players, after practicing prior to their rounds and playing 18 holes, will go back to the range for an hour or so," Whitener continued.

"I told some of my women who went out to the Lady Stroh's last year to pick out a couple of gals maybe their size, watch them practice, then follow them."

Both Whitener and Wartens agreed that the periscopes used by some spectators at a tourney work and can be useful in a crowd. Wartens suggested that binoculars can also be helpful for watching putting and driving from a distance.

A few hints for personal comfort:

- Wear a hat and use suntan lotion to help prevent sunburn.

- Wear comfortable shoes, preferably street shoes, shoes with ripple soles or tennis shoes. Too many people wearing golf shoes can damage the turf.

- If you plan to do a lot of walking on a hot day, drink plenty of water during the course of your meanderings to prevent dehydration.

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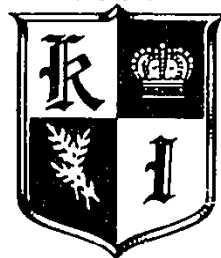
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