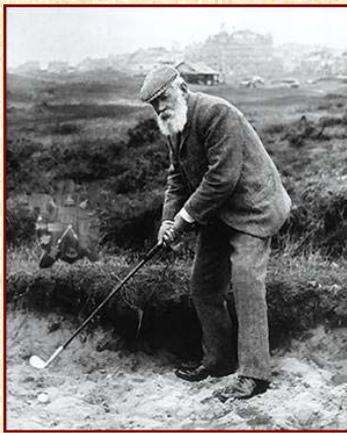


TURTLE REDUX

Notes on the Lore of an Icon

The history of the Terrapin Travelin' Trophy, known to some as simply "the Turtle," is murky at best. Its story has been only recently uncovered, heretofore shrouded in myth and legend. Plato's writings confirm that Greek philosopher Socrates contemplated the Turtle's inscrutable nature, but its history before that is unknown. Socrates appreciated the effort and desire required to possess the Turtle's virtues, referring to it as "*Rictis Servitum, Rarum Asceiscieum.*" Translated roughly as "widely hunted, narrowly captured," the phrase describes precisely the Turtle's essence.



The Turtle was lost in antiquity, only to reappear in around 1860, when "Old Tom" Morris was seen with it while playing in the first Open Championship of Great Britain. It is believed the Turtle served for a time as the Open Championship Trophy, only to be retired after "Young Tom" Morris won it for the fourth consecutive year in 1870 and refused to give it back. Thereafter, beginning in 1873, the Claret Jug has served as the trophy awarded annually to the winner of the Open Championship.

The Turtle disappeared from view from 1870 until around 1930, when it resurfaced among the trophies displayed by Bobby Jones after he had won the Grand Slam of golf. Exactly how the Turtle came into Jones's possession remains a mystery. Rumors persist that Jones had acquired the Turtle years earlier in a match with "Old Tom" Morris ("Young Tom" having met a suspicious and untimely demise in 1875), but those rumors have never been confirmed. "Old Tom" died horribly in 1908 after a fall suffered on the way to the loo. Jones was 6 at the time, and already a known golfing prodigy, but it is likely he acquired the Turtle by means other than a golf match. Regardless of how Jones obtained the Turtle, it is clear that he considered having it one of his greatest accomplishments. Professional golfers of his day were openly envious of Jones, an avowed amateur, for having the Turtle in his possession. As a result, the Wanamaker Trophy, awarded annually to the winner of the PGA Championship, is the most massive in golf.

Beginning in 1934, Jones inexplicably allowed the Turtle to serve as an award for various events involving Hollywood celebrities. It seems as though the Turtle would have been the perfect award for the winners of Jones's newly created tournament that later became known as the Masters. But because his brother-in-law was a haberdasher, Jones opted instead for surplus green sport coats to be awarded to Masters winners.



The Turtle, meanwhile, coalesced into a much sought after trophy among the Hollywood elite until 1938. In that year, the Turtle was awarded to The Three Stooges following a hotly contested 3-ball match with The Marx Brothers. It is believed that the Brothers made off with the trophy during a garrulous brawl that broke out during the awards ceremony. From there, it remained hidden from view for nearly three decades.



In 1966, the Turtle appeared again briefly at the Open Championship at Muirfield, Scotland, where it inspired Jack Nicklaus to victory. It is unknown how the Turtle made its way to Scotland or where it went after that, but it certainly provided Nicklaus with the inspiration he needed to win the Claret Jug for the first time.

From 1966 until 2002, fleeting glimpses of the Turtle occurred, but there is no confirmed account of its whereabouts during that time. This period was characterized by a proliferation of *Faux* turtles that were mass produced for use as competitive trophies, timepieces, and cutting boards. More likely than not, any unconfirmed sightings of the Terrapin that occurred during this time were of counterfeits, not the authentic article.

Finally, in 2002, the Turtle was rescued from obscurity by retired notions salesman Carl Trantham at an antiques auction in Maryville, Tennessee. No one knows the means by which the Turtle arrived in Maryville. The auction purported to be of the estate of an elderly gentleman with the surname “Marx.” Those in attendance obviously lacked insight into the Turtle’s true value. Encrusted as it was by the vicissitudes of time, Trantham paid a paltry Four Dollars, US, to acquire it. Once refurbished, Trantham donated the Turtle to the promoters of *The Golf Trip*. The Turtle has since become the most sought after award in sport even though its true significance has remained obscured until now. Players the calibre of Tiger Woods have coveted the Turtle, although Woods himself has never won it. It is now awarded annually to the winner of the Southern Pines Invitational, where players will do nearly anything to acquire it.



The provenance of the Turtle was only recently uncovered during the author’s research into the nature of golf trophies through the ages. Found among the papers in Mr. Marx’s estate was a letter dated April 27, 1934, to Samuel Goldwyn, from one R. Jones. This letter confirms the delivery of the Turtle in trust for use as “an award for golfing excellence among Hollywood charlatans and vaudevillians.” If authentic, this letter undeniably validates the Turtle as the award that is once again the Holy Grail of Golf. Thus, out of nothing has evolved an ethos surrounding the Turtle that is wholly fictitious, yet somehow compelling.

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