

To Play or Not to Play: A Golfer's Dilemma

By Mark Osmun

From time to time the Outrigger Canoe Club's golfing membership plays a tournament early in the morning at some distant course like Makaha. On those occasions, members often spend the night at a nearby lodge in order to be on the links early and rested. However, the May 17th outing at Royal Kunia Golf Course was not one of those tournaments. Lodging did come into play however.

At the start of the Kunia tournament, a noisy group of Outrigger golfers laughed and argued over various wagering propositions so loudly that golf chairman Frank Kingery had to shout his announcements to be heard. "...the winner," he hollered, "...of today's tournament will get free accommodations at our next overnight... stay with me..."

A quiet settled on the group. The golfers shuffled about restlessly; now confused about strategy. If they'd heard correctly Frank was offering free accommodations, but with himself as a roommate. This naturally cast a pall on the offer. Everyone knew of Kingery's wild debaucheries and no one wanted to risk their health or sanity just to save a few dollars. Nonetheless, the tournament proceeded with virtually every golfer deciding to stop trying to hit their shots either long or accurate.

A strange phenomenon occurred however. Perhaps due to the relaxation of not trying to win, the golfers began hitting unbelievably beautiful, soaring shots. Putts rolled in from 20 feet. Chips found the cup.

Each golfer found him or herself confronting a terrible dilemma: shoot the best round of one's life and risk a night with Frank, or take a dive. The pressure grew throughout the day.

Strat Whiting was the first to make his move. Late in the round, Strat came up short on the penultimate par-three. He then chipped into the left bunker. His third shot remained in the bunker. His fourth flew out of the bunker, skated across the green and landed in the right side bunker. His fifth trans-navigated the green again, splatting in the first bunker. He got out on his sixth shot and then managed a four-putt for a ten, effectively ensuring his safety.

Donny Mailer and Joe Spielman remained in contention to the last. Spielman was in the clubhouse with a low gross of 81. A par on the 18th hole, par-five would win it for Mailer with an 80. With shaking hands he hit a huge drive and followed it with a three wood that scooted through the group already on the green and came to rest in the back bunker.

As the frightened group ahead left the green (shaking their fists) Mailer said, "What should I do? I'm just 20 feet from the hole: three shots for an easy par. I could win — then I'll have to bunk with Frank." His playing partners shook their heads in sympathy.

Mailer hit a fine shot out of the bunker, leaving himself a ten-footer for birdie four. Not one to take a dive, Mailer charged the hole with his putt but it skated four feet past the hole. He missed the par putt. Then bogied.

"You tied Spielman," his partners said.

"No! Does that mean we *both* have to bunk with Frank?!"

In the bar as the prizes were being meted out, Spielman and Mailer approached Kingery. "Frank," they said, hats in hands, "We aren't *both* going to have to bunk with you are we?"

Frank, busily adjusting scores, looked up in annoyance. "What are you two blathering about?" he snapped.

"The prize," they said. "You know: low gross wins a free room... with you?"

"What?!"

"You said, 'The winner of today's tournament will get free accommodations at our next overnight and stay with me.' "

"Are you both insane?! Steve Dunn asked if we ever awarded trips and I told him, 'Not even the winner today gets free accommodations; not even if he stayed with me.' I hate to disappoint you."

The two smiled. "Oh, that's alright," they said in harmony.

Here's how the rest of it went:

Low Gross: Tie: Donny Mailer, Joe Spielman: 81

Low Net: Lloyd Jones: 62

Second low net: Gail Dolan: 72

Closest to the pins:

Hole # 8: Greg Cochran

Hole #13: Mark Osmun

Hole#17: Strat Whiting