

Pavin to be named latest Captain America The Boston Globe

By Jim McCabe

Globe Staff / December 11, 2008

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As our golf landscape is transformed into a winter wonderland, we are left with thoughts and observations to keep the game warm:

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- No golf event is a turn-on quite like the Ryder Cup, which is three days of unfiltered competitive fire. But there's no turn-off that compares to the insufferable hype directed

toward the naming of a Ryder Cup captain. We are, what, 22 months away from the opening tee shot of the 2010 matches, yet there will be a press conference in New York today to announce that Corey Pavin is the next United States captain? Come on, folks, how about a little perspective? A press release out of PGA of America headquarters in Palm Beach Gardens, Fla., would serve the same purpose and be a whole lot cheaper.

- Pavin? Yes, sir, that figures to knock the Yankees and CC, the Giants and Plaxico, Favre and the Jets, and K-Rod and the Mets off the back pages.
- You'll hear players from time to time moan about how the golf ball goes too straight, how they can't shape shots. Perhaps they can explain, then, how the most heralded creation to arrive on the television golf landscape in recent years is the ProTracer, a colorful graphic tool that shows how PGA Tour players prefer to move it left to right or right to left.
- When word surfaced that General Motors would no longer supply Buicks as courtesy cars at most 2009 tournaments, it served as a reminder to what life used to be like on the PGA Tour. "Only the top 50 players got courtesy cars when I first got on Tour," said Billy Andrade. "I said to Lanny Wadkins one day, 'That doesn't make sense. You guys can afford them. We can't. Shouldn't we get them?' He just smiled and told me, 'Kid, it doesn't work that way.' "
- Talk about positive moves, meet Shintaro Kai, now 86th in the world rankings, after having been No. 1,032 at the end of 2007. Imagine how high he'll go if he wins a second event. There are two other players currently ranked in the top 130 who began the year sitting below the 1,000 mark - No. 125 Kevin Streelman and No. 130 Taco Remkes.
- Mika Miyazato, 19, has joined the LPGA Tour, but she's no relation to Ai Miyazato, 23, who has been on Tour the last three summers. The PGA Tour version is Shigeki Maruyama and Daisuke Maruyama, who aren't related, either.
- In an effort to market himself and profit from the success of his captaincy with the US Ryder Cup team, Paul Azinger fired his longtime agent and went with superpower IMG. Apparently, the Ryder Cup isn't about the money, at least until it's over, at which time it's all about the money.

Continued...

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Schoolwork

There was a stretch of 90 holes in which he played 19 under par, making just three bogeys and one double. As for the 18 holes in Round 5 in which his Q School hopes were dashed? Well, **Geoff Sisk** hasn't spent much time beating himself up. "I'm proud of the way I handled my nerves. I played great and even in that fifth round [a 5-over 77] I played decent," said the pride of Marshfield after finishing joint 40th in the final stage of PGA Tour qualifying in La Quinta, Calif. Though he broke 70 in five of his six rounds, Sisk wound up at 14-under 418, when 19 under was needed to finish within the top 25 to secure PGA Tour cards for 2009. The tie for 40th enables Sisk, 42, to improve his Nationwide Tour status (he was 86th on the money list in 2008), though with a reshuffle staring him in the face after the 10th tournament, he figures it will be important to get going right away. That means lengthy trips to the first four events (Panama, Australia, two in New Zealand) that will put a big dent in his travel budget, "but you have to get off to a good start," said Sisk . . . **Josh Teater's** Q School experience featured a forgettable finish. Sitting on the number with four holes to play, he had two water balls in a triple-bogey 8 at the 15th, then went double bogey, par, double bogey to find himself on the Nationwide Tour . . . **Brian Stuard** had one of the biggest crashes, going from T-6 to T-34 with a closing 74 . . . There were highlights, of course. **Brian Vranesh** made seven birdies in his first 15 holes, then rode home with three pars to shoot a bogey-free 65 and make it on the number . . . Good stuff, too, from **Leif Olson**. He birdied four of his last five holes to make it in on the number . . . Give **Notah Begay** a gold star for having a finishing touch. He shot 65 in Round 4 to get through his second-stage qualifier and at the final test, the four-time PGA Tour winner finished in 63-67 to get through, at one point going 40 holes without a bogey . . . Three players who had already earned 2009 PGA Tour cards via the Nationwide Tour money list - **Ricky Barnes** (25th), **Bryce Molder** (23d), and **Spencer Levin** (22d) - went to the final stage in an attempt to improve their status. Give "A" for efforts all around, but each fell short.


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Let's call it even

Taking advantage of the chance to play in Bermuda this time of year, **Joe Horowitz**

and **Mike Donald** took it to the extreme last week. Part of the field in the inaugural Gosling's Invitational at Belmont Hills, Horowitz and Donald went 72 holes of regulation, then six more in a playoff before darkness intervened and produced cochampions. In some respects, it was a stirring win for Donald, who trailed Horowitz by eight shots through 54 holes and was still five back with nine to play. A bogey on the closing hole seemed to seal Donald's fate, only Horowitz made double to create a tie. When Donald (70) slipped home a 12-footer to save par to match Horowitz (78) at the sixth playoff hole, the pair shook hands and agreed it was a draw. **Kirk Hanefeld** of Acton closed with a 69 -282 to finish fifth, while the Americans prevailed in the team competition with **Joe Carr** of Bedrock Golf Club serving as US captain . . . If you're strolling past the Emirates Golf Club this weekend, give your best to **Annika Sorenstam**, playing what is being promoted as her last tournament - the Dubai Ladies Masters - before heading into the sunset to be a wife, mother (hopefully), businesswoman, and icon who doesn't play, yet isn't officially retired.

Miscalculation

For head-scratching, end-of-year stories, nothing quite compares with the one involving **Shane Bertsch**. The 38-year-old journeyman played in just four tournaments in 2007 because of a bout with vertigo, so this past season he was entitled to a major medical extension. Bertsch knew he had 25 tournaments in which to make at least \$785,180. When he got to \$841,248, he figured he was all set for 2009, but he soon discovered there had been a serious misunderstanding. Bertsch thought the \$785,180 was to get him exempt for 2009, but he was told it only made him fully exempt for 2008. To cover himself for 2009, he had to finish within the top 125. Thinking he had been safe, Bertsch skipped the penultimate tournament, then missed the cut at the finale, falling from 124th to 126th on the money list. Bertsch pointed the finger at a PGA Tour official he said offered incorrect information, but he has no one to blame but himself. His story was further compounded by two situations - first, he didn't bother to enter Q School, thinking he was exempt for 2009; second, he fell down the stairs in his Colorado home a few weeks ago and broke his right foot. But playing opportunities for No. 126 are plentiful the following season. In fact, in five of the previous six years, No. 126 on the money list played an average of 24.8 tournaments the following season and four times that enabled the player to get back within the top 125. ■