

Cueball Bests the Golfer Formerly Known as Big Boy, Jr., In a Classic Mano a Mano Duel

Sunday, April 25, 2004. 2:10 PM EDT.

By Chuck Dūmbáss, *Dimpled Orb Digest*, © 2004.

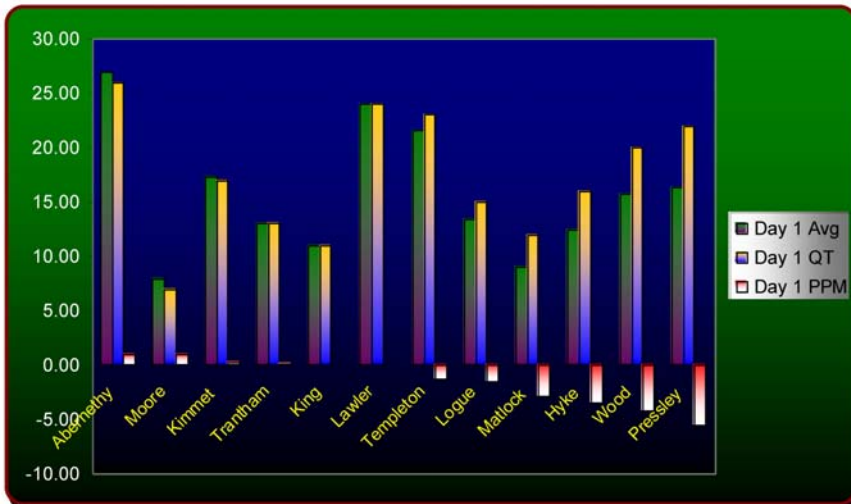


SOUTHERN PINES, North Carolina (DOD) – *S*ome men are born great; others have greatness



thrust upon them. Never was that axiom truer than in the 2004 Southern Pines Invitational, where Mark Kimmet and Mike King engaged in a classic wire-to-wire duel. In the end, Kimmet, affectionately known to his cohorts as “Cueball,” demonstrated intestinal fortitude bordering on polyorchidism to outlast a faltering King. Thus, Kimmet absconded with the Terrapin Travelin’ Trophy for his first overall win on tour. Said Kimmet afterwards, “I would like to thank Mikey for his courageous play, and Jack Daniels for the inspiration that carried me to victory.”

The Trip began in its usual fashion with the customary first Calcutta on the Tuesday before the tournament. Prior to the Calcutta, the crew was feted to a delightful slide show featuring photos from last year’s invitational. Calcutta Chairman Michael Wood remarked favorably on the selection of “Green Grass and High Tides,” the Trip theme song, as the musical accompaniment. On the expulsion of David Lewis, Wood said dryly, “David, it was fun while it lasted.” Jon Lawler took Lewis’s place much to the joy of everyone else in the field.



The first Calcutta also featured sound-enhanced player profiles and a new statistic called “Projected-Plus-or-Minus,” or “PPM.” The new stat is designed to predict the likely winner on a given day by comparing a player’s point quota on that day to the weighted average of his past performances on the course. The top four predicted finishers were



Harvey Abernethy, Dan “The Man” Moore, Kimmet, and Carl “Papaw” Trantham. King was a sleeper choice at fifth. The Calcutta yielded a healthy first day pot. Notable was the premium price paid for Toby “Hoss Cartwright” Hyke at \$45. Attababy! The Greg Logue/Dan Moore consortium made good use of the day one PPM to acquire King at a modest \$100, a harbinger of things to come. With the pot set and the players poised, and not to be out done by the others, most of the group was ready for an earlier than normal departure for Southern Pines on Wednesday afternoon.



King, the golfer formerly known as Big Boy, Jr., received his nickname as the result of his resemblance to Steve Williams. Williams is known widely as “Big Boy,” so the appellation of Big Boy, Jr., was a natural for King. Since his last appearance in the tournament, however, King has shed considerable poundage as the result of a rigorous training regimen in preparation for this year’s event. This required substantial retooling of King’s Calcutta Card. He also swings better because he



can see his balls. Thus, the newly svelte and renamed King seemed a good bet for the first day’s competition, despite a planned sojourn with playing partner Richard “Murdock” Matlock at the Prince concert in Columbia.



Play opened at Pine Needles under awesome, though slightly windy, conditions. King and Kimmet began their four-day duel on the back nine. It was nip and tuck, with each player holding a share of the lead coming in. Kimmet, needing a point to tie on the last hole, missed for bogey from long distance.



When the dust had settled, King, fighting off the effects of a case of pink eye from watching Prince, had managed to eke out a one-point win at +6, followed by Kimmet at +5. It was just the beginning of a neck and neck struggle that was destined to last through the weekend’s play. Murdock managed an admirable 17 points to tie Kimmet.



The PPM for day two predicted Moore as the likely winner. In the evening's Calcutta, Moore graciously offered to sell a quarter of himself to Logue. Not to be outdone, Logue returned the favor and sold a quarter of himself to Moore. Logue also received a special lifetime achievement award from King for all his hard work over the years in planning the golf trips. Unfortunately Logue is not a fan



of Prince, so he donated the award to an aging bard.

Day two's conditions were better than day one's, but the difficult greens at Mid Pines were even harder and faster than usual. Frequently the greens failed to hold even well struck shots. Playing in the first group with partner Norman "The Total Package" Templeton, Lawler, and Cueball, Moore was the leader in the clubhouse at +2 after making birdie at 10, par at 11, and a clutch bogey on 18. The tough scoring conditions surprisingly left everyone else in Moore's wake. Trantham managed to post a plus one for a second-place tie with Abernethy.



First day leaders King and Kimmet faltered at -4 and -2 respectively, leaving Matlock in the lead at +5. The Man's birdie and win were his first on tour in over a decade. As a result of Moore's eleemosynary gesture, both Logue and Moore cashed in on Moore's triumph even though Lawler owned Moore. The Man later remarked, "It just proves that a quarter of



something is better than all of nothing," a money management philosophy that profited the Logue/Moore consortium all weekend. After two days, Wood had failed to register a positive number or cash a ticket in the Calcutta.

By Friday night's dinner, Wood's frustrations were bubbling to the surface. Contending with too much Merlot and a case of the runs, he loudly threw down the gauntlet to the North Carolina Association of Proctologists and their lovely brides seated at the next table. Said Wood boisterously, "We'll get our best two sons of bitches and play your best two sons of bitches mano a mano. Our biggest problem is we don't know who our best two sons of bitches are." Fortunately none of the proctologists wanted to play the match or whip his ass (they certainly would have known how to do the latter—and make him like it). Wood later remarked, "I wasn't tryin' to start anything. I was just bein' the entertainment."



Moving day at Southern Pines is a tradition like no other. The third round at Pine Needles will likely be remembered as one of the greatest ever played. Templeton and Moore were in the second group with Abernethy and Wood, who owned Moore. Moore started dismally, but got hot on the back nine, thanks in large measure to chipping lessons from The Package. The Man finished with 14 points, much to the joy of Wood and Abernethy. After Abernethy incurred a penalty stroke at ten for hitting Norm's nugget, and Wood incurred two more at fourteen for running over Templeton's ball with his cart, Wood and Abernethy were out of contention. They gained solace, however with Moore in atop the leaderboard at +6, looking like a mortal lock to win for the second day in a row.

It was not to be, though, as Kimmet and King, playing together, staged a dramatic duel coming down the backstretch. Leading by one at sixteen, King parred to go to +6, while Kimmet poured in a birdie to tie. Kimmet pointed on 17, while King double-bogeyed, leaving Kimmet ahead by one. Needing only a bogey at 18 for no worse than a share of the win, Kimmet's approach was a majestic thing of beauty. Unfortunately for Kimmet, the spirit of Donald Ross is alive and well, as the shot hit the green and found itself in a collection area. Meanwhile, King dorked a six iron to within twenty yards of the green. Kimmet managed to skull his chip into a bunker on the other side of the green, from which he could not recover. King chipped to within 6 feet and made a knee knocking par putt for the two points and the win--a truly magnificent performance that left the spectators gasping.





Wood could only look forlornly on as his horse, Moore, faded to third. Moore was somewhat consoled at being beaten, since the Logue/Moore consortium once again owned King. The normally effusive Wood, on the other hand, fell into a deep funk that remained throughout the weekend. After exhorting the field at the first Calcutta to “plunder your opponent’s fortunes and wave them in his face,” Wood found himself on the receiving end of such treatment. His despondency only deepened after Lawler relieved him of \$100 in the afternoon’s emergency Nassau. By nightfall, Wood was looking for an apprentice auctioneer to conduct the Calcutta, and was seriously contemplating giving up the game.

He finished the weekend with an empty wallet in eleventh place in the overall standings. Wood’s performance was reminiscent of his play in 2002, when he set the record for weekend futility with a score of -17 over the last two days.



As day four approached, your leaders were King and Kimmet tied at $+10$, with Moore showing promise for the first time in years at $+7$. Former champion Matlock was a close fourth at $+6$. It looked like a run to the wire to claim the Terrapin on Sunday. Despite the battle for the top, however, Danny “Depot Stove” Pressley was not to be denied, finally showing the promise of his name. Notwithstanding a career Relative Value Factor of zero in seven prior rounds, the Stove boldly bought himself in the last Calcutta. Depot’s fortitude wavered, however, as he sold half himself to Papaw. He then proceeded to heat up and blow away the field with 27 points, a prodigious effort at $+7$ to win on the final day.



The real drama, however, was the contest atop the overall leaderboard, as four players vied for the Terrapin Trophy. The spirit of the contest is best chronicled by the following verses in iambic pentameter from an onlooker who witnessed the epic first hand (with apologies to E. L. Thayer).



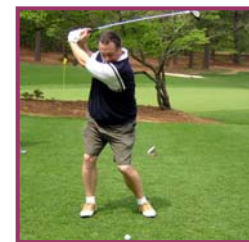
MIKEY AT THE TEE

There was much anticipation among the WMBAC five that day.
 Three were in contention with 18 more to play.
 King was tied for first at ten. Moore was close behind.
 Matlock could go all the way with a strongly played back nine.
 On their shoulders rested all the hopes of a WMBAC win,
 As only Cueball blocked their chance to reclaim the Terrapin.



Logue had long since retired as defending champion of all.
 He knew the orb would no longer hang upon his office wall.
 So on the tee he quietly spoke these words to Mikey King.
 “We’re pullin’ fer ye Mikey boy--bring home the golden ring.”
 So off they went with great fanfare as Moore poured it in for four.
 King bogeyed number one but knew he could get more.

On they played through number nine where Moore tapped in for bird.
 With eight points at the turn perhaps his game was truly cured.
 But on the back with errant shots misfortune he befell.
 His chances doomed by all the putts that simply never fell.
 So with Moore along the wayside, and Matlock never in,
 It fell to King to bear the flag and keep the Terrapin.



And so alone with steadfast play King fought along with flair.
 Despite the whiff at fifteen he knew his game was there.
 Sixteen’s par yielded two more points to bring the trophy home.
 Two more lousy holes to play to win the golden dome.
 At seventeen he let fly his drive and was at the fringe in two.
 But an errant chip and putts that missed are shots that he would rue.

One more hole, the eighteenth one, Mid Pines toughest test.
Could Mikey find the glory here and prove that he's the best?
Just as before the spheroid flew and landed softly near the trees.
Again the second straight and true, nestling neatly near the green.
Another chip struck boldly on, to win the final points.
And now the putt, the toughest stroke, would it the champion anoint?



With wand in hand King deftly took dead aim upon the goal.
His aim was true; his stroke was firm; the orb headed for the hole! . . .
Somewhere breaking putts are drained. Somewhere drivers boom.
Somewhere spring is in the air. Somewhere flowers bloom.
Somewhere life is happy. Somewhere choirs sing.
But there is no joy at WMBAC. For Cueball is the king. ■

