

THE DIMPLED ORB *DIGEST*

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**New Expanded Coverage of
the Southern Pines Invitational**



Bonus Photo Gallery!

A Cinderella Story

Richard Matlock Repeats as Orb Winner amid Controversy

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*By Chuck Dumbáss, Senior Editor
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SOUTHERN PINES, North Carolina (DOD) – In what may be remembered as the most controversial Southern Pines Invitational ever, Richard “Murdock” Matlock emerged victorious with an incendiary third-round performance. Coming into the tournament with a field-low eleven point quota, and tied with Dan Moore for the honor of runt of the litter, no one expected Matlock to do much against the big hitters in the field. Playing a fairy-tale-like third round, however, Matlock mounted a lead he would never relinquish. In so doing, Matlock crafted a story indeed worthy of Cinderella herself, joining Michael “Calcutta Chairman” Wood as the only repeat winners of the Holy Grail of Golf—The Terrapin Travelin’ Trophy, or as it is affectionately known by the players, simply, “The Turtle.”

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Matlock warms the Turtle by the Mid Pines fireplace.

Back for this year’s engagement were Mike “High Maintenance” King, Michael “The Trick Hoser” Moser, and Norman “The Total Package” Templeton. King’s return marked the end of a year-long sabbatical during which he removed a tree from his house and searched for his orbs. The Package also was back after tending to family obligations last year. Moser was able to retain his spot as Greg Logue’s playing partner when Mr. Monty Walton was forced to withdraw due to a scheduling conflict. The balance of the field consisted of the tour regulars, who appeared for Calcutta 1 on the Monday before the Trip.

Thanks largely to high minimum bids inveigled by Wood, the Calcutta Potentate, the first round’s pot was robust, though short of last year’s record. PPM’s were largely disregarded as Jon “Hair Ball” Lawler garnered the highest bid due to his recent stellar play, and Boston Marathon success. Lawler had placed first among all Tennessee runners the prior week. Moore also generated bidding interest due to persistent rumors that he, along with Logue, had recently joined Green Meadow Country Club.

The innovation for this year was the introduction of a hole-by-hole skins game among all the players, with carryovers for ties. Anything left at the end of the tournament was to go to the eventual Turtle champion. The payout was \$6.00 a skin. The consensus was that it would take birdies to win skins, which would benefit the better players in the field. To commemorate a dimpled orb of a different sort, a move was also afoot to rename The Turtle “The Raging Rhoid” in honor of Wood’s heroic triumph in last year’s event. The motion received no second, however, and was quietly tabled.



Logue tees off in Hickory.

As was the case last year, Logue’s group was to begin play at Rock Barn in Hickory, though this time on the Robert Trent Jones Course. This year the weather cooperated, so Logue, Moore, and Templeton played there, sans Moser, who flew into Greensboro that night from Las Vegas, via Miami. The Wood contingent of Wood, Lawler, Mark “Q-Ball” Kimmert, and Harvey “Papaw Jr.” Abernethy got in an early, rough round at Mid Pines.

Due to King’s high maintenance requirements, the team of King and Matlock



Q-Ball Depot Hoss Hair Ball

got their Wednesday round in at a local Southern Pines muni called Highland Hills. Toby “Hoss Cartwright” Hyke and Danny “Depot Stove” Pressley met up with the rest at the Long Leaf on Thursday Morning. In a fortuitous stroke that was the highlight of the weekend for the Templeton/Moore team, and much to the chagrin of the Calcutta Chairman, the hotel staff screwed up the reservations and gave Wood’s traditional penthouse suite to Templeton and Moore. The Templeton/Moore team is lobbying for that mistake to be made permanent.

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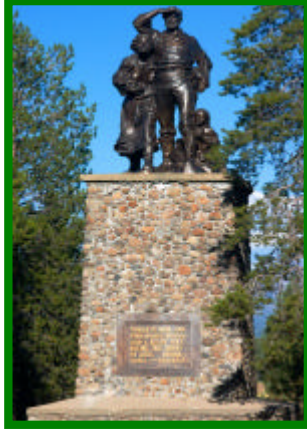


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Thursday's opening round at Pine Needles was played in hazy sunshine. The course was being readied for the U.S. Women's Open in June, so the conditions were hard and fast, with the greens more treacherous than in past years. Logue raced out to an early lead with a blistering 11 points at the turn. He barely missed eagle after rifling his second shot to within 10 feet on the par five tenth hole. The shot was truly remarkable, following on the heels of Logue's now familiar proclivity to injure himself in the first round. He sprained his left ankle by stepping into a hole right before hitting the prodigious shot. Righting himself, he tapped in for birdie and 14 points. Recording 5 more points as he limped home, he staked himself to the lead at plus 6. But the price was high; the ankle swelled to the size of a ginormous cantaloupe, and Logue would have difficulty coming through the ball for the rest of the tournament.



Hyke cashed in on Day 1.

Former Champion Hoss Cartwright carded a nifty 20 points to snuggle in close at plus 5. Hoser and Depot Stove came in tied for third at plus 2. Templeton looked ready to make a move with 24 points and plus 1 after 15. But he doubled the last three holes to fall into fourth. King and Wood finished the day even, while Kimmet and the early betting favorite, Lawler, came in at minus 1. The highlight of Moore's round was a 40 foot birdie putt at 12 that nabbed four skins, but still left him at minus 2. Matlock was right there with him at minus 2 also. Harvey finished with a disappointing



Depot flashes his first round score.

19, to trail at the end of the first day's play at minus 5. Hoss was the big winner in the Day 1 Calcutta, owning Logue and half himself.



Wood searched vainly for proctologists.

That evening, the Mid Pines dining room was strangely quiet. The Pinch Brook Women's Gynecologists Guild had already retired for the evening to whatever it is they do. Wood searched in vain for members of the North Carolina Association of Proctologists, and for the second year in a row, they were absent. This year, rather than challenge those sons of bitches to a golf match, Wood wanted to congratulate them on the fine work his surgeon had performed last year, and show them his scar.

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Lawler played well on Day 2, but faltered at the last.

The second round at Mid Pines began cool and slightly overcast, with the chance of rain. The players saw a brief shower at the beginning of the round, which eventually gave way to clear skies. Jon Lawler, still one of the betting favorites, followed his disappointing first round with an exquisite plus 8 to take the win and the tournament lead at plus 7. His playing partner, Q-ball, who garnered the high bid at the previous night's Calcutta, rewarded his purchasers with a dismal minus 3. Defending champion Wood soared with a plus 6 to move within a stroke of the leader. Templeton and Abernethy both carded plus fives to grab third for the day.



Templeton's damaged wing.

Templeton's score was enough to put him in a tie for second with Wood. Templeton's good play evidently caused him to tear several muscles and rupture a tendon in his left forearm, however. The injury would plague him for the rest of the tournament. His last two rounds would leave him with scores of minus 5, and minus 2, to drop him to a tie for sixth in the overall. By the following week, the injured arm would be the color of a winter night over Southern Pines.

Logue struggled on Day 2.



Meanwhile the other injured soldier, Logue, hobbled around Mid Pines with a lackluster minus 5. Logue would recover slightly by the weekend and play better, but his second round would prove costly. Hyke also came back to the pack, but kept second place all to himself, with a pedestrian minus 3 effort on Friday. Eventual winner Matlock posted a plus 3 to get himself back into contention heading into the weekend. Pressley and Moser both recorded minus ones to forge a four way tie for third with Logue and Matlock. No other player appeared to be a factor at the midway point, as Moore and King struggled.

Trick Hoser Moser



At that evening's dinner, the first major controversy in the event's history erupted when Wood admitted to losing his 3 wood and 9 iron on the course during play. The clubs were never recovered, so Wood borrowed clubs from his playing partner, Abernethy, to finish the round. U.S.G.A. rules prohibit this practice, and normally the breach would result in the violating player's disqualification from the tournament. Rules One and Ten of the Calcutta Rules and Regulations, however, evidently trump anything conceived of by the U.S.G.A.

So despite the obvious conflict of interest, Wood held that his own violation was of no consequence. No penalty was levied. But this controversy was small potatoes compared to the row that ensued the following day.



Controversy swirled around Wood and Abernethy.

After that evening's Calcutta, as is their custom, Templeton and Moore repaired to the Mid Pines practice green for a rousing session of night putting. They were loudly serenaded by members of the Pinch Brook Women's Gynecologists Guild, who were enjoying Sangría and fish tacos during a moonlight fressing session on the clubhouse veranda. Templeton tried to entice them into a game of cell phone bingo, at a nickel a call, but could find no takers.



Templeton night putting.

Day 3 of the Southern Pines Invitational is always moving day, and this year was no exception. And, because the players already have a couple of rounds under their belts, the PPM form chart is usually more accurate on Day 3 than any other round. That also proved true this year.

The PPM had the favorites as Moore, Matlock, and Kimmet, in that order. Kimmet was the betting favorite, as his moribund Day 2 round could not shake the confidence of his cohorts. Moore also went for a premium price despite his dismal minus 4 performance earlier in the day. For reasons unknown to this writer, Matlock couldn't make believers out of the Calcutta participants. In what may have been the best bargain of the tournament, Matlock went to Wood for a bid well below the market for the other favorites.



Matlock demonstrates his winning form.

And did Matlock ever deliver. In the best round of his 13-year career on tour, Matlock pulled an astonishing 20 points. Keeping the ball short but in play, and chipping and holing impossible putts all day with an ancient Billy Baroo mallet putter, Matlock laid a massive plus nine on the field.

His score was enough to put him atop the leaderboard with a commanding three-stroke lead over Lawler, who finished at even. Moore played to PPM form to close with a plus 6, but was still far short of Matlock's lead. Wood slipped to minus 2, but was able to hold third place at plus 4.

Q ponders missed chances.



In a scoring snafu, Q-Ball's score was initially reported at plus 2, good enough for a third place tie with Logue. During the skins calculation, however, it was discovered that Kimmet's actual score had been plus 1. In a tough ruling by the Chairman, it was determined that since the third place pot had already been awarded, the day's payouts would not be changed. Logue's plus 2 left him in sole possession of fourth place for the tournament at plus 3, still within striking distance of the leader. But with his ankle still ailing, Logue knew that it would take a monumental effort on Sunday to catch Matlock.

Abernethy continued his pattern of taking the day off on alternate days. This was his off day, as he finished at minus 6, to fall into a tie for tenth. He would, of course, rebound on Day 4. Moser seemed to be in a slow downward spiral, finishing at minus 2 to lose ground for the second consecutive day. He would complete the slide with a

minus 4 on Sunday. Hyke and Pressley were impressive as a team, both finishing at minus 7, and coming in with a team score of minus 14.

King nearly decapitated himself.



Mike King, Matlock's playing partner, continued to struggle in the third round. After a disastrous minus 6 on Day 2, he followed with a minus 2 on Saturday. The best shot King hit all day was his second on number ten, which ricocheted off a pine tree and knocked his own hat off. Moser said King turned as white as a sheet from the experience. By dinner King was still shaken. After nearly being squashed by a tree last year and losing his orbs, King's near death experience on Day 3 appeared to affect his game greatly. He never returned to form the rest of the weekend and would finish in last place at a cumulative minus 13.

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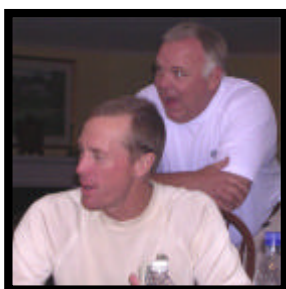
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Following the third round, the most explosive brouhaha of the tournament began to simmer. King casually mentioned to



Norm that his second shot on the par five fifteenth hole was from only 145 yards out. That struck Templeton as odd, as the hole played at 469 yards that day. King's as big a hitter as anyone, but Templeton was skeptical that King was 325 off the tee. Upon further inquiry, it turned out that King and his companions had played from the same forward tees as Thursday's round, when the hole played a more manageable 401 yards. The forward tees were off-white in color, so the players evidently did not notice that the white tees had been moved back. With the distance advantage, the foursome of

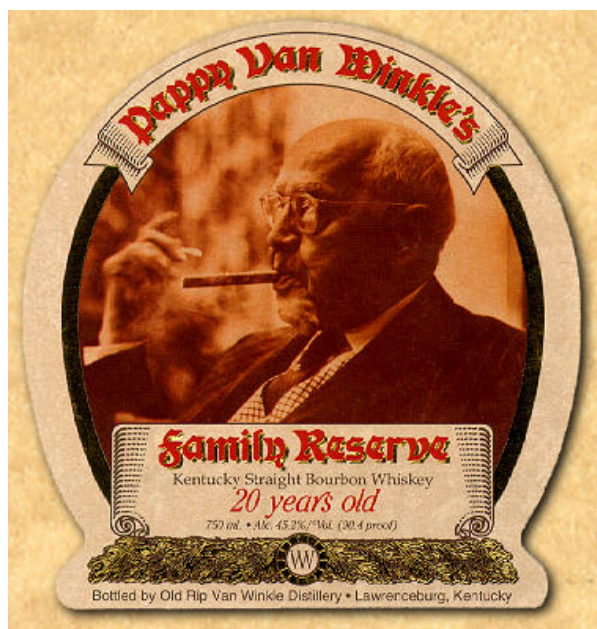
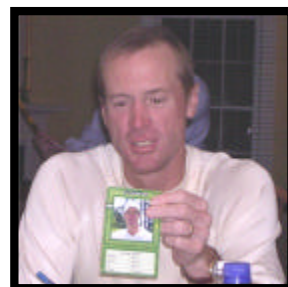


King, Matlock, Moser and Logue registered two pars and two birdies. Some argued that the hole, or perhaps even the entire round, should be voided for the group in question. Of course this would have greatly affected the leaderboard, with two of the top four spots occupied by Matlock and Logue.

The discussion grew more heated over dinner, culminating in a near free-for-all at the Long Leaf just prior to the Calcutta. It seemed as though an emergency tribunal might be necessary to adjudicate the merits of the controversy, with Depot Stove Pressley as the presiding officer. But before



formal proceedings could begin, the Chairman stepped in and ruled that since the prizes had been awarded, and that using the wrong tees had been without chicanery, no penalties would be assessed. Cooler heads had prevailed, but the rhubarb had a chilling effect on the rest of the evening's business. Wood tried his best but could not cajole much from the crowd in the last evening's Calcutta, usually the most lively each year. It is evident that major rule changes would be desirable for next year's event.



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They just didn't fall for Lawler on the back nine.

Moving into the final round, Matlock sought to protect his three shot lead. For most of the day it looked as though he would not, as Lawler would catch him. On fire with 15 points at the turn, and a par on ten, Lawler needed to play only moderately well on the balance of the back nine to post the clubhouse lead. But after playing so well through the first ten, Lawler's game and chance at immortality vanished like vapor. He could manage only one more point over the final eight holes to end up at minus 4 for the day, in fourth place overall.

Logue continued to grind it out through the final round to post a plus 2, good enough for third on the day and second place overall at plus 5. But the result was disappointing. His mind lingered over thoughts of what might have been had he not stepped in that hole. He and Moore had hoped that the Green Meadow experience would enable one of them to return the Turtle to the WMBAC offices and hang it on the wall. Now Logue has only a *faux* turtle and dreams of next year.



Abernethy seemed bewildered by his erratic play.

Meanwhile Abernethy was on schedule for a good round, and did not disappoint. His plus 5 got him the day's win. But his style of alternating good rounds with bad could get him only a minus 1 for the tournament, tied for sixth with Templeton. Kimmet finally showed his old form to post a plus 4 for the day, good for second. His round included a brilliant birdie on the extremely treacherous 12th hole, which got him four skins. His overall plus 1 managed to get him sole possession of fifth.



Faux Turtle.

Wood finished at even to nab third place at plus 4. Pressley also was even for the day, but at minus 6 overall, he finished tenth. Hyke was minus 3 to finish in eleventh position.



Q and Lawler celebrated Q's four skins.

Whether it was too much Pappy Van Winkle or doinking one off a parked car on the fourth hole on Sunday, Moore never lived up to the promise of low point quotas and extensive pre-tournament play. By Sunday morning, he was golfed out, and came in with a career low of 5 points. His overall minus 5 left him tied with Moser for eighth. It is obvious his game will require at least another year of short game psychotherapy before he can be considered a serious contender for the Turtle.



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Matlock was surprised to learn he'd won the Turtle.

As for Matlock, with only 2 points through nine, he played most of the last round believing he had lost the tournament. Only after reaching the eighteenth green at minus 3 did Matlock learn that Lawler and Logue had failed in their quests to run him down. Whereupon, Matlock proceeded to put an exclamation point on the Championship. He calmly used the Baroo to hole his final putt for par from some 60 feet away. With that Cinderella ending, Matlock was left only to try on the Turtle for the second time. The fit was perfect.

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Photo Gallery



