

THE DIMPLED ORB *DIGEST*

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Exclusive Coverage of the Southern Pines Invitational



On the Road to the
Elusive Terrapin

Special! Turtle Redux

A Star is Born

Monty Walton Comes From Behind; Overtakes Dan Moore to Share the Turtle.

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*By Chuck Dūmbáss, Publisher
Dimpled Orb Digest © 2008.*

SOUTHERN PINES, North Carolina (DOD) – A new day has dawned in Turtledom. Previously unheralded dark horses and former playing partners Monty “Piledriver” Walton and Dan “The Man” Moore waged a furious duel on the final day of the Southern Pines Invitational to share the most prized and elusive award in sport--the legendary Terrapin Travelin’ Trophy. Known variously as the “Terrapin” or simply the “Turtle” by its aficionados, the trophy enjoys a rich heritage whose true provenance was only recently discovered (see *Turtle Redux*, *infra*). With the conclusion of the Invitational on Sunday, the saga and mystique of the Turtle have continued their meteoric rise to unparalleled heights. And Piledriver Walton has hammered home his place among the greats who have sought the Turtle at golf’s highest levels.



Walton and Moore played down to the wire.

The tournament commenced in its usual fashion amid great anticipation among the competitors. Missing were Tour irregulars Danny “Depot Stove” Pressley and Norm, “the Total Package” Templeton. Stove used Excuse Number 5 for Missing the Golf Trip—My Kid Has a Prom. Greg “Longball” Goddard took his place as Toby “Hoss Cartwright” Hyke’s partner.



Goddard and Hyke admire the Turtle.

Templeton used the European Variant to Excuse Number 5—My Kid Has a Soccer Tournament. This is actually worse than the American version, and invites scorn from Tournament Director Greg Logue, who has a well-known and intense aversion to soccer. Says Logue, “I’ll believe soccer’s a real sport when a hundred thousand people watch it at Neyland Stadium.”

After much searching, Tracy “Manhole” Thompson was Norm’s last-minute replacement as Walton’s partner, evidently agreeing to this arrangement before being warned of Piledriver’s predilections and wardrobe avarice.



Thompson brought his own trophies to the party.

The rest of the cast included the Michael “Calcutta Chairman” Wood/Harvey “Papaw” Abernethy team; the Jon “Hairball” Lawler/Mark “Q-Ball” Kimmet team; and the Mike “High Maintenance” King/Richard “The Envy” Matlock team. After the shuffling of players, Moore and Logue teamed up for the first time on tour despite playing golf together regularly off the tour for over fifteen years.

With the field in place, the stage was set for the first Calcutta, at its customary place and time. After leading the players in the now familiar *Golf Trip Creed*, Wood reviewed the Calcutta and Tournament Rules, and his own golfing philosophy, in excruciating and hilarious detail, largely for the benefit of the newcomers. He then proceeded to recite what is already an instant classic—

The Nine Worst Excuses for Missing the Golf Trip.

- 9. Terrorist Attack.** Unless they actually blow up the golf course.
- 8. Work.** That’s why you have employees to cover your ass so you can go.
- 7. Injury.** Especially a pulled hamstring caused by swinging a club or rising from the dinner table.
- 6. Divorce.** Dan Moore missed two Trips for this. Just when you need to go the most and there’s no one there to tell you that you can’t.
- 5. My Kid Has a Prom.** Wood missed two of these and his kids had a great time anyway.
- 4. My Kid’s Graduation.** Every dumbass in the world graduates so what’s the big deal if you’re not there?
- 3. Weddings and Funerals.** The bride and groom and the person who’s dead couldn’t care less if you’re there.
- 2. Anniversaries and Birthdays.** Who’s the boss in your family anyway?
- 1. And the Number One Worst Excuse for Missing the Golf Trip--A Tree Fell on My House.** Just pack the wife and kids off to a motel, give ‘em a credit card, and tell ‘em to have a good time until you get back.

With those words of wisdom, following an endless slide show of last year's tournament, Wood conducted the Calcutta.



Wood antes up at the Calcutta.

Having seasoned for another year at Green Meadow, and with still below-the-Mendoza-line points, Moore was the odds-on favorite, bringing the largest bid. He was followed closely by Lawler and Wood. King had the highest PPM, but the lowest pain tolerance after suffering a pulled hamstring swinging a club while practicing. He bravely stayed in the field (*see Excuse Number 7 supra*), but received low bidding interest. Newcomers Longball and Manhole came in untested, with extensive reputations and points to match, both entering the tournament at 26. But with a long history of failures by first-timers, the bidders were disinclined to lay out top dollar for them. Whereupon, without further fanfare, the Calcutta was over and the 2008 Quest for the Turtle was officially on.



The assembled multitude. Back Row, L to R: Abernethy, Wood, Kimmet, Lawler, Hyke, Logue, Thompson, Matlock, King. Front Row, L to R: Goddard, Walton, Moore.

The Tournament opened at Pine Needles in idyllic conditions that would persist throughout the weekend. Fulfilling his early promise, Moore served notice that he was there to play with a splendid round of 18 points to command the lead at plus 10. So inspiring was his effort that community leaders decided to rename the county, formerly known as Fayette, after him.



Harvey opened at plus 6.

This was Harvey's day to play, so he carded a terrific 30 to take second at plus 6. Goddard avoided the first-timer's curse with a 30 of his own to place third with a plus 4. It was clear Hyke knew what he was doing when he brought Longball on the Trip. Walton also posted a nice round at plus 4 to tie for third. The rest of the players meandered about at roughly their own quotas, ranging from Wood's plus 2 to Matlock's minus 4.



Piledriver conducts the Lanyard Ceremony.

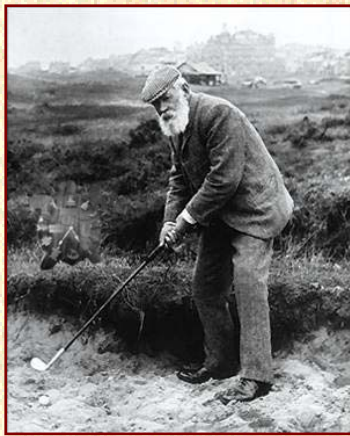
That evening's Calcutta was preceded by an awards ceremony conducted Piledriver. The affair began with a specially commissioned slide show prepared by Moore at Walton's request, entitled *Not Everyone Gets a Turtle*. Wood was so moved by the feature that his eyes welled with tears.

Thereafter Walton surprised the players with trophies to commemorate strong play. These consist of carefully crafted Golf Trip Medallions hung from Green Lanyards, to be worn by all the players while on the grounds at Mid Pines. The Lanyards are festooned with special Turtle pins to signify victories in the overall competitions since the Golf Trip's inception. Logue and Wood received four Turtles each for their wins over the years. Commencing with this year's event, a player will receive stars for placing in each day's Calcutta—Gold for first, Silver for second, Bronze for third. For his victory on Day One, Moore received the first ever Gold Star awarded in Golf Trip competition. To top it off, the current possessor of the Turtle has the special privilege of being attired with a singular Gold Lanyard bearing a Gold Medallion. As the reigning Turtle Man, Matlock was adorned with the Gold Lanyard until his reign as Turtle holder was over.

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 Servitim, 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.

--C. D.--

The introduction of the Lanyards was one of the most moving evenings in the history of the Golf Trip, which was quickly forgotten as the evening's Calcutta began. As is customary, Wood coaxed the pot to well above the first day's total. Belying all statistical analysis, Lawler commanded the high bid. He was followed by Moore after his strong opening round. Matlock also brought a premium based on his well-known affinity for Mid Pines.



Matlock squares off on Mid Pines.

For some reason, Matlock always burns up Mid Pines. The other players usually struggle with the treacherous, undulating greens that differ markedly from those at Pine Needles. As Day 2 warmed, Matlock used his now legendary Billy Barroo to fashion a masterful plus 8 round of 19 points. Following his first round minus 4, Matlock was back in the hunt at plus 4.

After a net 0 on Day One, Manhole Thompson got into the mix with a strong 32-point, plus 6 round to take second on the day and move into third in the overall. At the time, it was the strongest showing ever by a first time player (later surpassed by Goddard). Lawler came back to reward his buyer with a nice plus 5 to forge a tie with Matlock in the overall.



Thompson set a record on Day 2.

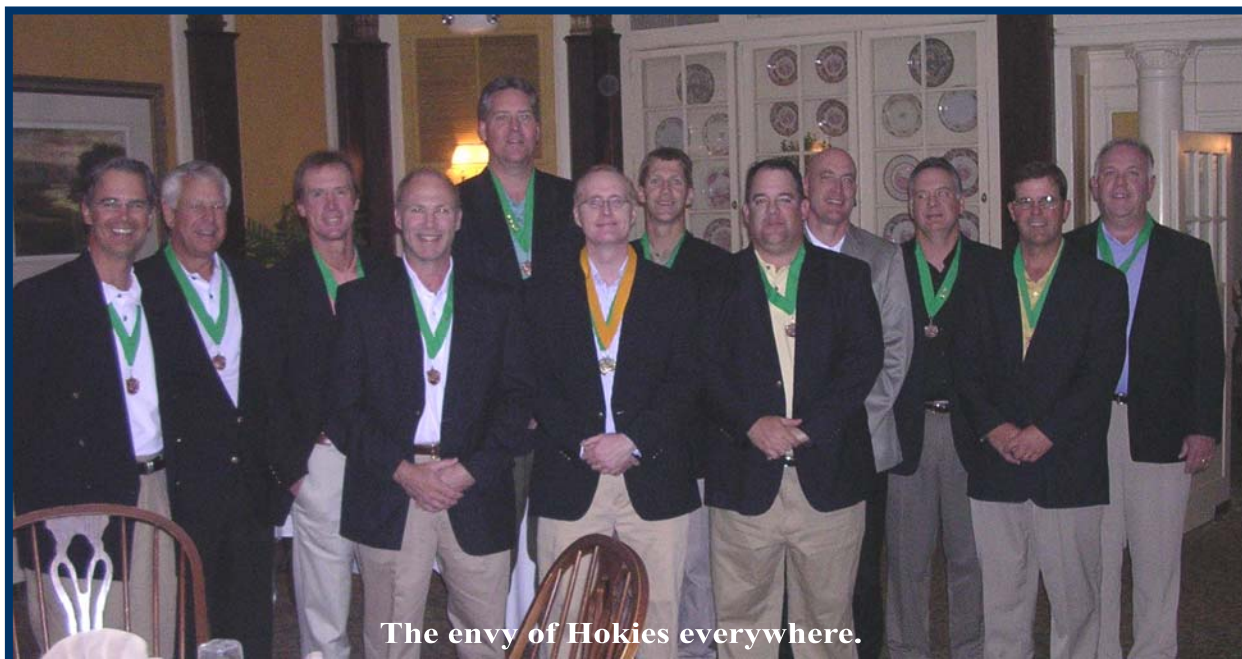
Walton continued his fine efforts with a plus 3, achieving a two-day total of plus 7, second in the overall. Meanwhile, Moore struggled on the back nine, salvaging a plus 2 on the day with a brilliant up and down par from an anthill under a dogwood on the eighteenth hole.

Hampered by his hamstring injury, King pulled a measly 5 points to card a minus 4 on the day. Also among the walking wounded, suffering from a rash of indeterminate origin, Logue posted a horrendous minus 9 to fall into the cellar. To top off his miserable day, Hyke nearly hit him with a shot from the woods on 18. After losing the Turtle last year as the result of a near fatal pine cone attack, Logue was ready to hire a full-time medical attendant to accompany him on the Trip. Until then, he had to settle for a bar of Zest soap to combat his rash. While looking for the soap, he nearly came to blows with another driver in the Wal-Mart parking lot, causing him to remark "You don't mess with a man with a rash."

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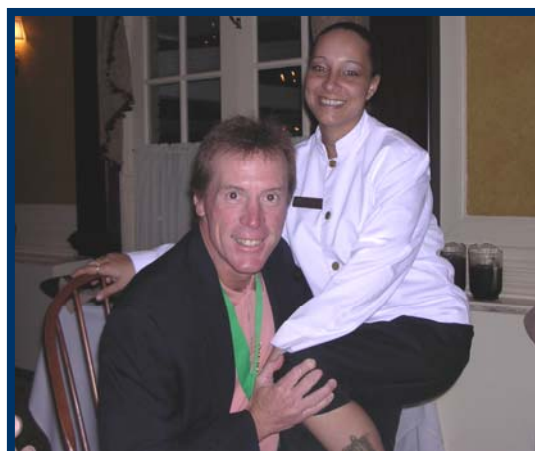
The envy of Hokies everywhere.

That evening, resplendent in their newly minted and decorated Lanyards, the fellows set out for dinner at the Clubhouse. Their attire evidently evoked rancor among other patrons, as catcalls could be heard from another table during the group photo. The source turned out to be the Virginia Tech Men's Alto Glee Club, in town for a little golf and a few choruses of "Hokie, Hokie, Hokie, High." In the absence of the North Carolina Association of Proctologists, the "Hokies" quickly became the new object of Wood's desire to whip somebody's ass.

Our waitress, Sarah, shared similar feelings, brandishing a straight razor to convince Wood of her earnestness. An instant bond was formed, as Wood remarked "I'll bet it's nothing for you to cut a man with that." After Sarah agreed, Wood explained the significance of the Turtles around his neck. Sarah was ecstatic, as it turns out she has a turtle of her own as a pet and the image of one tattooed on her leg. Wood tipped the "Turtle Girl" with one of his own Turtle pins and made her an honorary member of the Tour.

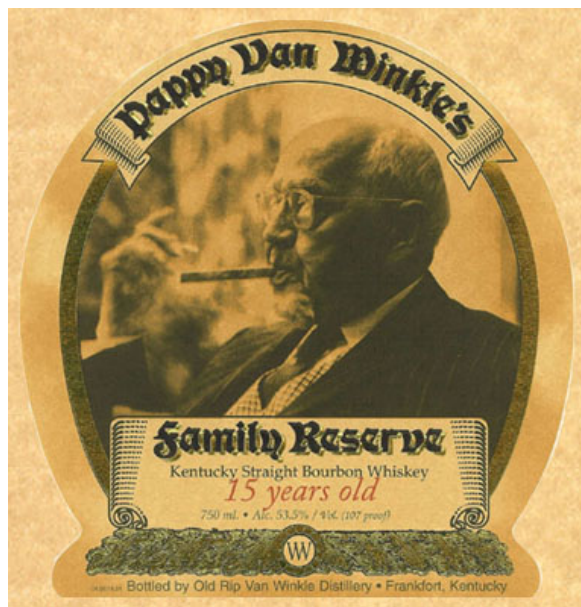


The Turtle tattoo.



Woody and the Turtle Girl.

At that evening's Calcutta, Moore, Matlock, and Lawler continued as the favorites due to steady play and reasonable PPM's. Meanwhile King had achieved what was previously thought to be a statistical impossibility. His point quota had dwindled to 7, while his PPM had risen to 7.4. This previously undiscovered anomaly caused Harvey to remark that "King looks like a mortal lock unless you've seen him play." Even with that analysis, King drew a relatively robust bid from his playing partner Matlock, who was freshly flush with cash from his victory earlier in the day.



That's right, Day 3 at Pine Needles is Moving Day. As clichéd as it sounds, it's nearly always true. This year was no exception as Greg Goddard moved in ways never before thought possible. Firing a tournament record 72, Goddard posted a magnificent 35 points, by far a record point total, that was good enough for a *plus 9*. This is a truly incredible feat for anyone who started the tournament at 26 and went *up 2* after the first day. These are records likely to stand for a long time.



Goddard sizzled on Day 3.

Meanwhile, the mere mortals in the field continued their strivings for the Turtle. Walton posted an excellent round of 18 points to grab second on the day and push his overall total to plus 12.



Walton made a move on Moving Day.

Matlock also continued his stellar play, including a Barroo shot from 60 yards on 17 to within two feet of the cup. The resulting par pushed him to 16 points, to which he added 1 on eighteen. This got him to plus 8 overall.

It was Abernethy's on day, so he followed his previous day's minus 2 to post a plus 3. Moore continued to grind, with a par on the last hole for the second day in a row to once again post a plus 2. Thus, with three rounds in the books, Moore led with 14, followed by his former partner Walton with 12. Matlock was third with 8, followed by Abernethy with 7, Lawler with 6, and the ever-dangerous Goddard with 6.



The non-contenders lost focus after Day 3.

After the third round, the competition committee, headed by Wood and Logue, decided to pair leaders Walton and Moore in the final group on Sunday. The thought was that with the entire field ringing the eighteenth green, it would make for an exciting conclusion to the Tournament. This turned out to be a clairvoyant move on the Committee's part.

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Walton won the Turtle but failed at Hyke totin'.

With the field thus rearranged, Wood began the final Calcutta. Once again, Moore was one of the favorites, garnering the second highest bid. The high bid was for King after Wood offered him for sale by the pound. Not to be outdone, Piledriver wagered with Wood that he, Walton, could carry Hyke up the Longleaf stairs. Walton failed in this effort so Hyke ended up buying himself. The rest of the field was divvied up in due course, resulting in the most robust pot of the weekend.

The final round started with Moore ahead of Walton by 2 points in the overall, playing on a quota of 12. Walton's quota had swelled to 15, so Moore had essentially a 5-point lead. Moore knew that if he could just stay within a couple of points of Walton, the Turtle would be his. That he managed to do through the twelfth hole, actually holding the outright lead, 12 to 11.

A turning point was 13, where Moore's bogey putt slid by, while Walton holed a curling four-footer for par. That left the margin at 4 with five holes to play. Walton continued to chip away, with single points at 14 and 16, while Moore played like Jean Claude van Damme and earned no points. But when Walton missed his bogey attempt at 17, it looked as though his comeback effort would fall short.

Standing on the tee at 18, Moore and Walton both had their points for the day. Moore was still up by 2 in the Turtle hunt, so Walton knew he had to make at least a par to forge a tie if Moore failed to point. That seemed like a tall order, since Walton had never parred 18 before. After Moore hooked his drive into the trees the door was opened, if only a little. Walton's tee shot was well placed. He followed it with a screaming three-wood to the fringe, while Moore was doinking his second off the yardage stake back into the woods. After three more shots finally got Moore to the green, he was out of the hole. Meanwhile Walton needed an up and down to tie. Walton's chip was about 15 feet short, so it looked as if Moore would survive his stumbles down the backstretch. But it was not to be. In the most thrilling conclusion of the Golf Trip ever, Walton holed the last shot of the tournament to finally pull even and claim a share of the Turtle.

And a share it was as the combatants agreed to split the award. Said Moore afterward, "Monty truly played like a champion today, especially the par at 18. I wish I had made one more point, but my hat's off to him for what he did. I'm just happy to be able to share the Turtle with him."

As for the rest of the field, Goddard had 18 points at the turn, and looked like he might actually catch the leaders. He finished at plus 3 for the day, in a tie for the Calcutta pot with King and Wood, and in third place for the Turtle. Matlock and Lawler both posted minus 1's to fall to fourth and fifth respectively. This was Harvey's day off. He slipped to eighth overall with a minus 8 on the day. Wood and Thompson tied for sixth at plus one followed by King, Kimmet and Hyke.



Logue looks to next year.

Logue managed a plus one for his round but could not get out of the cellar. He has vowed his now familiar refrain that he will retire from the game if he is no longer competitive.

They say that golf does not build character it reveals it. That was never truer than in the final round of this year's Southern Pines Invitational, as Monty "Piledriver" Walton's final shot will be the stuff of legend. Meanwhile, Moore is left to ponder his missed chances to hold the Turtle alone, and to get ready for next year.



Moore congratulates Walton on his fine play.



Photo Gallery





