

## Sarah's Journal Entries to The Southern from the Ricoh British Women's Open 2015

### DAY ONE FROM ST. ANDREWS

And so it begins.....the first day of my Ricoh British Women's Open trip. You may be confused on how two days can be the first day.....but you get up on Thursday morning, travel to Philadelphia all day, get on another plane, fly all night, arrive in Glasgow and then keep yourself awake all day to try and reset the internal clock.

Traveling with me this trip is a college teammate from when we played for the Salukis, Kim Birch. We have been friends for over 40 years now and have had many "adventures" involving the game.

We came to Scotland three days prior to beginning my official responsibilities in the hopes that we could play some venues of note--most important on our list was the Old Course at St. Andrews. We were told that it would be a very tough tee time to get because of The Open Championship being here last week but we were not deterred and decided to give it our best shot

So.....upon landing in Glasgow at 6:50 a.m., we picked up our rental car to take off for St. Andrews, approximately 2 hours away. We knew driving on the wrong side of the road, from the wrong side of the car would be challenging.. Little did we know that all the cars have manual transmissions. That didn't bother me because my Jeep has a stick that I am quite proficient with.....but I had not considered the shifting would also be done with my opposite hand. Bottom line, we arrived safe and sound at St. Andrews around 1100 am. With lots of laughs.

We went immediately to St Andrews to trying and secure a tee time. We were told that all times were filled for the day and that 17 people were on the walk up list ahead of us. Our chances didn't look very good but we told the staff it was our only chance to play the course and so we started our long wait. Crab Orchard Golf Club Members, Fred and Luan Neal, who have traveled extensively to Scotland, had told me to find their friend, Paul, who is a starter. We found Paul and introduced ourselves , but he, like other staff, was not optimistic about our chances.

So our long wait began.....we were able to putt on the practice green and have lunch. It was a beautiful day and we were quite content to spend the afternoon sitting around the first tee at St. Andrews. I always say the golf world is very small and as I sat there, around the corner came two USGA Committee members that I know from Arizona , Ed Gowan and Lorraine Theis. They were leading a tour for twenty of their Arizona friends to the British Open and various other venues. Ed is an International Member of the R & A and took me into the Clubhouse to see the trophy room. What a special place!

The afternoon was getting long and finally at 310, there was a no show. They began going down the list of names for walk ups and the first one to say "here" would get the spot. Being so late in the day many had given up hope and left. We, however, were still there and they finally called Kim's name. She was in!

I went back to my bench at the first tee to continue my wait hoping my name would come up next. I knew that there may not be another no show but I was willing to wait for my chance to play at the birthplace of golf.

At 450, all tee times were complete and at 500 the tee reopened to local member of St Andrews....my chances were almost none that I would get to play. Finally at 520, I was asked if I would like to join some local members..... Of course I did!!! Colin, Blythe, and Jack would be my newest best friends.

Colin, a nurse, and Blythe, a postman, were brothers. Jack was Colin's college age son. What a treat it was to play with them and hear about everything from a local's perspective. The course is much different than it appears on TV. The ball kicks and bounces all over the place. The bunkers are SO deep. At 9:50 p.m. We walked up the 18th hole bathed in the light from the St Andrews clubhouse. What a special day!!

On tomorrow's agenda....play at the Jubilee course at St Andrews (we have a tee time) and explore the village.

## **DAY TWO AT ST. ANDREWS**

Today was a great day. Started the day playing golf at the Jubilee course which is part of the golf complex here at St. Andrews. Many of the holes run parallel to holes on the Old Course giving me a second look at them. The weather was unusually nice until we completed the front nine and then the rain and wind moved in. It rained hard enough that the droplets ran from the brim of my cap. It was very interesting to see that nobody on the course started running in or anything--they just played on!!

That is one of the most interesting things I have observed so far. The folks here play hard. It doesn't matter where their ball is, they deal with it. Doesn't matter what the weather is, they deal with it. They play very quickly. Everyone knows who has the honor on the tee. On approach shots they don't watch everyone else's swings, they hit as soon as it is their turn. On the green, there isn't a lot of extra time taken reading putts, marking balls, etc.. They are efficient players!

After playing, it was off to the village to explore. I do not recommend this place to anyone not interested in golf as there is very little that doesn't revolve around the game in one way or another. If you love golf like I do, you have to come here!

Tomorrow it is off to play at Crail. We have a late tee time so we will have time for a few quick "must dos" such as retaking our pictures on the Swilcan Bridge (it was so dark Friday night they didn't take) and seeing more of the city sites.

## **LAST DAY AT ST. ANDREWS**

Got up this morning and looked out the window to see people starting to come to the Old Course. It is closed for golf on Sunday as they want the "people of St Andrews" to be able to enjoy it. The locals and tourists come to enjoy the links. They bring their dogs and kids. They play frisbee, take pics, have picnics, etc. . Anything but golf. We had breakfast at the St Andrews Links Clubhouse and then set off to play Crail. After playing The Old Course which is the oldest in the world, Crail seems very young--it is "only" the 7th oldest. Crail was much different from St Andrews as it was quite hilly. It was also very different as there were spectacular views as each hole was seaside. The wind howled and it was a bit chilly. To give you an idea of the wind, I hit a driver on an uphill 143 yard par 3. I was able to get it hole high but under normal conditions I sure don't hit driver for 143 yards. Crail is in the middle of nowhere. The drive out there is challenging--remember I am on wrong side of road, wrong side of car, shifting manual transmission with wrong hand, and NOW, they throw in a one lane road with "pullovers" for oncoming traffic! Passed an old airfield that was used for WWII . We threw in quick stops at Kingsbarns and St Andrews Castle course just checking them out since we were in the area.

Had dinner tonight at The Jigger Inn which is near the Old Course Hotel. We were seated next to some folks and as we overheard their conversation, we thought, they sounded like us.. We asked them where they were from. They were from near Nashville. Great people and we really enjoyed dinner as we just made it a table of six. They were just beginning their trip.

What a fabulous experience so far!! Did all of the things golfers MUST do--played the Old Course, visited the R&A Clubhouse, had my picture made on the Swilcan Bridge, went to Old Tom Morris's golf workshop, snacked at the Dunvegan, stayed at The Old Course Hotel, bought souvenirs .....the whole thing was a totally awesome experience.

Tomorrow it is off to Glasgow where I will turn in my rental car--hallelujah--and be "collected" by the official transportation of the Ricoh British Women's Open for transport to Turnberry.

### FIRST ROUND FROM TURNBERRY

Today was the first round. Getting to this point has been quite involved with course walks, mapping, and rules meetings. Turnberry is quite a special place. It is located right on the sea with absolutely breath taking views. All of our lodging is here on site so it is convenient from that standpoint, but it also presents challenges as there are very few places to eat etc.

My starting time for today was 7:42. Due to the fact that they don't have as many officials as we have in the US, instead of sending a walking referee with each group, they assign each referee three groups and put us in a cart. It is between very difficult and impossible to know what each of your groups are doing with all of the galleries and roping. Rounds were quite long with my final group being 38 minutes over their anticipated pace. I had three rulings but they were nothing of earth shattering interest. Probably the most interesting was a request to replace the ball in play. It is so rare these days to have a ball that is cut or cracked but one of my players indeed had a cut ball.

Mid morning we received radio traffic that we were having a helicopter land and that if the noise bothered a player that it was ok for them to delay and back off their shot. The helicopter was delivering Donald Trump, owner of Turnberry. Fortunately, most players just ignored the disruption and kept playing.

We were really lucky with the weather as it was sunny, cold, and windy. We have been told it is the best day we will get for the Championship. Tomorrow, particularly late day, the rain is to move in and continue through Saturday. It is hard to officiate or play in those difficult conditions. When officiating, the most difficult challenge is keeping paperwork and radios dry.

For round two, I start at 7:03. It will be interesting to see how players position themselves as they try to make the cut.

### ROUND TWO FROM TURNBERRY

Today was round 2. A much earlier start for me today--5:05 wake up call which is about the same time I get up at home.

The first challenge was dressing appropriately. At tee time, the temp was projected to be 51 with lots of wind and rain for later in the round. 51 isn't too bad, but with damp wind, it certainly isn't my favorite weather. All of my friends know that I hate to be cold so....I ended up with 6 to 7 light layers on top and two on bottom. That combined with several kinds of headgear would be just the ticket.

Properly dressed, it was off to the course which is just a short walk from my room. The first order of business was to retrieve my radio, paperwork, a towel, and umbrella from the rules office. Next stop was at the Ladies Golf Union to pick up a cart key followed by the long walk to the "buggy" barn to secure my ride. I have my own keys to almost every cart made but they have a system here to circumvent my strategy (guess they know about people like me). Each cart has a 6 digit code that has to be entered after inserting a key or the cart won't move. Now that I'm finally on the move, just two more stops--the Media Center for a Diet Coke and finding a quiet place to organize my paperwork for the round.

With my three groups going at 7:03, 7:14, and 7:25, I made my way to the first tee. Yesterday Natalie Gulbis was my marquis player, but today I had a stable full--Stacy Lewis, Inbee Park, Anna Nordqvist, So Yeon Ryun, Charley Hull, Azahara Munoz, and Christie Kerr--girls who certainly can play! As I've said in an earlier entry, trying to officiate for three groups is really tough but adding in

the large galleries watching these superstars and the weather, I worked hard today!

Following today's round, I was invited to a luncheon hosted by the Ladies Golf Union in the Ricoh Hospitality Center. I was seated between two guys who were administrators for the Royal & Ancient--great conversations!! When I finished and started my walk back to my room, the rain intensified.. Good to have live TV coverage in my warm, dry room.

Following the completion of play today, the cut will be made. I will have three groups for Round three beginning with the 10:20 group. Sure hoping for better weather.....but if it doesn't improve, at least I'm getting a good taste of real Scottish golf.

### **ROUND THREE FROM TURNBERRY**

We awoke to beautiful sunshine for round three, but we all knew that wouldn't last long in Scotland. Checking the weather forecast, I quickly discovered we would see all four seasons in one round of golf.

I had two groups today instead of the normal three to shepherd around because a starter's time that had been built in. It may not sound like a big deal, but keeping up with two groups is unbelievably easier. My players, Jaye Marie Green, Hannah Jang, Charley Hull, and Azahara Munoz all hit it fairly well. Jaye Marie was probably the wildest, but she was fast to find it and hit it again.

The round started with sunshine and cold wind. About a third of the way through the round, the chief referee called our onsite meteorologist to see if winds were supposed to continue to increase as balls were beginning to oscillate on the greens. The report was that steady winds should continue with even higher gusts as the day wore on. Then the skies darkened-- really darkened -- over the sea and we prepared for heavy rain. A call came over our radios asking if all referees had a claxon. I didn't know whether to respond that I had one or not as I didn't know what a claxon was. If it had been used in context, I could have figured it out but without that, I was lost. I quickly found some friendly faces in the gallery who informed me that a claxon was a loud noise producer which I assumed meant an air horn in English. I soon after saw one of the LPGA Tour officials working the event and he too admitted he didn't know what a claxon was either. We shared a good laugh. Shortly after, the rain moved in, and with wind, it came at us sideways. One of my groups was playing the very difficult 16th hole during the storm and both players hit into the water fronting the green. It was most unfortunate because under normal conditions I don't believe we would have had balls in the water.

Just as quickly as the rain came, it left leaving the calm, sunny conditions. The players with late tee times for sure had luck of the draw today for scoring opportunities.

As we were finishing our 18th hole, I turned to my left to have Donald Trump watching. He moved on rather quickly and soon thereafter his helicopter took off.

For the final round I have been assigned to walk with one group to officiate like we do at our USGA Championships. I have been assigned the third to the last group for my final round around Turnberry.

### **FINAL ROUND FROM TURNBERRY**

Today was the final round of the 2015 Ricoh British Women's Open. The day started, as they all do here in Scotland, looking at the weather to try and plan the wardrobe. I work in a business where assessing the weather is super important, but in most places it isn't as tough as it is here. Get it wrong, and you will be absolutely miserable! It was rainy and windy, but it appeared to hold promise for a bit warmer temps so I elected to go with only four layers. I loaded my rain gear ( "waterproofs" as they call them) into my backpack knowing that with luck I could throw them onto a rover cart and get to them if I had made a poor decision.

My assignment was walking with the 1:25 starting time as their referee. My players were the World

#1, Inbee Park and Minjee Lee. I have refereed for both of these players several times. As Chairman of the U.S.Girls' Jr. Championship, I had the privilege to officiate the final match in 2012 at Lake Merced when Minjee Lee defeated Allison Lee so I thought it would be really neat if Inbee could come from behind to win and I would have a pair of Champions that I had officiated for in the final round.....but enough for that thought, we had miles to go with a trouble filled golf course.

We started the round with Minjee and Inbee trading birdies on #1 and #2 but they were still way behind the leader. The rain started on #3 and they became more focused. It was Inbee who really got it going with birdie after birdie. I had three rulings during the round--two with Inbee and one with Injee. We had an Appendix section rule in effect here for balls that are within two club lengths of a sprinkler head and the sprinkler head is within two club lengths of the green. It is a rule that is only implemented on golf courses where putting from off the green is important to the playing of the course. One of my rulings involved that rule and the other was for interference for an immovable obstruction. She called me over and said it sounded like there was something solid under her ball. The rough was quite long and visually nothing was showing but when we probed, indeed there was an irrigation plate under her ball. I granted relief and we were again on our way. Minjee's ruling involved the water hazard on #16. It was pretty typical relief except she was really hoping to get to go to the drop zone. Unfortunately, her ball had not crossed the hazard line in an area allowing her anything other than standard relief.

Coming down the 18th hole, I stole a look at the leader board and let the thought of Inbee winning creep into my mind. Shortly thereafter, one of the TV crew accompanying our group said that someone had made double bogey back on #16. I knew that in all likelihood, Inbee would be the Champion. I accompanied them into the scoring area (recording area as they call it over here). Following the signing of cards and before interviews, she came over and handed me an autographed ball. I asked if she would sign my rules badge and she obliged.

It seems that all went well here at Turnberry but I would be amiss if I didn't tell on myself. For USGA events, we are required to wear solid black or brown shoes so I thought I should try to do the same over here. On the first day, I was called over to help a player determine if she was in a bunker or not. I should preface this with the fact that US bunkers don't hold a candle to these. I worked myself into position to determine the position of the ball and was getting out of the area. Unfortunately.....the terrain was very steep and my USGA black shoes are spikeless. As I started moving back up into the fairway, I began sliding sideways. It was slow motion and I ended up IN the bunker. I figure if that was the worst thing I did, I'm ok.

Tomorrow is travel day. Flying out of Glasgow arriving in Nashville, TN at about 430 if all goes well. This week has been an absolutely fabulous experience. I often tell my friends how fortunate I am that God allowed golf to be a part of my life because a small town girl has had a lot of special opportunities because of it. Looking forward to getting back to my family and friends at Crab Orchard Golf Club and my next adventure.

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