



IN HIS OWN WORDS

Dan Jerred: A Pilgrimage to the Home of Golf

Avid golfer Dan Jerred travelled to the game's oldest and most storied course, St. Andrews in Fife, Scotland, to witness the 150th anniversary of The British Open.

Most golfers will tell you their life would be complete if they could play one round on the most hallowed and sacred ground in the sport: The Old Course at St. Andrews Links. Attending The British Open, which has been staged there 28 times, would likely come a close second.

In 2010 I reached a milestone birthday, and as a reward I travelled to the oldest major championship in golf to witness the venerable competition's 150th anniversary. With a bit of luck, I also hoped to tee up on the Old Course — a golfer's ultimate form of self-actualization and fulfillment (with apologies to my first-year Psychology Professor Don Morgenson).

St. Andrews is a small seaside town in the northeast of Scotland, about one hour north of Edinburgh. In many ways it is frozen in the 1800s. Every second storefront is a golf shop. The locals eat, breathe and sleep golf, especially during The Open. Strangers asked me who I "fancied" to take the title. And where else could you wear golf shoes around town and not be viewed as some absent-minded

golfer who forgot to take his spikes off after a round on the links?

Despite the lack of drama on the tournament's final day — South African Loius Oosthuizen easily won by six strokes — it was an amazing experience to see some of golf's greats hole out on the infamous Road Hole, and finish their round on the 18th hole in front of the St. Andrews Links clubhouse and Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (R&A) headquarters.

I had the wonderful good fortune to be in the right place at the right time to witness the shot of the tournament. On the Saturday afternoon, one of European golf's most colourful and likeable characters, Miguel Angel Jimenez (aka The Mechanic) found his ball lying almost directly against the wall behind the Road Hole's 17th green — an unplayable lie for most golfers.

The Mechanic calmly positioned himself facing away from the green and caromed the ball off the wall onto the putting surface. The crowd went wild. Later, when asked

how difficult it was to execute this seemingly impossible shot, Jimenez deadpanned that it was no big deal since he practised that shot "all the time."

My pilgrimage to the home of golf was truly memorable and the trip of a lifetime.

But I left St. Andrews with one piece of business tragically left unfinished. No round of golf at The Old Course! If you want to tee it up at the home of golf, it's best not to travel to St. Andrews near The Open Championship when demand for tee times easily exceeds supply. I settled for an excellent consolation: a round at Balcomie Links (partially designed by Old Tom Morris himself) with old friend Arthur Stephen (BA '73), also in St. Andrews for the tourney.

All going well, I'll be back.

This story is dedicated to the memory of Wilfred McIntyre 'Mac' Wilson (BA '67), who was a scratch golfer and multiple club champion at Westmount Golf & Country Club.