

Nathan Crace's

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Cease and Desist

By: Nathan Crace Date: May 19, 2008

It's been a year and just like clockwork, here come the writers, pundits, and soothsayers who want to make the Players Championship at the TPC Sawgrass the fifth major. It's almost too tiring to discuss. More than one major national golf publication has spent considerable copy space discussing the merits of the idea. After all, now that such a great event with so much history (reality check: 26 years is not long and storied in the world of golf) is being played in the month of May, it only makes sense. Now there won't be that nagging lapse of two months between the Masters in April and the US Open in June (go back to the archives on the Lipouts.com web site and read my May 2007 article entitled "When Four is More Than Five" for a look back into the crystal ball from a year ago). We saw this coming from a mile away—or at least from Augusta to Ponte Vedra Beach. The TOUR moved its flagship event to May because course renovations and schedule changes forced its hand, now Finchem and Company simply sit and wait for everyone to say "You know, it does make sense doesn't it?" Sure.

Not that I have anything against the event or the course. I've long been fascinated with the TPC Sawgrass and Pete Dye is one of my favorite modern architects. But to call a tournament the game of golf's fifth major is a long shot at best for a number of reasons. Strangely, the weekly publication *Golf World* had a Players preview issue with an interesting survey of TOUR players who said that they do NOT think the Players would be the fifth major. Many picked the Memorial, some the Arnold Palmer Invitational, and still other spots on the schedule. For that matter, if there were a need for a fifth major, where do you stop? Ten years from now will be breaking up into individual discussion groups studying the merits of which even should be the 48th major each year? The Frys.com Open? How about the Justin Timberlake Open? No seriously, that's a real event this year in mid-October.

There are four majors for a reason (see that article from last year I mentioned earlier). But beyond that, we must remember that now—more than ever—we are in a global way of life with no turning back. The world grows smaller each year with the Internet and jet service, the growth of technology, and better infrastructure. Just look at the growth of the European Tour (about as close to a World Tour as Greg Norman could ask for). For that matter, where do we get off telling the rest of the world's golfers that yet another event in America is the fifth major? We already lay claim to 75% of the current majors. In contrast, the professional tennis circuit has 75% of their majors (Grand Slam events) outside the USA: Wimbledon, The French Open, and the Australian Open. Why wouldn't the Scottish Open, the Australian Open, or the Canadian Open be golf's fifth major? Because the TOUR doesn't pump marketing dollars into them like they do their own flagship event? If you hadn't noticed, the World Golf Championships are played in the US...a little presumptuous perhaps? When's the last time we won a Ryder Cup? Someone call the Euros and tell them they are not worthy of participating in the discussion. Maybe they'll get back to us after they hand us our collective hind parts this fall in Louisville.

Okay, so I know it sounds like I'm some conspiracy theorist. Like I think the TOUR is like "Big Brother" telling us what to think and what to believe. Never mind that two of the four majors are "open" events run by the USGA and R&A. Remember, we are merely golfers...consumers really. They know what is best for us...just trust them and everything will be okay. Well, I for one refuse to sit back and listen to the ridiculousness continue. Some have said that the TOUR has eyes everywhere and that I need to be careful because their control reaches further than I know. I'm scared. This is my opinion and I'm entitled to it—right or wrong. It just happens to be that I'm right. What are they going to do to me? It's not like they can just cut off my column right in the midd