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Let Martin ride

The PGA needs to admit golf isn't about walking by letting Casey Martin use a cart

AN EMERALD EDITORIAL

Some people consider golf an ancient and admirable institution, important because of the skill required and the history involved. Others take a disdainful view of the sport, seeing it as a silly excuse to pollute local waterways with chemicals and fertilizers while whacking a little white ball with a stick.

Frankly, it doesn't matter. Most of the time, golf is of interest only to a few people who hold something closer to the former view of the sport. In recent days, however, golf has become a political event.

Sure, golf has always been political simply because too many presidents have decided to drop too many bombs while out on the links. More recently, though, the golf course has become the latest field of battle for the fight over the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Casey Martin is suing the Professional Golf Association for the right to use a cart while playing on the tour. Martin, who suffers from a rare disorder that affects the flow of blood in his leg, says that walking an entire course is extremely difficult and could worsen his condition.

The PGA doesn't claim Martin can play without a cart. It simply refuses to let him play with a cart. The reason: According to the association and many of its players, the walk is an integral part of the game of golf.

Maybe we just don't understand. Maybe, if we'd been raised in the appropriate country-club environment, we would see that golf is such a holy sport that using a cart would violate its very essence.

As it happens, we don't think golf is defined by the solemn, caddy-assisted march across the course. Golf, it seems to us, is about hitting a ball into a hole. That may be silly or it may be profound — it certainly requires considerable skill — but it has very little to do with using or not using a cart.

ing a cart.

Under the disabilities act, reasonable accommodations must be made to allow disabled people to use public facilities. A federal court has already ruled that the act does apply to the PGA, saying the tour is a commercial enterprise and the courses are places of "public accommodation," according to the Associated Press.

This means it is now up to the court to decide if allowing Martin to use a cart would unreasonably skewer the playing field. As we said, we

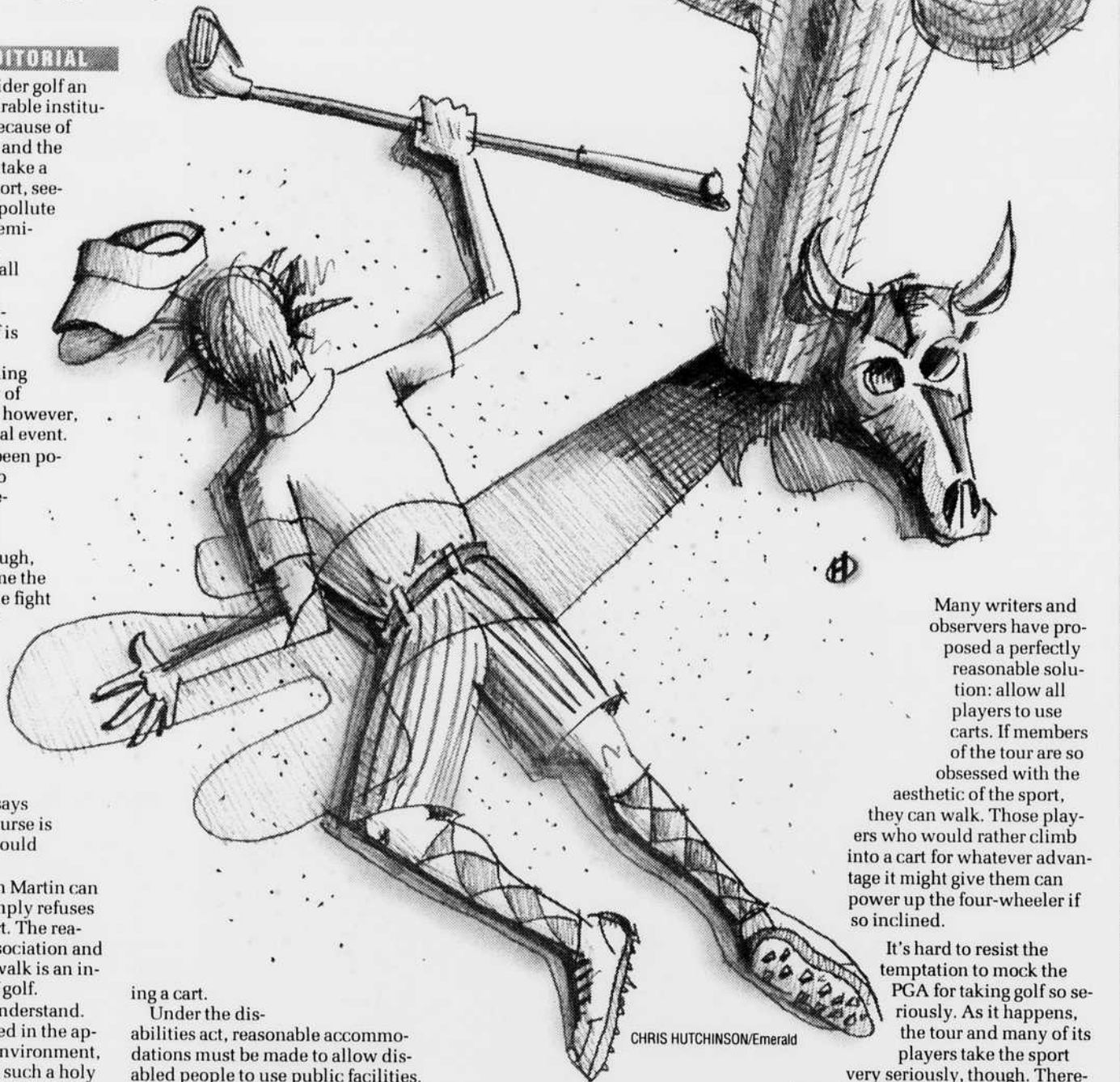
don't think it does. When we think of golf, we think "stick, ball, hole." "Hike" never comes into play.

Some players have argued that, even if the walk is not an integral part of the game, allowing Martin to use a cart would give him an unfair advantage because he won't be fatigued from marching across the course.

Many writers and observers have proposed a perfectly reasonable solution: allow all players to use carts. If members of the tour are so obsessed with the aesthetic of the sport, they can walk. Those players who would rather climb into a cart for whatever advantage it might give them can power up the four-wheeler if so inclined.

It's hard to resist the temptation to mock the PGA for taking golf so seriously. As it happens, the tour and many of its players take the sport very seriously, though. Therefore, at a serious level, we believe the spirit of golf will be better upheld by allowing a player who cares about the game to participate than by banning him because he can't chase after his ball on foot.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu



CHRIS HUTCHINSON/Emerald

Thumbs



To The Register-Guard:

Eugene, as a college town, offers many opportunities for education about diversity. Not only does the University strive to teach tolerance and understanding, but the Eugene community is enriched by the presence of a varied student body. So why is it that editorial writers at The Register-Guard consistently display a profound ignorance of the issues surrounding rape and sexual assault? In an earlier editorial, we expressed our disgust with the Guard for expressing archaic and destructive attitudes about rape when it suggested that the women who have accused Danta Graham-Preston of sexual misconduct couldn't have been raped because they had prior sexual contact with him. Now, after the Frohnmayer decision, the Guard has reasserted its ignorance. The latest editorial reads, in part: "Both women are accusing the defendant of having sexual intercourse with their permission even though each acknowledges having a prior sexual relationship with the man and having agreed to spend the night in his house." As before, the Guard is perpetuating the myth that women somehow "ask" for rape by putting themselves in close contact with a man. Regardless of Frohnmayer's decision or the merits of the cases, it is crucial that the Guard and others recognize rape as a question of consent. Past sexual histories or overnight stays do not constitute consent and should not be used to justify sexual intercourse if it was unwanted.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Editor's note: In previous stories dealing with the Danta Graham-Preston sexual misconduct cases, people have been quoted labeling Graham-Preston as a "rapist." The Emerald wants to clarify that Graham-Preston has been charged with two counts of sexual misconduct and found in violation of the Student Conduct Code. He has not been charged with or convicted of rape. His cases have been remanded to the University Appeals Board by University President Dave Frohnmayer.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'More responsible choice'

Your Roe vs. Wade celebration article by Michael Burnham (ODE, Jan. 23) fell short, by quite a bit, from being objective, professional journalism. The pro-abortion viewpoints were given twice the space as the pro-life views. The pro-life space left out our reasoning and explanations and merely stated our objectives. In addition you used the term "anti-choice" to refer to our initiative, thus adopting our opponent's rhetoric as your own.

"Anti-choice" is unfair given that our initiative leaves the woman with her current full array of choices for the first three months of pregnancy. In other words, if you get pregnant in June, you have until September to do whatever you choose. Rather than "anti-choice," you could have said

"more responsible choice" or "less barbaric choice." It is reasonable for a society that allows a mother to kill the child in her womb to require her to do it early, rather than half the way through the birthing process. Only 25 percent of Americans support abortion in the second trimester or later. A majority of Americans even oppose first trimester abortions if you allow exceptions for rape, incest, severe birth defects and life of the mother. A woman told me how her daughter had an abortion in the eighth month. If she had inconvenienced her life for less than a month longer, she could have blessed that child with life and a childless couple with a baby and charged lives for generations.

Barry Williams

Communications Director, Lane County Oregon Citizens Alliance

CORRECTIONS

The article "Case decision sparks protest on campus" (ODE, Feb. 3) reported inaccurate information. ASUO President Bill Miner's quote should have read, "People need to be aware that we have an alleged rapist on campus, and we don't want him here." Additionally, in the article "Frohnmayer asks board to review cases" (ODE, Feb. 2) Miner's quote should have read, "I don't want to ... know that my female friends are walking around on campus with an alleged rapist."

In Hannah Dillon's column "Bookstore backbones" (ODE, Feb. 3), Robert Canaga should have been identified as art supply buyer for the Fine Arts Department of the University Bookstore.

The photo of a skull accompanying the story "Remains of the Day" (ODE, Feb. 4) should have been identified as a modern harbor seal skull.

The Emerald regrets the errors.