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Adventitia

The Crofton Cup

British Lung Foundation ventures are astonishingly effortophilic – turning up on an October day when the Perthshire mountains are white with the first snow and hands are as blue as the sky.

Old acquaintances, friends of friends, and not a few colleagues consent to over-the-odds payment for the cause. Handicaps are cut by a cruel third under Crofton Cup rules and they're off – brisk, focused, as courteous as golfers meeting in the rough.

“How's your game?”

“Much like yours.”

Off they go in their opposite ways. The longest drive is won by a lady on the uphill par 5. The 290 yard gentleman accepts defeat although the lady has the advantage of the forward tee (120 yards start).

“Bad luck.”

Breathless at the green we agree that this course is not for those with compromised airflow or low transfer factor. The youngest competitor nearest the pin on the 18th was furthest away from fitting the prize – Sam T's Ryder Cup shirt – nice photograph though and signed with a pencil which has graced a thousand scorecards.

So what if Sir John denied golfing genius, his was a player's speech – crisp, precise, humorous, and gently self-critical – the ideal approach from tee to green. By sheer luck the cup was won by a chest physician domiciled in St Andrews. Did October's alternative golf attraction (Dunhill Cup) in that nearby town reduce our numbers? Maybe a courtesy bus for

the golfers with emphysema went there instead.

The American Lung Association has a Golf Privilege Scheme to reduce playing fees to subscribers which was advertised in the Christmas edition of *Golf Magazine* as: “Some gifts are so special they take your breath away. Some gifts give it back.” The monetary gifts involving tobacco sponsorship in sport seem inappropriate. The money from the good old generous cigarette manufacturer is proposed as a gift to the sport of golf which then kindly allows advertising only from the sponsor. Several questions arise. Which will survive? Will tobacco sponsorship outlive the sport? Which can breath hold longer? Can golf survive as we know it, and escape from the noose of tobacco advertising and its slow asphyxia?

The Crofton Cup and the Dunhill Cup were a happy coincidence. Blue hands again next year I suppose – or maybe not – since the Crofton Cup will be played at the end of September on a links Open qualifier course which is primed for this year's Open at Turnberry. Neither the Open nor the Crofton Cup are sponsored by tobacco – in fact, the Crofton is the main UK golf competition which extols the basic philosophy of a non-smoking golf event. Details of the next Crofton Cup can be obtained from The British Lung Foundation Scottish Office, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, 232–42 St Vincent Street, Glasgow G2 5RJ (tel: 041 204 4110).

KENNETH ANDERSON

Contributions to this column encouraged (maximum 600 words), otherwise the column will close. – SGS