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THE TOUR—AN EXPLOSIVE DECADE

This is a story about the Pro Tour. Also known as the Professional Golfers' Association of America Tournament Circuit, or Pro Golf's Circuitous Caravan, or The Long Gray Grind for Gold, or, quite simply, as The Tour.

It is also a story about one of The Tour's most interesting performers. That's me, the narrator. Also known as Anthony David Lema, or Champagne Tony, or, quite simply, as Tony.

There are perhaps a hundred touring pros like me—or near enough like me to make my story their story. We float along on a tournament schedule that runs from year end to year end. We compete for almost $2,500,000 in prize money and hundreds of thousands of dollars in peripheral income. This is a great deal of money and some professional golfers get very rich. Unfortunately it is not nearly enough to go around, to support all the players who chase after this kind of wealth. Some professional golfers get very broke. We are migrant sportsmen moving from state to state, from city to city, from country club to country club, and many of the millions of people who watch us think, "Gosh, what a ball. Playing a game for all that money; traveling all over the U.S. and all over the world!"

Well, the tour is a ball—some of the time. The money is there—if you are good enough to win it. And as for the traveling? Listen to what my friend Don Whitt, who has been on the tour since 1955, once remarked.

"I guess I've traveled a hundred thousand miles a year on the pro tour," he said while lying on his back in a San Juan hotel room, too tired to go to the beach, "but the only thing of interest I've ever seen is the Washington Monument."

That is a complaint, but it is also nothing more than a statement of fact. We are not out here on the tour to sight-see. We are out here to make our living. To some the tour proves too tough a way to make a living and so they abandon it. Others of
trial section of Oakland. Everyone in the family had to work pretty hard through the years to help make ends meet, and though I did everything I could to carry my share of the bread-winning burden I also did a little bit of hell-raising on the side.

I was pretty tough to handle in high school, ran with a rough crowd, and though we got into trouble quite a bit we were lucky enough to stay out of the local lockup. Those are years I would love to have the chance to do over. We got into trouble because we would sit around and booze it up from time to time, then start talking big and pump ourselves full of a lot of false courage. Phew! Talk about close calls! Thank goodness for golf. I began to caddy when I was twelve at the nearby Lake Chabot municipal golf course because I could pick up a couple of bucks a day that way. Then I began to play. How I loved to play! When I hit a good shot I got a strong thrill out of watching the ball hanging in the air and then the slow way it floated down to earth. The excitement of sinking a long putt was almost physical. I loved to play basketball, but that was a team sport, and the most important kick I got out of golf was the individual challenge. I didn’t have to rely on anyone else. There was no team to blame for losing or to blame me for losing. A bad score was entirely my fault and a good one was entirely to my credit. Everything was right there in front of me and I could see it happening and know why it happened. By the time I was in my teens I loved the game so much that I would play hooky from school to be able to play golf. In the summers I would work the night shift at the cannery so that I could play golf during the day. The thought of making golf my life’s work, however, had never occurred to me.

After finishing high school I had joined the Marines because I was at loose ends and couldn’t think of anything better to do. I served in Korea as an observer with the artillery corps, but the fighting was over by that time and I never got into any trouble there. When I got back to the States, I joined the camp golf team (also because I was at loose ends and couldn’t think of anything better to do), and played unspectacularly in the All-Marine Championship at Parris Island, all the way across the country, and in the All-Service Championship at Langley Air Force Base in Virginia. Now here I was on the high road back
perience was so overpowering that it almost kept me out of
tournament golf forever, but at least I did begin to learn that
playing competitive golf involved something more than throw-
ing your golf ball down on the first tee and hitting it until you
had finished 18 holes. For the first time I learned about the cut
—the reduction I mentioned earlier that takes place halfway
through every tournament, cutting the field down to a more
workable size. At the Open after 36 holes the field is reduced
to the lowest fifty scores, or anyone tied for fiftieth place. The
hundred players who fail to survive the cut go home and the
rest play the final 36 holes on Saturday, carrying their scores
forward so that the final total will be based on 72 holes of play.
On the PGA tour it is customary to cut the field to the sixty
lowest scores after 36 holes. These players then finish out the
tournament with 18 holes on Saturday and another 18 on
Sunday.

For the first time I learned how to register at the club, how to
find my locker, how to get my caddy, how to obtain coupon
books that entitled me to eat at the club for half price, and in
general how to comfort myself around the site of a tournament
I was playing in. I got all my information kind of left-handed,
from clean-up boys and spectators—but I got it. By the time I
played in my next tournament (the Western Open in San
Francisco some four months later), my green complexion was at
least a little paler.

For the first time I also met the big names of professional golf.
Or rather, I didn’t meet them; stood around and stared at them
goggle-eyed would be more accurate. Prior to the Open these
players were simply important names that I had read about in
books, magazines and newspapers. I had never even seen any of
them play. I got a big charge from seeing Mike Souchak getting
a haircut in the club barbershop. I actually sat at a big long
table in the club grillroom and ate lunch with the likes of Sam
Snead and Ben Hogan, with Cary Middlecoff, who had won the
Open in 1949 and was to win it again that year, with Doug
Ford, the 1955 PGA champion, with Jack Burke, the recent
Masters champion. I kept my eyes and ears open and was very
impressed. These players impressed me so much, in fact that I
crept over the hill to Oak Hill’s adjoining 18-hole course and
did my practicing there.
not too long, about 6,800 yards, and the high altitude and thin air make it possible to hit the ball about 10 percent farther than on a sea-level course. Mike started out like the Mike of 1959. He burned red-hot during the first two rounds, shooting scores of 68 and 67 to set an Open record at 36 holes of 135. At that point he led the tournament by three strokes over Doug Sanders and five over the rest of the field. He continued to play well on the morning of the final day and came to the last tee of the third round with a chance to hold a four-shot lead starting off after lunch. A four-shot lead with only 18 holes left to play is golden. It gives the leader a chance to play almost anyway he wants to. It forces the players behind him to gamble in the hopes that they can cut the margin. At the U.S. Open it is a dangerous thing to gamble.

There was Mike on the eighteenth tee that morning with the Open as good as his. Then, just as he reached the top of his backswing a camera, aimed by one of the spectators in the gallery behind him, clicked loudly in the silence. Startled, Mike hooked his drive into the pond that stretches out in front of the eighteenth tee at Cherry Hills. It cost him two strokes and he carried a two-shot lead, not a four-shot margin, into the final round that afternoon. Mike’s game sagged and he shot a 75, while Arnold Palmer was shooting a 65 to win the tournament.

A couple of weeks later at another tournament Mike and I ate dinner together and I asked him, as one golfer who had blown tournaments to another: “What happened to you at Denver?”

“I guess it just wasn’t meant to be my day,” was what he said. “All afternoon I kept thinking about that camera clicking, about the two strokes I had lost on account of it, and about what those two strokes could mean. I just never was able to concentrate on what I should have been doing.”

Mike Souchak is a tragic reverse example of what the Open does and could mean to a golfer. Because he combined a cheerful spirit with a big tee shot Mike has always been extremely popular with the people who follow golf. He has won plenty of tournaments and still takes about $50,000 a year from various sources out of the game, but an Open title for Mike could mean an extra $150,000 to $300,000 a year in outside deals. He knows this as well as anyone and Mike’s tragedy is that he has come so
THE MODEST comeback that the 1961 St. Pete Open had at least hinted was in progress continued for me right into June. I was thinking well, playing well and picking up some very nice checks. Official money means two things on the pro tour. First, all, just like anyone, we can spend it. Secondly, it is also a measure of accomplishment, like a batting average in baseball or a points-per-game average in basketball. A player’s rank on the money-earned list can have a significant effect on his tournament program, at least at the middle levels. This is because any golfer among the top forty on the official list in the year’s final money statistics is exempt from pre-tournament qualifying the following year. He is thus spared the frustration of the Ghost Squadron. He also gets an automatic ticket to the special invitational tournaments like the Colonial Invitational in Forth Worth, the American Golf Classic, the Sahara Invitational in Las Vegas, and other tournaments that fill out their field by invitation only and do not even have pre-event qualifying. Being in the top forty also means that the player is invited to compete in pro-amateur tournaments. It has reached the point on the tour where practically every event is now preceded by a pro-am that will distribute from $2,000 to $10,000 in prize money to the forty pros who compete in them. These pro-ams are almost always held the day before the tournament proper begins. In such an event each pro is paired with three amateurs and two tournaments are going on simultaneously. The top six or eight teams, on a best-ball basis will earn money for their pro members; the top eight or ten pros, on the basis of their individual scores, will also pick up checks. First prize in each category pays between $250 and $1000. This is unofficial money, but it can still be a pretty nice source of income.

At the beginning of 1961 I was struggling hard to pick up enough checks to get into the top forty on the official lists—even
though the five weeks I had spent in the Caribbean did not count officially—and I was doing pretty well until, suddenly, I ran into a severe case of the putting jitters. They got so bad that I began to think the only solution would be to get out of tournament golf altogether. I was not going to let a thing like putting ruin my entire life. I would quit golf first.

I had started taking between 38 and 40 putts per round, some six or eight more than the 32 putts most of us consider about right for a consistent game of golf. I was never able to hole a four-footer for a par and I'd usually come up with about five or six three-putt greens a round. I had not qualified for the U.S. Open that year and so after the Memphis tournament I went up to Detroit and borrowed a car from a close friend of mine, Ed Addis, for the three and a half hour drive to Grand Rapids, where the Western Open was being held. At Grand Rapids I combined bad playing with my usual bad putting, missed the 36-hole cutoff and headed back for Detroit. I was going to drop the car off at Addis's house, pack up my clubs and clothes and head home. Ed was not there and so I sat down to wait for his return. While I was waiting it occurred to me that Detroit was the home of Horton Smith, the pro at the Detroit Country Club, and one of the game's great putters. I had met him a couple of years before, decided now that I would call him up with the hope that he would remember me and be willing to do something about the sad state of my putting stroke. I looked up the number of the club in the directory, dialed the number and soon he was on the line.

"Hello, Mr. Smith," I said. "This is Tony Lema. Do you remember that we met a couple of years ago?"

"Sure, I remember, Tony," he said. "How are you?"

"Well, I'm not too good," I said. "My putting is shot to pieces, and unless it gets put together again I'm just going to have to quit the tour. I was hoping that you might be able to help me."

"Absolutely," he said. "You come right on over. I'm sure all you've lost is your confidence, but you come over and we'll get that confidence back again for you and get you back to a good putting stroke." I felt better almost as soon as I had set the telephone back in its cradle. I drove over to Horton's club and for an hour we practiced on the putting green. He talked to me
about what a putting stroke should be and what I could do about smoothing out mine. I could feel the confidence ebbing back into me as he talked. Horton explained that putting was almost entirely a right-handed stroke and that the left hand was there only to help keep the blade on line. He demonstrated an extremely helpful exercise. This involved holding the putter with nothing but my right hand and hitting the ball at the hole from two feet, then four feet, then six and finally 10 feet. My stroke came back. It was a miracle. Horton couldn’t have been more considerate and I can never thank him enough for what he did. His sudden death in 1963 was a tragic loss to golf. He was the only man I know who ever put more into the game of golf than he took out of it. I felt so eager that I jumped right back into Addis’s car and drove up to Flint, Michigan, where the Buick Open was being held.

In the Buick Open I started out with a 71 and a 72, pretty good golf on the longest course the tour hits each year (7,300 yards). I started hitting the ball badly over the last two rounds and finished with a 75 and a 77, but still was high up enough to earn $200. My putting had been wonderful. I felt I could eventually become a very good putter.

Next stop: St. Paul. I shot three fair rounds and one very good one, tied for fifteenth and picked up a check for $670. I was so pleased with my showing in the tournament that I gave a party in my suite at the St. Paul Hotel. A bunch of us were taking the train that night to Winnipeg, where we would play in the Canadian Open. Since the train was a late one I invited a few of the players and some girls I had met in the hotel’s Hospitality Room, and we celebrated until train time. It was a delightful evening. Before it ended we were teeing golf balls up on the rug and driving them out the window and over what must have been a very surprised city of St. Paul.

Next stop: Winnipeg and the Canadian Open. I shot a first-round 65 to lead the tournament by a shot over Jacky Cupit, who eventually won it, Jon Gustin and Bob Pratt. I couldn’t match Cupit after that—he finished 69, 64, 71—but I tied for seventh with a 277 and earned $1,250.

Next stop: Milwaukee. I closed with a burst, shooting a final-round 66 to tie for sixth place at 275 with Tom Nieporte, Gary Player and a young amateur named Jack Nicklaus. My putting
was very good, but I was also beginning to learn at last the secret I had searched for vainly way back in December, 1957, at the Mayfair Inn Open when after my third round I had gone out to watch some of the top stars play. At that time I thought that their consistency was due entirely to experience. Milwaukee supplied me with rather dramatic proof that week-in, week-out consistency came as much from the mind as from the golf swing. I started the last round in eighteenth place, tied with Tom Nieporte, Venturi and two other lesser-known players. We were all at 209, eight shots back of leader Bruce Crampton. After 10 holes I was three under par and closed to within three or four shots of Crampton and actually felt I had a good chance to catch him. Then I bogeyed the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth holes, right in a row, to throw my fine round right out the window. I thought to myself, “Goddamnit, what are you doing now? You’re always blowing up like this.” On the fourteenth hole I missed a very short putt that would have given me a birdie. I was just about to whirl and put my putter into orbit in the general direction of the clubhouse. I checked myself in time. It wasn’t the putter’s fault, particularly, and I began talking to myself as I walked to the fifteenth tee. I said, “Tony, wait until you have played the last four holes before you get mad. Then when you get into the clubhouse break all your clubs, smash them, twist them into metal pretzels, do anything you want. But while you’re out here see what you can salvage. You only have four holes to play and it will only take an hour.” Well, it wasn’t just a coincidence that I finished with four straight birdies, jumped back into a tie for sixth and picked up a check for $1,300. The eighteenth was particularly memorable. It was a par five that could be reached with two good shots, but I hit my tee shot into deep grass. Trying to really smash the second shot and get it onto the green I succeeded only in knocking it to the right and under a tree about 80 yards short of the green. I was partially stymied by the tree trunk, and a low branch forced me to play the ball low. I choked up on a 5-iron and cut across the ball on the shot, sending a low slice out toward the green. The ball hit with a great deal of slicing spin on it, ran toward the green, bounced right around, a sand trap and up to eight feet from the hole.

Learning to keep his temper is one thing a touring pro finds
very difficult to do, but he absolutely must in order to play consistently good golf. It is not so much the act of blowing up that is harmful, it is the attitude behind the act that does the damage. Golf is a game of so many bounces—up and down, from right to left, backward and forward—that many of these bounces are going to go against the golfer. He must learn to understand that this will happen and then learn to accept these misfortunes with good grace. Otherwise, even if he isn’t throwing clubs, shouting at photographers or spectators, he is not going to play his best golf. The sport is definitely one for an unruffled composure.

The constant pressure, the need to bear down on every shot or toss away a potful of prize money, eventually has an unnerving effect on all of us. Tommy Bolt is not the only one capable of tempestuous outbreaks. Golf does not supply the physical release that more active sports like baseball, basketball and football do. This kind of repression inevitably produces a reaction.

When I first came out on the tour the players used to tell me about a trigger-tempered pro named Ivan Gantz who had just left it. “I had been on the tour just a short time when I first laid eyes on Ivan,” Don January told me. “I was walking down one fairway and looked over into another and there was this fellow with blood pouring out of a big gash in his forehead. It was Gantz and he had gone and hit himself on the head with his putter.” The pros used to tell about how, after missing short putts, Gantz would dive into creeks or sand traps, hit himself over the head with a rock, or roll around in the grass like a dog trying to scrape off fleas.

No one is immune to the urge. I’m not the only golfer who has thrown his bag of clubs into a creek after hitting a bad shot or three-putting a green. Jim Ferree can tell you about the times he has done it. I am also not alone in having taken a half dozen extra putts on a green. In the 1963 Phoenix Open I was paired with Dave Hill and at the ninth hole he first hit a shot high up into a palm tree, where it stayed, then knocked two more shots out-of-bounds. By the time we had reached the green Dave was as hot as a hornet. When it came his turn to putt he simply chased his ball across the green, hitting it again and again as it rolled—at two penalty strokes per whack. Dave
made a nice fat score of 15 on the ninth hole in that round.
The right idea, of course, is not only never to lose your temper while you are playing golf, but not even to feel like losing it. This is an impossible goal to achieve, but the nearer a golfer can get to it the more effective a player he will be.

As the 1961 season began to draw to a close this was the state of mind I had begun to achieve. Through the fall I began to finish among the top ten or fifteen in almost every tournament. I won the 36-hole Hesperia Open, took a vacation from the tour for a few weeks, went to Mexico City where I won the Mexican Open, then returned and picked up the tour at Florida in December. I finished eleventh at West Palm Beach, and at the Coral Gables Open—the last even of the year—I finished in the money and so managed to qualify for the Los Angeles Open. My putting was sound, so was my temperament, and I was knocking at the door of my first big tournament victory. I had turned what had started to be a miserable year into a pretty good one. Officially I won $11,505, but unofficial money from pro-ams and the Caribbean tour had given me a total income of well over $20,000. I felt so confident about my future that a sponsor to back me on the tour fell into the category of a non-essential item. Crocker had promised me my freedom from our contract whenever I wanted it. So as the 1962 campaign got underway I asked him if we might not end our arrangement, with only the stipulation that I would pay back the approximately $11,000 debt that I had compiled during my lean years. Life looked rosy once again and sullen Tony Lema no longer needed lectures from his friends to get him to behave like a normal, cheerful adult.
The 1960 U.S. Open in Denver provided this sharp contrast between victorious Arnold Palmer, flinging his cap skyward after holing the winning putt, and disconsolate Mike Souchak, burying his face in a damp towel on the sixty-fifth tee as his hopes sank.
HERE is a book written from inside the glittering world of professional golf. Not aimed at correcting the reader's back swing, this book describes the tensions and triumphs of golf at the very pinnacle of the game on the Professional Golfers' Association Tournament Circuit, better known as the P.G.A. Tour.

The reader's guide to the intense pressures and pleasures of big-time golf is Tony Lema, present British Open Champion, and one of the game's most attractive new stars. Fourth in the money in 1963 and one of the leading money winners of 1964, “Champagne Tony” is magnificently qualified to introduce the reader into the very heart and soul of the Professional Circuit. With humour and insight, he conveys what it feels like to have several thousand pounds or dollars hanging on one putt, to know the despair and terror of a protracted slump and to fight one's way up from the desert tournaments and scruffy nine-hole courses to the Open, the Masters and other top tournaments which make up the Tour. However, his story is by no means narrowly autobiographical. Here one can learn what it is like to play alongside Palmer, Nicklaus, Snead and the other leading money winners.

Gwilym S. Brown, who transcribes Lema's story, is well known as a golf writer and is a staff writer for Sports Illustrated.
that we are never going to catch the rabbit, but we are getting a
terrific bang out of trying. Everything takes second place to the
chase. A job that keeps you at a desk from 9 o’clock in the
morning to 5 o’clock at night—Lord, what a bind! Happiness
is a fine day and a fine golf course. A non-golfing girl I know
once said that she thought the greatest torture God could devise
for a golfer would be to one day empower him to hit every drive,
every iron and every putt perfectly. Imagine his anguish when,
returning to his mortal golfing self, he tries to play again. Well,
every golfer has actually had these moments. The hacker who
suddenly fired a burst of seven straight pars that seemed as
effortless as breathing. The really good amateur who breaks the
course record one day and decides he could really play this
game well if he could play it more often. The desire to play and
play and play becomes overwhelming. For some there is no
solution to this problem. For others there is the pro tour.

The second powerful lure of the tour is the clean and un-
complicated nature of the competitive challenge it presents. I
guess a few no-talent actresses have gotten good parts because
the producer had the hots for them. I guess a few good baseball
players never got a real chance to show their wares because the
manager could not stand them. I guess a few quarterbacks were
made to look bad because their teammates wouldn’t block for
them. I guess a few junior executives became senior executives
because they could play office politics. Well, you can’t win golf
tournaments by playing politics. Once you have put your ball
down on the first tee no one can hold you back but yourself. No
one is allowed to help you but your caddy. Some of us complain
about our luck or our putting, but we know that luck and
putting are part of the game that we have chosen to play for a
living. We also know, and believe me it is a very satisfying and
rewarding piece of knowledge, that we will get out of the game
what we put into it. That we will progress in our chosen pro-
fession just as far as our physical equipment and our dedication
will take us. When a tournament professional shoots a good
round of golf that round belongs to him and him alone. When
he shoots a bad round of golf he surely wishes that it did not
belong to him, but he knows within himself that there is no one
else to blame; not a selfish producer, an irascible manager, a
jealous vice president, or a line that won’t block for him. In
In the long run the best player—and when I say the best I mean in every department: skill, nerve, and temperament—is going to shoot the best scores, win the most tournaments, make the most money. That is the way life should be, really, and yet so seldom is. But that is the way of life on the pro tour.
So long as golf is played, the game’s fans will wish they had been able to watch Bobby Jones in his prime. Grantland Rice has now enabled them to do the next best thing—to relive those moments of drama and suspense with the master of descriptive prose.

Bobby Jones and O. B. Keeler as golfer and writer were one of the most perfect teams in sports history. The publication of THE BOBBY JONES STORY is an important event not only for golf and sports fans, but for all lovers of good writing and high drama.

During his active golfing career, Bobby Jones stood alone and apart and above anybody who played the game. Discussions of sports figures who were supreme in their field bring up no other name so automatically as his.