

# Psych-Out™ GOLF

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# Don't skip the **Introduction**

This game is *mental!*

*Psych-Out Golf* is the art of playing with an opponent's mind... for fun and profit.

Other golf books explain how to improve your mental game. *Psych-Out Golf* explains how to drive your opponent mental.

This is not about crude tricks, like distracting an opponent during his backswing. (Remember *Caddyshack*? "Miss it! Miss it!") No, it's about getting into his mind before the backswing so planted doubts distract him.

Is this sort of thing illegal? Nah, it's just playing a new game within the old game.

Tiger Woods isn't above using mind games. Surely you've noticed how he doesn't talk to an opponent he wants to intimidate. In *Golf Magazine*, Tiger admitted, "I try to play with a poker face. I don't want my opponents to know what I'm thinking." Why would the maestro bother perfecting a poker face if he thought he shouldn't try to affect opponents? Why does he wear a red shirt on Sundays as a sign that he's shown up to win? He knows that an opponent's mindset matters more than one's clubs and fuzzy animal head-covers!

Sir Nick Faldo, one-time carpet fitter who became a five-time Major winner, talked about opponent-awareness on *The Golf Channel*, in explaining how pros approach match play: "Most important thing is your mental powers. You can play a few little games with your opponent on how you react to shots. It's very important how you react. If you hit a bad shot you never want to show your cards.... You've gotta keep your cards close to the chest." That's right, you don't just play your ball; you play an opponent!

Wanting an opponent to lose is not new to golf, of course. Long ago, British golf writer Henry Longhurst famously said: "Splash! One of the finest sights in the world: the other man's ball dropping in the water – preferably so that he can see it but cannot quite reach it and has therefore to leave it there, thus rendering himself so mad that he loses the next hole as well."

Even the lovable Walter Hagen was known to cheerily mess with his opponents' minds by exclaiming on the first tee, "Okay, who's going to come in second?"

We've all heard the cliché that golf is a mental game, one played on a 6 inch surface -- the space between your ears. True enough. But *your* mind is only half the story; what about your opponent's 6 inches? Well, maybe that isn't the best way to put it...

Anyway, this book can help you add 10 or more strokes to an opponent's score. Adding 10 is easier than you think because a single psych-out will not only cause a bad shot, the aggravated golfer will often compound that error with one or two more bad shots. You usually only need a few psych-outs to ensure victory.

And how much money would it take to shave ten strokes off your *own* score? Thousands of dollars in new equipment, lessons, instruction books, and practice at a driving range?

Just because you *can* add ten strokes to an opponent's score doesn't mean you *should*. You should not win by too much; otherwise your opponent might stop playing with you. Why not settle for winning by 1 stroke at a hole, rather than 3? If you are wagering – and of course you are – you want to win just enough for bragging rights... plus enough to buy drinks at the 19<sup>th</sup> hole, a new 3-wood, and a steak dinner.

We are not naïve about our cynicism; we realize that some will criticize *Psych-Out Golf*. They will whine that this sort of thing spoils a gentlemanly game. Well, let them play badminton if they can't handle the mind games of friendly competition. (Actually, we are just trying to psych them out by saying that.)

Unlike most book introductions that explain an author's good intentions, we offer...

### **Great Rationalizations for *Psych-Out Golf* (POG):**

- 1) **Mind games are played in most sports.** Why should golf be an exception?
- 2) **It's a fairer way to "handicap" an opponent.** There is a lot of fraud in handicapping, with people submitting bad scores but conveniently forgetting to submit good scores. *Psych-Out Golf* is a way of settling scores by introducing a *personality handicap*. If people are foolish enough to be defeated by their own negative swing thoughts, they should be penalized by having those thoughts suggested to them by opponents. It's only *fair*.

- 3) **It's "tough love."** *Psych-Out Golf* will help your pals learn the hard way, and hard-way-learning is the most effective kind. They should learn not to make excuses, not to seek sympathy, and not to succumb to pride. Plus, you will give them the gift of motivation (their wanting a re-match for revenge).
- 4) **It revives your love of golf.** When the pace of play is painfully slow, *Psych-Out Golf* gives you something to enjoy between shots. It keeps your mind engaged as you try to figure out new ways to confound a buddy. The more you provoke an opponent into moaning, "I hate this game," the more you will love it. And if you have been stuck at the same basic handicap level for years and are getting bored, *Psych-Out Golf* could be the cure.
- 5) **Winning is good for you.** Learning how to win by being wily, witty, and weird with opponents can help you improve in other fields of endeavor -like politics, poker, or polygamy.
- 6) **Honesty is sometimes the best policy.** Golfers pretend to want their opponents to play well. Don't be hypocritical. Of course you don't want them to win. Any time a dollar is on the line, you want to see an opponent shank his drive out of bounds. Be honest; there is nothing quite as rewarding as humbling your pals.
- 7) **Mischief adds spice to life.** If you're golfing with someone you don't like, psyching them out will make the game more enjoyable for you.
- 8) **You shouldn't take the comedy out of camaraderie.** Friends love to golf partly as an excuse to laugh with, and at, each other. To POG is to entertain.

If Machiavelli had been a golfer, he might have written this book. Instead, it's left for us to do it – two humble amateurs in love with a game and its gamesmanship.

We are father and son, and also close friends. But don't worry – this is not one of those poignant father-son golf journeys into the mystical meaning of life. We've instead shared a mischievous journey into the mind games of golf.

While we are not professional golfers, we've done years of research in writing this book. One of us has learned strategy from politics, public relations and advertising. The other learned psychology from acting, movie production and real estate. And, as avid golfers, we understand the pressures in "friendly" golf competition.

The idea of *Psych-Out Golf* may seem a little crass, but we have an idealistic vision... Ultimately we imagine a School of Psych-Out Golf. There will be no equipment, balls, or

driving range -just classroom instruction on subjects like “Taunt Technique” and “Performing an Ego-ectomy.”

Whoa, we’re getting ahead of ourselves. For now, *Psych-Out Golf* is to be found within these pages. So, sit back and relax as we couch-coach you in the fine art of playing with your opponent’s mind.



## Chapter 1

# Psych-outs in other games

All is fair in love, war, and recreation

Mind games are played in almost any contest – even if you’re not aware of them. Indeed, if you are not aware of them, you are described in this line from *Rounders*, the movie about underground poker: “If you can’t spot the sucker in the first half hour at the table, then you *are* the sucker.”

For weaker, brainier athletes, psych-outs are a way to level the playing field. That may seem unfair to physically superior opponents who selfishly want to win “fair and square.” (When Goliath noticed David pulling out his slingshot, he probably said, “Hey, I’m not falling for your head games!”)

To rationalize turning a casual round of golf into a psych-out game that is competitive at all levels – mental, mischievous, as well as muscular – you can always use the excuse, “Everyone does it.”

Here are examples of psych-outs in other games...

### **Football**

A common psych-out is “icing” an opposing kicker in the final moments of a close game. If a team is about to attempt an important kick, the opposing coach will call one or more timeouts at the last second. The coach wants to put stress on the kicker by disrupting his concentration and giving him more time to worry. The kicker has more time to think about what is at stake in the game, which can throw off the rhythm of his routine.

The same is true of golf. The more time you have to think about a crucial shot, the more doubts can creep in and undermine your pre-shot routine...thus spoiling your shot.

According to a recent study, icing in football is an effective tactic. Researchers viewed 273 “pressure kicks” in the last moments of close games. Kickers kicked field goals at least 80% of the time when they weren’t delayed by a timeout by the opposing team. But when they were “iced” the kickers were successful only 67% of the time! That 13% difference is a big deal. Keep in mind that these are professionals with millions of dollars on the line. And for an NFL kicker, pressure is part of the job. So imagine what icing an amateur golfer can achieve. When you try to ice a golf rival, just couch it in terms that sound tongue-in-cheek helpful. “This is a big putt, so take your time. I don’t want to win because you felt rushed. I’ll wait in the cart and take a nap.”

Here's an example of a *counterproductive* psych-out... Many football fans felt that New York Jets defensive end Mark Gastineau was trying to demoralize opponents by doing what came to be known as the "sack dance." This was a passionate but awkward looking jig he performed whenever he tackled the QB. Did his dance get into the heads of opposing players? Maybe. But it seems that it got more under the skin of his team mates and NFL honchos. For instance, in 1984 he was not voted to a starting spot in the Pro Bowl despite leading the league in sacks, and shortly thereafter the NFL wrote a new rule penalizing players for engaging in acts of "premeditated exuberance." That came to be known as the Gastineau Rule.

Psyching-out in amateur golf is often more effective when it is subtle, not in-your-face. Subtlety has the extra benefit of making your opponent *wonder* if you're trying to psych him out. It helps you get deeper into his head. So, save your dancing for the Jersey Shore.

## **Basketball**

Roland Lazenby wrote a book about the legendary NBA coach Phil Jackson, *Mindgames: Phil Jackson's Long, Strange Journey*. The title alludes to a famous Grateful Dead lyric, "What a long, strange trip it's been." Aptly, the book opens with a young Phil Jackson doing a hit of acid before having breakfast.

His Zen-like take on basketball changed the psychology of the sport. Here's an example: Before the 2010 playoffs had even begun Phil Jackson complained in media interviews that the superstar of his upcoming playoff opponents, Kevin Durant, was getting to the foul line more often because the referees were treating him "like a superstar." Many saw his complaining as a way to get into the heads of refs so they would call more fouls in Jackson's favor once the series got underway. Shaqadelic, baby!

A basketball psych-out that seemed more acid-inspired was in the movie "BASEketball." The premise of the film is that two slackers invent a sport that is a combination of basketball and baseball, and when an opponent is about to shoot the basketball into the hoop you're allowed to do whatever you want to spoil his concentration. At one point Matt Stone takes a Polaroid picture of an opponent while he's attempting to shoot. The flash causes the opponent to miss the shot. (The POG equivalent is more subtle: Just ask an opponent if you could take a picture of his swing with your smart phone. He'll say no, probably, but he'll be so self-conscious in preparing for his next swing -- wondering what about his swing is so odd that you'd want to put it on YouTube -- he will likely misfire.)

Trash-talking is not uncommon in the NBA, especially when players go to the free throw line for a crucial shot. In a *Sports Illustrated* Players Poll, Celtics forward Kevin Garnett was voted the biggest trash-talker. But one of the most memorable examples of trash-talking involves an earlier Celtics forward, Larry Bird. *SI* tells the tale: "In 1988, with five seconds left in a tie game against the SuperSonics, Larry Bird told coach K.C. Jones that he wanted the ball and everyone else to clear out of his way. He wanted the final shot. With Seattle forward Xavier McDaniel guarding him, Bird looked at his defender and told him exactly where he would hit the game-winning shot. Bird got the ball -- four seconds left -- took two dribbles -- three seconds -- then posted up right where he told McDaniel he would -- two seconds. Money.

Afterward, Bird turned to McDaniel and said, ‘Damn! I didn't mean to leave any time left on the clock.’”

One of the most famous psych-out lines was uttered in Game 1 of the 1997 NBA Finals. With just a few seconds remaining, Jazz power forward Karl “the Mailman” Malone was at the free throw line with the game tied. The Bulls’ small forward Scottie Pippen said, “Just remember, the mailman doesn’t deliver on Sundays, Karl.” Malone missed his free throws and Michael Jordan proceeded to make the game-winning shot for the Bulls.

In golf, the “free throw line” is anywhere an opponent needs to make a good shot – driving, pitching, chipping or putting. And unlike basketball, where players run up and down the court and post up without saying a word, amateur golfers constantly banter. Indeed, with many hackers you are considered unfriendly if you don’t exchange insults and laugh when someone screws up. And, like Scottie Pippen ribbing Karl Malone, you’re expected to needle an opponent at opportune times. (“Isn’t this like that shot you botched last week when the money was on the line?”)

At the peak of his career, Michael Jordan didn’t have to do much to psych out opponents – usually showing up was sufficient. But, not only was he the greatest basketball player ever, he was great at trash talk. Talk about a one-two punch! The man was so competitive that he really couldn’t help himself. One of his famous sayings sounds quite POG-like: “There is no ‘I’ in *team*, but there is in *win*.”

## **Baseball**

There are countless examples of baseball psych-outs. Perhaps the most common involves stealing second base. Even if a runner has no intention of trying to steal second he can get into the head of the pitcher by making a show of wanting to do so.

Most baseball psych-outs happen between the pitcher, catcher and batter. We talked with former MLB catcher Brian Johnson about psych-outs in baseball. He recounted an at-bat when he was tricked by a catcher who had been his childhood hero, Tony Pena.

“I was with the Giants and it was a key game against the Houston Astros at Candlestick Park. Tony was, seemingly, getting confusing messages from his manager in the dugout. I didn’t pay attention, and worked the count in my favor to 2 and 1, then to 3 and 1 and finally a full count. Would they walk me or try to strike me out? I was ready for anything until I peeked behind and saw Tony extending his right hand in silence. He looked like he was going to concede the base and hope for better luck with the pinch hitter. It made some sense because I had a HR earlier in the game and an RBI double. So I reveled for a moment in the thought of ‘That’s right, you better walk me or I’m gonna hurt ya!’ I relaxed for a moment so I could look cool while watching ball four come into Tony’s glove. But unbeknownst to me, Tony squatted down at the last second and set up for a perfect fastball strike, down and away. My heart sunk as Tony squeezed the fastball and grinned from ear to ear at his good fortune of calling the oldest trick in the book and, incredibly, having it work.”

Perhaps the best pitcher to use psych-outs to his advantage was Gaylord Perry, the Hall of Famer. He had a reputation for throwing a spitter, an illegal pitch also known as a spitball,



freakball, mudball, supersinker, shine ball, wet one, unsanitary one... A spitter is a ball that has been, in *Ghostbusters* parlance, slimed. It would fly in an atypical way and was thus considered less controlled and more dangerous to hitters. Despite his reputation, Perry pitched for 21 seasons before being caught throwing a spitter. But his notoriety for throwing them enabled him to psych out batters who feared he would throw one. One such tale is told in Wikipedia: “As he looked in to his catcher for the pitch selection, Perry would touch various parts of his head, such as his eyebrows and his cap. In this manner, he may or may not have been applying a foreign substance to the ball on any particular pitch. Reggie Jackson was so upset after striking out against Perry one time that Jackson was ejected from the game. Jackson returned from the dugout with a container of Gatorade, splashing Gatorade onto the field while yelling at the umpire that Perry should be allowed to use the Gatorade on the baseball.”

Gaylord Perry spoke with us about psych-out pitching: “Any pitcher tries to get the batter to think of something other than what he intends to throw. When you talk with the other team’s players and they say they know you’re going to throw a curveball or whatever, don’t deny it – just play along. They’d say ‘What are you going to throw?’ and I’d say, “What type of bat will you use, cork or regular?” But out on the mound, you’re very serious, never giving anything away – concentrate on what you have to do, maybe look mean, like Bob Gibson. One batter would never look at me, Ted Simmons, the catcher – only when I was winding up. After I retired I asked him why he never looked at me and he said, ‘Because then I’d think of what two pitches you might throw and I wouldn’t be ready for either one.’ ...Psyching out doesn’t always work, but most of the time it does. If you can get a batter to go 2 for 10 instead of 3 for 10, you’ve been successful.”

Even the architecture of a baseball stadium, like the architecture of a golf course, can create mind games. The new Yankee Stadium is a monument to intimidation. When the opposing players arrive at the ballpark it awes them by its size and ubiquitous reminders of the team’s storied success. You can say you don’t want to use unfair advantages on the golf course but consider the money and manpower that was employed by the architects of Yankee Stadium to achieve what you’re worried about. Maximizing your advantage is as American as baseball and apple pies at Walmart.

## **Hockey**

This is a sport where physically assaulting an opponent is considered high-level strategy. Boys just wanna have fun!

Hockey has “pests,” players who specialize in provoking opponents to be violent or otherwise make an obvious penalty. Their goal is to commit minor, unnoticed penalties that will result in the other player going into full Lorena Bobbitt mode.

Inflicting bodily harm and maximizing penalties doesn’t seem to have much in common with golf. (Happy Gilmore notwithstanding.) But consider what happened to the Canadian junior hockey players in their world-championship loss to Russia. Canada was the dominant team. They had a 3 goal lead with 20 minutes to play. And they lost! How did it happen? Dave King, a hockey coach for four decades, coached the Canadian juniors to gold in 1982. He felt that the

turning point of the game came after the Russians made their first goal. “They (the Russians) started to believe in themselves, they knew they had nothing to lose and from then on they played the game in a spontaneous way. When you’re able to be spontaneous in hockey, you see more of the ice, you make better plays. At the same time, the Canadians became more deliberate and more hesitant. And when you become reflective like this, unconsciously, you start to slow down.”

Golf is no different. When you’re feeling confident and relaxed, you can stay in tempo. But when you are over-thinking, your focus and rhythm will suffer.

Hockey is very different in that it moves quickly and requires constant improvisation. Sports psychologist Simon Hartley offered his own explanation for Canada’s loss: “Our unconscious brains are fantastic at playing sports, at making a shot. And that’s because it’s the unconscious part of the brain that learned how to do it in the first place. But the moment players start thinking about what might happen if they lose, playing in front of all those Canadian fans who expect them to win, they focus on that and not shooting the puck. It becomes a very quick downward spiral.”

That’s something golfers can relate to. When you start thinking about shooting a record score or winning a wager, you’re focused on an end result and not the task at hand. That poor thinking leads to poor play which leads to anxiety and worse play! Another sports psychologist, John Dunn, describes this in physiological terms: “All these extraneous thoughts that have nothing to do with the task at hand flood in and they all interfere with your focus. And when the stress levels rise to this extent, then your breathing rate changes, your adrenal rate goes up, and it becomes very hard to control your muscles.”

This happens in all sports. The remedy is simple: stay calm and in your routine as much as possible. Nerves happen, but you have to use nerves to your advantage and not let them overwhelm you. Remember the wisdom of a sports psychologist in a distant galaxy, a little green guy named Yoda: “Fear is the path to the dark side. Fear leads to anger. Anger leads to hate. Hate leads to suffering.” So true. May the force be with you.

## **Boxing**

Muhammad Ali pioneered and popularized psych-out boxing. In this mental heavyweight division, he was indeed “the greatest.”

Ali had an unusual pugilist style which he described as “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.” Being unorthodox in boxing helps psych-out an opponent before he even enters the ring. If he knows you are going to be unconventional in style and tactics, there is already a seed of doubt. If there’s a Y factor to your opponent, how can you fully prepare?

One of Ali’s best-known tactics was rope-a-dope in the “Rumble in the Jungle” match against George Foreman. That’s when he took a protective stance against the ropes and let Foreman, considered the superior puncher, tire himself out. During the match Ali kept taunting Foreman, angering him so he continued to flail away. Many observers were afraid that the pummeled Ali was in danger of being killed from the relentless beating. But in the late rounds, when Ali sensed that Foreman suffered fatigue, he regrouped, started pounding Foreman, and was the

eventual victor. (A rope-a-dope strategy in amateur golf is when you get an opponent to tire himself out in practice at the driving range before the game. If he hits two large buckets of balls before the round, he will probably be too tired to shoot well in the late holes.)

Ali was also known for his pre-match hype. This helped him become a celebrity and it drove up ticket sales and prize money. Equally important from his viewpoint, his trash-talk would infuriate and discombobulate his opponents. Ali would psych himself *up* in these press conferences and psych his opponents *out*. His trash-talk was so clever that his opponents couldn't think of a satisfying response. One of Ali's famous quips: "If they can make penicillin out of moldy bread, they can sure make something out of you."

And we shouldn't forget Mr. T, a fictional character who became a real-life character -- or was it the other way around? Anyway, he was good at boxing trash talk, too. Rocky couldn't get Mr. T's boastful lines out of his head as he stared mournfully into his mirror. You had to pity da foo'.

## **Swimming**

Winner of four gold medals in swimming, Amy Van Dyken admits that she psyched out her opponents before a race by staring, clapping, growling, and even spitting. How sexy!

By the way, if you growled at your opponent on the golf course they'd call Carl Spackler to come blow you up with plastic explosives. So don't try it.

## **NASCAR**

A racecar driver has to stay keenly focused for four hours straight. Professional golf is about the same duration. Sure, NASCAR drivers are stuck in a hot car and the only reprieve is some water or cool air blown on the face, but pro golfers have to do it four days in a row. That's not easy. When was the last time you played four days in a row? Did you stay at peak performance, physically and mentally, all four days? Please do not try to psych us out by answering yes.

Racing employs mind games similar to other sports in using media hype to sell tickets -- trash-talking, sob stories, etc. But it also has its own unique psych-outs: choosing a stall directly in front of the chief opponent, picking athletic pit crews, seeing who can put the most mayonnaise on his Wonder Bread bologna sandwich...

Focus in every sport is important but it's a top priority in games like racing and golf because they require concentration over long periods of time. One of NASCAR's greatest drivers, Jeff Gordon, put it this way: "I'm somebody that always sort of blocks things out very easily, and that's always just been kind of built in, in me, and that's good and that's bad. It's good in racing because it allows you to just worry about the things that you need to worry about that are important and focus on the things that are coming up."

In 2010, the mind games between top drivers Jimmie Johnson and Denny Hanlin were so intense, reporters asked Johnson about it. He said, "I'm not smart enough to play mind games. I just get in the car, do my thing and I go. The fact that people think so much about what we're trying to do ends up being a mind game in its own. They are almost Jedi mind-tricking

themselves." Wasn't that great? He turned his I'm-above-all-these-mind-games into a boast, which is a type of mind-game! Did he do it knowingly? Who knows? But it's not something a rival wants to ponder as he approaches a curve at 200 mph.

The capper is that Hanlin decided to let everyone know he's above the mind games in a different way: by going out and playing golf! Yes, right before the most important race of the season he was in Las Vegas, playing golf with Bubba Watson. This was an Alfred E. Neuman psych-out. "What, me worry?"

## **Poker**

Poker is a natural for psych-out competition because it's all about playing the player. The great poker players read and mislead opponents. They always look for "tells," subtle changes in an opponent's behavior that provide clues about whether the hand he's holding is strong or weak.

Before you even sit to play poker you can psych-out opponents by placing a huge stack of chips on the table. You may not plan to put all those chips at risk, but it gives you the advantage of intimidation. Do your two jacks seem as strong when \$500 is on the line as they do when it's \$5? Negatory.

Of course, lying in poker is part of the game. Poker pros know how to talk about their cards in a way that seems like a sly lie, yet might be the truth. They love to psych out.

Some attempted psych-outs in poker are minor ploys that people laugh off as transparent. For instance, if you're in the big blind and no one raises you might say to the dealer, "Hurry up, before someone changes his mind." If you have a good hand this supposedly will make people think you don't and just want to see the flop for free. Shrewd players know the ploy and won't fall for it. It's similar to what's said in golf banter when someone jokes, "I hope you don't hit into that sand trap." People laugh because they know you really mean the opposite. But in golf, unlike poker, such ploys actually plant a bad swing thought in someone's mind. Amateurs often can't help but visualize what they need to avoid, and their subconscious can't help but produce it.

In poker, "tilt" is when a poker player is "steaming" or confused after experiencing a "bad beat" – losing a big hand to someone who got lucky. Playing with frustration or anger can put you on tilt (as when a pinball machine freezes the flippers if you try to tilt the machine to guide the ball). Players on tilt often get too aggressive and reckless, trying to win what they just "unfairly" lost. When savvy players see that happening, they are ready to call the bluff with a bluff of their own...and as a result, often scoop up the pot.

In golf, you want to put an opponent on tilt without his blaming you and attacking you with a 3-iron. If you gauge your foe correctly you may even be able to get him to increase the wager because he's upset and convinced that the reason he's losing is because of a temporary glitch in his game. He figures he'll be able to correct it before the 18<sup>th</sup> hole. He won't suspect that you have many more POG cards to play.

## **Tennis**

Scott Sinnett, a psych professor at the University of Hawaii, conducted an experiment. He had 33 undergrads observe tennis players hitting balls. Some of the tennis players grunted as they hit and some did not. Researchers then asked the students to indicate the direction of the shot immediately after. Apparently grunting not only slowed the students' response time, it also caused them to make more mistakes in guessing the direction of the shots! So why not use this distraction to your advantage? Well, a Portuguese tennis pro already has. Tennis star Michelle Larcher de Brito – queen of the grunt – has been booed off the court after being accused of using her war-like whoops to distract opponents. Some grunts have apparently achieved a decibel reading of 109. So, if she was on a motorcycle with, say, a bottle of whiskey and a semi-automatic, you'd still be able to hear her shriek above the roar of the chopper. Our kind of gal!

## **Spectators**

Let's not forget about hometown fans getting into the heads of athletes on a visiting team. A good example is the Cameron Crazies, so named because they pack themselves into Duke University's Cameron Indoor Arena. The Crazies are very effective at rattling the visiting players. They don full body paint and shout the Grade Point Average and SAT scores of the opposing players, and sometimes even make fun of their girlfriends! Wow, no wonder they're called the Blue Devils.

## **Onward and psychward!**

Jane McGonigal wrote the book, *Reality is Broken – Why Games Make Us Better and How They Can Change the World*. In it she offers evidence that playing video games, specifically those that involve avatars and role-playing, actually help improve the minds and confidence of those who play them. She offers proof that the feelings of satisfaction and joy that come from doing well in these games transfer to real life.

The same is true of *Psych-Out Golf*. The feelings of joy and confidence that come from a good round of POG continue long after. You'll hold your head high in other areas of life – working, dating, haggling with an auto mechanic....

We human beings waste so much time on self-improvement. And amateur golfers are notoriously conscientious. They say crazy things like, "I've got to practice more at the driving range" or "I need more lessons" or "Gee, maybe Botox isn't such a bad idea."

It's time to move beyond self-improvement.

Let's help our opponents lose. They shouldn't have to do it all by themselves.

