

**"Is that Harry Vardon? Why isn't it Seve?"** Pdraig Harrington, who clearly doesn't approve of the silhouette on the new European Tour logo.

# GOLFPUNK ON THE BAG

Golf Punk stupidly volunteers to caddy for one of SA's top amateurs, in one of the country's biggest tournaments *nogal*. Now what did we go and do that for? **Words: Richard Asher**



Like all the best caddies, I'm just a little late. In my defence, I didn't know about the road works outside Paarl until this morning. But I've finally made it, just in time to catch my man winding up his pre-round routine on the Pearl Valley driving range.

The man in question is rising Southern Cape star Jake Redman, as featured in the March issue of Golf Punk. The tournament concerned, meanwhile, is nearly as big as it gets on the local amateur scene: the South African Amateur Stroke Play. Jake, who's recently cracked the top five in the national rankings, has sportingly agreed to let Golf Punk carry his bag for the day. He knows he won't get any worthwhile reads on the greens from me; on the other hand, though, he's saving on caddie fees...

It's the second round of the tournament, and we're paired up with another of Golf Punk's former *Punk in Training* subjects: Jared Harvey of KwaZulu-Natal. Completing our trio is Gauteng North's Leon Knoll, who, like Redman, has recently notched up his first big amateur win.

As for my fellow loopers, it's an interesting line-up. On Harvey's bag is Steve, a Fancourt-based caddy who tags along to some of Jared's tournaments to earn extra cash in his time off. Leon's bag is in the care of his father, who is, um...Leon. Leon Senior explains that his lad's first name is actually Leon-Brink, but they've

just decided to drop the 'Brink' because people kept getting it wrong. The last straw, apparently, came when he recently received a trophy engraved 'Leon-Knoll Brink.' So Leon & Leon it is, if you follow.

Everything seems awfully serious on the first tee. There's a SAGA man in a green jacket, who appears to be terribly important and gives me a disapproving look: I'm not wearing a tournament bib. Fortunately there's one to hand, and there's no question of me earning Jake a two-stroke penalty before he's even hit a shot. Sigh of relief number one.

But once Jake, Jared and Leon have all bashed it down the inviting first fairway and we're out on our own, things feel a lot more relaxed. Jake turns out to be a pleasant guy out on the course, always courteous no matter what's happening to his game. He's ultra-precise with his yardages, too. Using his notes from round one, and pacing out the measurements from the fairway markers, he's well-equipped to make the right choice of club. I like to think I'm playing an important role by looking after the pin sheet, letting him know just how far onto the green the flag is.

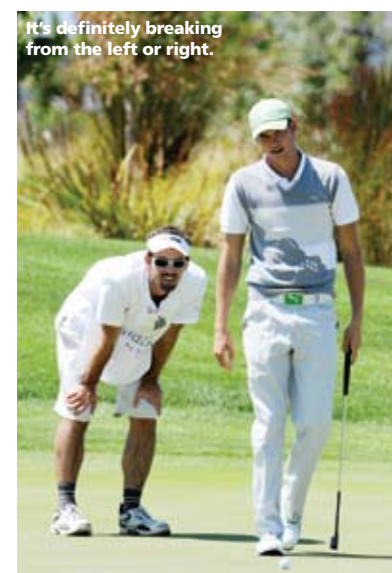
Trouble is, there's always going to be guesswork on a day like this. As on the first day, the wind is howling and gusting like crazy. It quickly becomes clear that, as per day one, level par will be a great score.

**"On the first tee there's a SAGA man in a green jacket, who appears to be terribly important and gives me a disapproving look."**

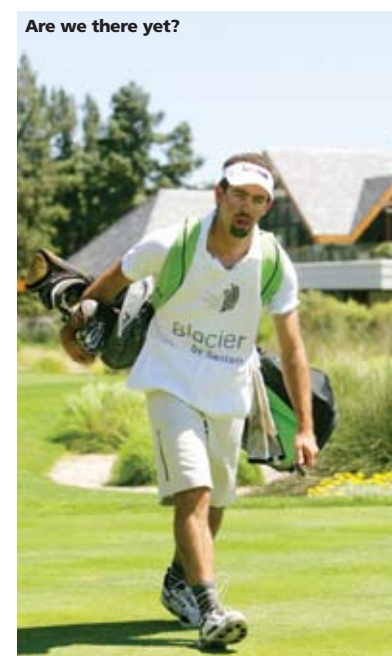
**"I believe he's the man for the job, but I'm surprised he's prepared to give up his chance of making the team."** Harrington on Colin Montgomerie's Ryder Cup captaincy.



140 metres? I'd take driver



It's definitely breaking from the left or right.



Are we there yet?

Pearl Valley's mean at the best of times: today it's a wounded animal.

A miscued approach leads to a bogey on the second hole, but Jake bounces back in no time. He birdies the par-three fourth with a lovely eight-iron and a single putt, grabs back another shot at the par-five fifth and then gets up and down for a third straight birdie at the short par-four sixth. But then the wind bites, as a couple of doubt-inducing club selections before the turn lead to a pair of bogeys.

He heads to halfway house level, which is good going for the conditions. It's more than can be said for Jared, who cards an incredible 12 at the ninth. Not only do a couple of balls sink into the dam after a wayward drive, but one of his attempted approaches also goes way too far and nestles into a sunbed by the swimming pool in front of the clubhouse. Definitely a hole to forget - but some remarkable golf on the back nine sees Harvey still making the cut.

Sadly Jake's back nine is little to write home to the Ernie Els & Fancourt Foundation about. A double on 12 and a ball in the water at 17 are among the lowlights, but he does keep his cool. After all, he's not the only one struggling; the ease with which he makes the cut is testament to that.

I'm just thrilled to walk off the 18th green with all the clubs in the bag. Leaving one behind somewhere (which very nearly happened after performing raking duties at a certain fairway bunker) would have been unthinkable, and just the sort of thing I'd do. As it was though, I've even helped Knoll and Harvey locate a couple of off-piste shots, so I feel I've done my bit for the group.

Lugging a bag in the hot sun all morning is, of course, a bit of a strain. The bag's constant knocking has given me a few unusual bruises and I've got a spot of bag-chafe, but I do get my revenge as we carry out some role-reversal back at the range. Jake sportingly dons the bib and carries the bag so that I can ease the frustration of having to watch all day by whacking a couple of shots of my own. Both of which fly unusually true; it would seem that spending a round in the company of proper golfers is inspiring!

Sadly, the reformed swing won't last. But I can still quite realistically make my pro debut in 2009. As a caddy, that is...

Jake Redman made the cut and went on to finish the SA Amateur Strokeplay in 18th position, with scores of 74-79-75-73. Leon Knoll and Jared Harvey also made the cut, finishing seventh and 65th respectively. Victory went to North-West's JG Claassen by two strokes.



Left to right: Steve, Jared, GP's Editor, Jake, Leon and Leon



Role reversal: Redman tries out the bib for size.



...and watches in awe as GP launches an arrow-straight rocket