

"I threw a lot at him, but he didn't flinch." Paul Casey reflects on his failed attempt to wear down Geoff Ogilvy in the final of the WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship.

"There's a new-old one, a new-new one, which is the new one, which is the model in front of the old one." Ogilvy on the revised Titleist Pro V1 ball range...



HOW'S YOUR SWING?

RYAN DREYER

After a decade on the Sunshine Tour, Ryan Dreyer quit golf completely and turned to winning millions in competitive poker. But a few weeks ago he started playing the local amateur circuit again – and just as we went to press he won the South African Amateur! Looks like this punk can do anything he puts his mind to... *Words: Richard Asher*

Your first claim to fame was as a professional golfer, right?

I was on tour for eleven years, mostly playing on the Sunshine Tour, as well as a little in Canada and the minor tours in the USA. I never got a win, but had a few top tens and made plenty of cuts. I was solid.

But then one day you just... stopped. Why?

Three years ago there came a point where I actually hated golf! Grinding it out for a living made me lose my love for the game completely.

Why did it get so bad?

I was a solid tour player, but you just can't make a decent living in SA unless you're finishing the Order of Merit in the top five every single year. The number of guys making R20 000 a month after expenses and tax is probably about seven! I was just surviving from week to week. At one point, just to keep going, I even went to work as a golf teacher on a cruise ship in the Caribbean!

Fortunately, you had other forms of income...

I've been playing for money on the golf course since I was about 16. After I turned pro, I made as much in money games during my weeks off as I did at the actual tournaments! I've probably won about half a million bucks in golf bets – only while I was a pro of course!

What's the trick to winning money on the golf course?

Play against guys who are worse than you! Also, try and play for what you are comfortable with. It's got to mean something, but not to the point where you are worried about the money. You've got to think about the pride of winning, and the money takes care of itself.

Not only do you have an enviable record in golf wagers, but you're pretty handy round the poker table too...

I've been really fortunate since quitting pro golf that I've made money playing poker. And I've got good jobs editing the SA edition of *Bluff* magazine as well as commenting on the All-Africa events with the Poker Channel.

Just how successful has the poker been?

I've been to Las Vegas and played in the World Series of Poker Main Event for the last three years. I won the Sun City tournament last year – the biggest ever held in Africa. I won just over R2m through that, so I made more in four days at Sun City than I made in my whole pro golf career!

So why bother having a job if you can make money like that playing poker?

Poker's a bit like golf. You can play well and not make a lot of money. I have a passion for poker, but I know what it's like to try and do something you love for a living... when it becomes a grind it's no longer fun. My goal is to keep poker fun – if I make a bit of extra cash from it, great. If I don't, that's OK!

How do you perform in other forms of gambling?

I like blackjack but don't play it much. Once you've understood how poker works, you realise that playing any other casino game is insanity. Poker's a skill game – in all the other games the odds are inevitably stacked against you. In a casino you're going to lose long term.

We notice that you're playing golf again...

About six months ago, I picked up a club and off I went. The guys said 'come along and play on Thursday.' It wasn't bad, so I played the next Thursday...you can probably say I'm fully addicted again! I shot a 61 at Parkview the other day... that was fun!

And the next thing we hear, you're the SA Amateur champion!

I think it's a great achievement, though it hasn't hit me yet. But if these youngsters can't beat me then they shouldn't turn pro! I tried for a decade and played probably no different than I did in Benoni for the SA Amateur. I was making those scores on tour, and I can tell them it's not good enough out there.

So any thoughts of going pro again, or are you happy to remain the old man of the amateur scene!?

I'm still just planning to play golf for fun. I'm excited about playing league golf for Killarney GC in Joburg, and will play the big amateur events whenever I have the time. 🏌️