



BY
CLIVE AGRAN

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olfing immortality is all I crave – nothing more, nothing less. By that I don't mean I want to go on playing indefinitely, it's just that I'd like to be remembered long after I've found a comfortable corner in the great spike bar in the sky. Generally speaking, immortality in golf has usually been achieved by winning a few Majors, setting a number of course records, that kind of thing. Still a double-digit handicapper at 58, I have to accept, somewhat reluctantly, that this path is no longer open to me.

WITH AGRAN, GOLF IS THE WINNER



Clearly I need to be a touch more creative in my thinking if I'm to enter golf's Hall Of Fame, albeit through the back door.

Mr Flitcroft, a seasoned hacker who put one over the R&A by twice teeing up in an Open qualifier, is my kind of role model. The world famous Mr Mulligan, with his sympathetic approach to a duff opening tee-shot, is another whose name is now as much a part of golf's rich vocabulary as birdie or shank.

The idea that will earn me a place alongside Ben, Jack, Arnie, Seve and Tiger came to me as I missed a three-foot putt for a bogey five at the notoriously easy third hole at my club.

It's nothing less than a radically new scoring system. Dr Stableford, no mean physician I'm sure, who could doubtless diagnose epicondylitis at 50 paces, might well have never broken 90 around his local links.

However, and here's the rub, his name is better known than, say, Richard Davies, who was the leading amateur in the US Open in 1963.

The Stableford scoring system has considerable appeal, not least to those

of us who habitually run up a couple of eights and the odd nine.

It does, after all, permit one to be rather more sanguine about a sliced drive onto the adjacent beach than might be the case in a medal round.

The trouble with it, though, is that it places too much emphasis on the number of strokes; a fault common to most, if not all, scoring systems so far devised and where, if you'll pardon the expression, the Agran system really scores.

With my revolutionary method, much more attention is paid to other important aspects of the game that have hitherto been largely neglected and it therefore provides an altogether fairer reflection of the round.

The imaginative Agran system can be used, more or less, in either strokeplay or matchplay competitions and is designed to both speed up play and encourage players to be bold.

Space constraints preclude my detailing all 637 rules, but the following should give you the flavour.

Points are scored as follows:

- Remembering a pencil, pitch repairer and ball-marker: one point each.
- Using a driver off the tee: two points.
- Getting the tee-peg to fly backwards: one point.
- Outdriving your playing partner(s): two points for each one you outdrive.
- Attempting to hit a long iron out of the deep rough: one point.
- Refusing to lay up short of a hazard but instead attempting miracle shot: one point.
- Hitting a sprinkler head on the fly: three points.

Points are also deducted:

- Taking a practice swing: one point for each swing.
- Marking the card on the green: three points.
- Marking the card on the next tee when it's your turn to tee off: three points.
- Any patronising remark such as "well out" for a thinned bunker

shot: two points.

- Mention of Tiger Woods: one point each time.

To help speed up play, no penalties are incurred for a lost ball.

Simply drop a ball more or less where you might reasonably have expected it to be. Similarly, there is automatic relief without penalty from lateral water hazards and no such thing as out of bounds, both of which are regarded as unnecessary man-made complications.

One of the great virtues of the system is that it takes a considerable length of time to calculate the score at the end of the round, which effectively obliges participants to stay on for a drink or two.

And by the time the drinks have been consumed, everyone is past caring who has won.

So with the Agran system, competitive individuals are put in their place and golf is the only true winner.

I'm confident it'll catch on.

trp illustration: Cel Gulapa