

editor's  
**letter**

BY  
**BENNY TEO**

# PLAYER KEEPS PLAYING

upporting charities by raising more than US\$64 million over a period of 35 years, The

Player Foundation, founded by

South Africa's greatest golfer, Gary Player, has found a way to marry charity with corporate networking, fun and an element of competition with The Berenberg Gary Player Invitational.

The event, held recently at England's Wentworth Club and supported by Berenberg Bank, put together a star gathering of professional golfers and high profile individuals to play with two amateur partners per flight in a unique 'sports-meet-personality' program to support the Depaul homelessness programme for the young across the UK.

**SWING** spoke to him to find out what keeps him going at age 83.

**SWING: Why do you continue to work when most people your age are already well into retirement?**

**GP:** Well it's been interesting and very enjoyable for me. It's not easy at my age in the latter part of my life to travel to all these countries and raise that amount of money, but we are helping young people who are not as fortunate as we are with a number of projects.

**How does the money help them?**

The sponsorship of Berenberg Bank has been just unbelievable. In London, they've helped us build the Depaul home for young people experiencing homelessness, who are turning their lives around, becoming doctors and lawyers after sleeping on the streets. It's quite remarkable.

In South Africa, we've built two schools which are really rewarding to see. People without an opportunity of having education now going out into the world and excelling. The support we have raised gives people a place in the sun.

Having been very poor as a young person, it gives you an appreciation. Few people in the world have the same luxuries as we do and we are inclined to forget that.

**Is golf the perfect vehicle for raising money?**

Most of the (professional) golfers have a charity of their own. And, if I may say, this started in 1965 when I won the US Open. I was the first golfer at that time to give my entire cheque back to cancer as my mother died of cancer, and to junior golf.

Golf is a magnificent sport and it's a great catalyst for raising money because the average man can play golf with pros, but he can't go out and play rugby with professionals, for example.

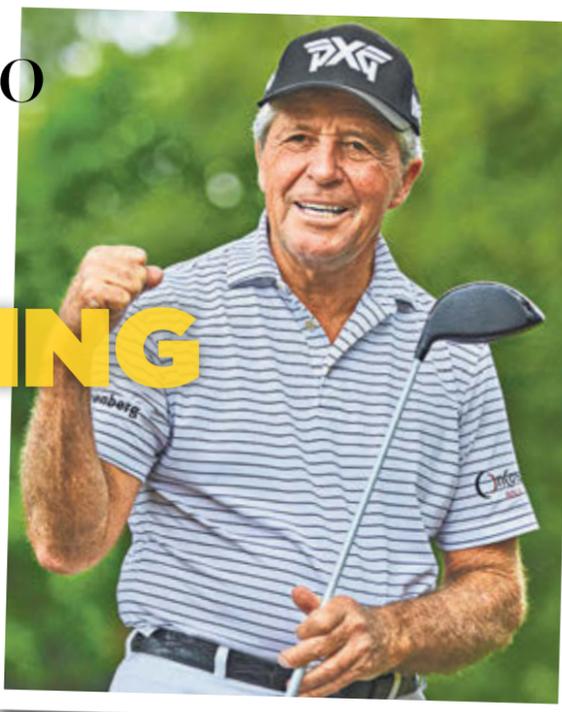
**What do you think professional golfers could do more to help?**

Obviously, it's their enthusiasm that makes them do it and they realise that they have a debt to society. I think people must realise that. And I think that it's going to continue, even more so into the future.

The young people, they're making so much money. When I think back, my first Open win at Muirfield, I won a thousand pounds, but that was in 1959. I don't know what that would be today but these young fellows are making so much more.

**How important is corporate support in this endeavour?**

Well, without Berenberg, we wouldn't



IN TIME WITH  
  
**ROLEX**

**Gary Player (left) is still in the swing at 83.**

come up with equal pay. I watched the Netherlands play Sweden in the Women's World Cup. Those ladies played so well and, if you look at the galleries and the attendance and the coverage, my goodness me, that shows the demand is there.

These young ladies, they train hard and they travel around the world. They also have big expenses and they are providing such a strong example for young people everywhere. They deserve it.

**Do you have any plans to travel to Singapore?**

Well, first of all, Singapore as a golf destination is a marvellous place to go to. They have beautiful golf courses. They have great food and, for me, I think Singapore is the best run country in the world.

They have a strong economy, respect for all races and religions and, above all, the best law and order. Singapore is one of my favourite countries to visit and I've always enjoyed playing golf there.

The heat is something you get used to and I always get a kick out of the weathermen there. Every day he says, "It will be very hot with occasional thunder-showers." And he's never been wrong!

**What are your thoughts on Ria Bintan, a golf course that you designed near Singapore?**

It's one of my favourite golf courses in the world. I love the holes on the ocean and in particular the par-three (ninth) which plays over the ocean. It was quite a difficult hole to design. In fact, the whole golf course was difficult, but it turned out one of my favourite courses in the world.

**Gary Player was speaking ahead of The Berenberg Gary Player Invitational, which took place at Wentworth Club on July 22 to raise money for good causes across the UK.**

really have had the success that we've had. They've been a very outstanding sponsor of this event. As has Rolex. If you look at Rolex, what they've done for golf and sport, probably more than any company that I can think of. Between those two sponsors, we've been very fortunate because if you don't have sponsors today you just cannot reach the heights that you would like to go.

**In three words can you sum up what The Berenberg Gary Player Invitational means to you?**

I think changing the lives of people. Contributing to society. And camaraderie. Well that's three sentences but, you know, when you get to my age you don't hear as well. So, you need a multigan.

**Well, I think you can hear this: Is Tiger going to pass Jack?**

I don't think so. The odds are stacked against him doing that at his age (43), but we are talking about Tiger Woods. I'm such a Tiger Woods fan. His comeback I think is the greatest comeback ever in any sport. What he did after what he went through, my hat's off to him.

So, do I think he will pass Jack? I don't think so. Would it be good if he did? Yes. I think Nicklaus will go down as the greatest golfer ever because you've got to go by the record. The record is what counts.

**The Women's British Open is coming up (next week). Would you support calls for equal pay?**

Yes I would. I admire the example of tennis. It's marvellous to see they have

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