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THE MATCH

Shootout at Cypress Point

The untold story of golf's greatest money match, featuring Hogan and Nelson at Cypress Point, comes to life in this exclusive excerpt from Mark Frost's gripping new book, *The Match*

Illustrations by Rob Johnson

BEN HOGAN DID NOT LIKE TO PLAY WITH AMATEURS. Nothing bothered the taciturn Hogan more than excessive praise, and amateurs gushed helplessly in his presence. Once, when a corporate playing partner pestered Hogan for a tip on how to stop irons on a dime, Hogan asked the man how far he hit his 7-iron. When told 120 yards, Hogan replied, "Why the hell would you want it to stop?" Not another word passed between them.

BUT this misty January day in 1956 was different. This was no ordinary match, these no ordinary amateurs. Hogan, now a part-time Tour player, was paired with Byron Nelson, who was 10 years removed from his farewell to competitive play. The two legends, both 43, were crossing swords with Ken Venturi and Harvie Ward, the two best amateurs in the world. The 24-year-old Venturi was a Walker Cup hero, and Ward, 30, the reigning U.S. Amateur champ. They both worked for Eddie Lowery. Now a wealthy car dealer, Lowery was best known as the childhood caddy to Francis Ouimet during the fateful 1913 U.S. Open. The tight, tense match was the result of a wager Lowery made with the well-connected Cypress Point member George Coleman at a cocktail party the night before, just days before the start of the Crosby Clambake. Lowery, always full of bluster, proposed a bet: His two rising stars could beat any

two golfers in the world—pro or amateur—in a best-ball match. Did Coleman want a piece of the action? "I've got a couple fellas in mind," he told Lowery. "Fine, bring 'em on, my boys can beat anybody." Before the party ended, Coleman had procured two men who had 14 major wins between them, who liked the idea of a friendly match against a pair of hotshot kids. After a few incredulous moments, Lowery regained his composure. "Well, they'll beat them, too!"

NELSON and Hogan stood 1-up through 15. It had long become clear that the two amateurs would not bow down before the legends. ("We've got our hands full with these guys," Hogan had told his partner at the turn, with both sides 6-under and the match all-square. "You can bet on that," Nelson replied.) The four men—with Lowery,



Ten years past his prime, Nelson launched a flag-seeking missile that cut through the mist and stopped six feet from the hole.

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ROB JOHNSON

NAME THE SONG THAT BEST DESCRIBES YOUR STYLE: "For my workflow and stress levels when doing certain illustrations, that would be Ozzy Osborne's 'Crazy Train.'"

HOW TO CONTACT: Represented by Donna Rosen, www.donnarosenartists.com

"In this particular piece, the AD chose a concept that would involve three golfers in a classic situation," says Rob. "I like to do paintings that have longevity, something you can continuously look back at, and get it right away. Almost like you can write the story in your head from simply looking at the final illustration."



Bringing Reality to Life

PAUL CRAWFORD, AD OF GOLF MAGAZINE, describes the challenge: "The article was an excerpt from a new book, *The Match*, recounting the true, untold story of a big money match featuring two legendary golfers—Hogan and Nelson—versus two very good amateurs of the time. But there was no photographic material to use for the situations detailed in the extract, so an illustration of the real events seemed appropriate."

Crawford wanted a sophisticated, classical feel to the illustration for the article, and was inspired to contact illustrator Rob Johnson after seeing his work on a painting of Tom Sawyer for *Weekly Reader*. That was the start of a joint effort. "Rob and I had to find a lot of reference points to get a true sense of how the golfers may have looked at the time they were playing."

"IT'S ALMOST A HISTORY LESSON IN PIECES LIKE THIS," says Johnson. "I had to render a golfer great, and everybody knows what he looks like. But I had no reference of him from the angle I was going to be painting him."

"In tightly rendered pieces, I use models to pose for me in the appropriate clothing, etc. So, once the sketch was approved, I began to look for my model. Sometimes I use a local modeling agency, and I somewhat lucked out on the guy I chose. I did a quick photo shoot with him in various poses and facial expressions. Once that was done, I made a drawing in Photoshop, then began to lay in color. Working digitally gives me the freedom to make mistakes and correct them, and also the freedom to explore color. I never paint in layers like many who work digitally; I just paint on a flat surface."

"In the end, I was very happy with the way it turned out and relieved to know that I pulled off what I thought was going to be really tough to do."

Crawford agrees: "I think the results show that we got things pretty much spot on to our vision."



IF IRONY IS GOD'S LITTLE HUMBLER, then karma—the Buddhist belief that what goes around comes around—can be thought of as self-fulfilling prophecy. In this case, a 1996 *Ms.* cover: Imagine the one word in the entire lexicon that you wouldn't want to misspell in your magazine, and then imagine that it's in the giant headline on the cover.

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