

# MONDAY MULLIGAN

## "I WAS SO MUCH OLDER THEN, I'M YOUNGER THAN THAT NOW"

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Anyone old enough to remember the '60s, or curious enough to study history, especially that of music, will recognize those words as the work of Bob Dylan from his 1964 song My Back Pages. What he was saying was that he used to live in a world of limitations created by over-simplified ideas. But as he got older he came to appreciate the unlimited possibilities of imagination.

We may be on the verge of re-imagining what is possible in golf. Recently, Jim Furyk shot the first 58 on the PGA Tour. And over the weekend, In Gee Chun broke the major-championship scoring record in relation to par for men and women at Evian by finishing at 21 under par.

Are they the Roger Bannister of golf? After the Englishman broke the 4-minute mile in 1954 the floodgates in running opened. The unbreakable barrier was broken again and again and now the world record is 3 minutes and 43 seconds. Will we now see scoring records in golf go lower and lower?

My friends Lynn Marriott and Pia Nilsson teach VISION54. That's the peak-performance approach to the game that makes the goal not a par on every hole, but a birdie – a 54 on a par-72 course. It's all about imagining the impossible and making it your reality. Furyk and Chun have redefined what's possible.

One of the many things I love about sports is that it speeds up the time frame of human existence and tears down the walls restricting imagination. We learn a lot about people in a very short period of time. In golf, one tournament, one round, one shot can teach us how a person handles success or failure; whether or not they treat their opponents with respect; and what kind of honesty they brings to the game.

Sometimes sport is viewed as an outlier in society, lagging behind the times. In fact, just the opposite is true. Sport is a petri dish in which the experiment of culture evolves much faster than in the broader society. In sports, people from different

backgrounds are thrown together and must learn how to work together for the common good, as a team or as representatives of a league or tour.

In 1947, when Jackie Robinson integrated major league baseball, some people ask why it took so long. Lost in that question is the fact that Brown vs. The Board of Education of Topeka, Kan., the U.S. Supreme Court case that outlawed segregated public schools, did not happen until 1954.

In 1961, the PGA got rid of the "Caucasian Only" cause and some asked why it took so long, failing to note that Congress did not pass the Civil Rights Act until 1965. Sport has long led the way in social change.

And so it is that the games we love pave the way in new ways of approaching all the challenges in life. Through sport, we learn that a huge barrier to what we can achieve is what we believe we can achieve.

In his 1968 presidential campaign, Bobby Kennedy liked to quote the George Bernard Shaw line: "Some men see things as they are and ask why; others dream things that never were and ask why not?"

Also in 1968, protesting students in Paris put up the wall poster that shouted: "Be realistic. Demand the impossible."

Golf is full of examples of the impossible made possible. Ben Hogan won the 1950 U.S. Open 16 months after a near-fatal car crash; Babe Zaharias came back from cancer to win the 1954 U.S. Women's Open. Jack Nicklaus won the Masters at age 46 and Tiger Woods did it at 21 – by 12 strokes. Annika Sorenstam birdied 12 of the first 13 holes in shooting the LPGA's only 59.

What we are seeing in golf right now is a phenomenon that could teach us a lot about how to crash through the glass ceiling of belief. Give Tiger some credit for that, and Annika as well. They showed the current players the incredible level on which the game can be played and demonstrated that being "in the zone" is not a fortunate happenstance but a deliberate state that can be achieved by focus work.

What do Jason Day, Rory McIlroy and Jordan Spieth have in common – besides being in their 20s? They believe they can win. The oldest winner of an LPGA major this year is Brittany Lang, who was 30 at the time. Lydia Ko and Brooke Henderson were

both 18 when they won majors; Ariya Jutanugarn was 20 and Chun 22. What unites them, besides age? Belief.

Just as Jackie Robinson helped pave the way for Brown vs. The Board of Education; just as Charlie Sifford helped along the Civil Rights Act, a current generation of athletes – in all sports, not just golf – are teaching us that we can be better than we are.

And think of the importance of that message.

Perhaps the most important thing that sport teaches us is that we are more similar than we are different. Sport unites us; they bring us together. And golly do we need that right now.

In a time where trouble seems to lurk around every corner, we need that belief that anything is possible. And we need to rediscover the decency to, after the match, remove our hat, look our opponent in the eye and congratulate them on a game well played.

Golly, I love this game.