

GOLF

TIPSTER

REVIEW



SMART BETTING CLUB

IN THIS REPORT



EDITOR'S NOTE

Thanks for downloading this **1st Free Smart Betting Club Magazine**, designed to give you a taste for some of the unique content published on a regular basis that can **help you make money betting**.

In this free issue you can read the original review and interview of the **Sporting Life's golf tipster Ben Coley** and the profitable performance of his bets over the years.

If you enjoy this content and are after dedicated, independent help with your betting then please do consider joining our tight-knit community of profitable gamblers.

In fact, I believe so strongly in our ability to help your betting, that there is a 90-day money back guarantee if not satisfied with the service for any reason.

Best Regards,

Peter Ling



Smart Betting Club Owner/Founder
<https://smartbettingclub.com/>



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Established in May 2006, the Smart Betting Club is a **100% independent** source for reporting upon, reviewing and monitoring the world of betting advice.

We can help point you in the direction of the **best tipsters, strategies and advice on making money betting** via the following:

- **SBC Magazines** – Over 120 issues since 2006 which feature our independent tipster reviews – famed for their detail and for helping uncover the best experts to follow
- **SBC Tipster Profit Reports** – Published several times a year, these unique reports contain our latest tipster ratings, including 'Hall of Fame' recommendations and at a glance comparative league tables on over 50 different of the most profitable tipsters.
- **Pro Betting Fundamentals** – Get your betting on the right footing with our Betting Insight articles and two expert guides: 'The Pro Gambler Blueprint' and 'Get The Betting X-Factor'. Designed to help you get the winning betting mindset needed to make it pay long-term and bet like a professional.
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SBC MAGAZINE REVIEW & INTERVIEW: BEN COLEY

First published: **SEPTEMBER 2020** – Updated **June 2022**

In each SBC magazine, you can find several independent tipster reviews as this example analysis of the tips put up by Ben Coley helps to showcase.

It's a great example of how we can help showcase to you as a Smart Betting Club member some of the best free tipsters out there and exactly how to follow them.

Ben supplies all of his advice free of charge via the Sporting Life columns he publishes and has an excellent track record of performance dating back to 2017. As part of our analysis, we painstakingly built up a spreadsheet of results in order to showcase them to SBC members and provide examples of how you can follow him both with bookmakers and on the betting exchanges.

Ben was also good enough to answer our questions on his golf betting strategy, including how he got started, odds movement, form and a lot more besides.

SBC continues to report back on the form of Ben and his tips in each of our Tipster Profit Reports

TIPSTER REVIEW BEN COLEY – SPORTING LIFE'S GOLF TIPSTER

REVIEWER: PETER LING



FREE GOLF TIPSTER WITH AN EXCELLENT TRACK RECORD

| | | | |
|------------------|---|---------------|---------------|
| NAME: | Ben Coley | EMAIL: | n/a |
| WEBSITE: | https://www.sportinglife.com/golf | TWITTER: | @bencoleygolf |
| BET DELIVERY: | Online | COST: | Free |
| BET FREQUENCY: | Approx. 30 bets to 40 per month | SBC DISCOUNT: | n/a |
| BET SUPPLY TIME: | GMT: 7pm Monday and midday Tuesday | | |
| LANGUAGE: | English | | |
| BOOKMAKERS: | Essential: Bet365, Skybet, William Hill, Betfair, Paddy Power, Betfair Recommended: 888sport, Betfred, Unibet, Boylesports, Bet Victor | | |
| EXCHANGES: | Possible although expect a run on the odds, especially early on after tipping | | |

SERVICE SNAPSHOT

- Top notch golf tipster with a 23.06% ROI since March 2017
- Popularity sees some issues obtaining 'officially' quoted odds with bookmakers
- Following a Betting Exchange strategy should allow you to match, if not beat quoted odds
- Need for a long-term mentality if following due to the nature of golf betting. The right betting bank size also matters.
- Recommended service for those of you looking to add a golf tipster to your portfolio

INTRODUCTION



Ben Coley is a very well regarded golf tipster who supplies all of his bets free of charge via the Sporting Life website each week and his official Twitter account.

With a record of profitability dating back several years and a keen eye for highlighting value in the golf betting markets, Ben is a tipster the layers genuinely fear. This respect from the bookmakers can in turn see the odds on his selections tumble, especially in some of the weaker golf markets as many of Ben's followers back his judgement.

The fact that Ben supplies his tips for free is therefore both a blessing and a curse at times. The blessing is obvious – it costs nothing to follow, yet this means that when in good form, as he is at the time of this review, more punters than usual back his selections and the bookmakers respond in turn by slicing the odds.

The other issue getting his odds involves the time of release which at around 7pm on a Monday and midday on a Tuesday is still relatively early for the golf markets, which are quite weak at this time. These often do not start to get more liquidity and volume until later on a Tuesday and into a Wednesday, especially on the smaller tournaments, such as the DP World Tour and even on some of the weaker PGA Tour events.

Bookmakers are wary of taking too much sharp, early money on any golfer and so this in turn does mean some prices don't always stand up. Either that or you have to wait and request prices in the hope they rebound back out, which they sometimes do. Exchanges do offer one angle on this front but for those of you who prefer bookmakers, it is not rare to see tips put up by Ben on a Monday or Tuesday go downward in price with some firms.

An example of this in action came during the British Open in July 2022 where Ben put up eventual winner, Cameron Smith at 28/1 early on the Tuesday. Come Wednesday, the best price was 22/1 before he started the tournament at between 18/1 to 20/1. This kind of downwards movement doesn't always happen but on a popular and value bet like Cam Smith, getting on early was crucial to get the best value.

Therefore, following Ben at his advised bookmaker prices is not always straightforward, yet given his high ROI, you can often get equal if not better value through shrewd usage of the betting exchanges. More on this later.

In terms of accessing the tips, they are all posted up at <https://www.sportinglife.com/golf> and it is very much worth giving Ben a follow on Twitter (@bencoleygolf) as he regularly tweets when a new set of tips and preview goes live. Added to all of this, Ben comes across as one of the good guys in the betting world, with time to reply to followers concerns and a genuine desire to help people with their golf punting.

RESULTS



As you will read in the interview with Ben that follows this piece, he has been tipping on Golf since 2010, yet the historical record back to this point is not available to view on the Sporting Life website.

There is however a rundown of the annual performance stats since 2016 and you can view this tally of results [here](#), which is regularly updated after each tournament.

As part of this review, we went through each of Ben's columns dating back to March 2017* to build a spreadsheet record of his tournament-by-tournament performance levels.

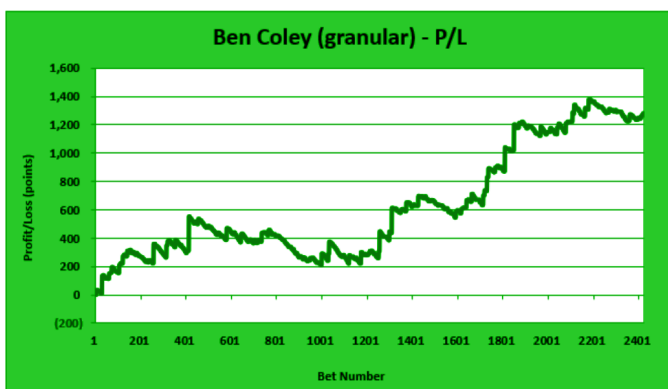
The results prior to March 2017 were no longer available online when we tried to source them – hence this was our cut-off point for this detailed performance analysis.

The headline figures for Ben since March 2017 are impressive with a 23.06% ROI from 2,420 bets put forward since.

Period summary (Variable staking)

| Year | Bets | Strike | Stakes | P/L | ROI |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 2017 | 272 | 8.82% | 560.50 | 341.06 | 60.85% |
| 2018 | 457 | 6.78% | 1029.50 | 34.33 | 3.33% |
| 2019 | 434 | 6.22% | 983.50 | (145.59) | (14.80%) |
| 2020 | 393 | 7.63% | 941.00 | 364.86 | 38.77% |
| 2021 | 552 | 7.61% | 1321.50 | 691.54 | 52.33% |
| 2022 | 312 | 7.69% | 712.50 | (6.66) | (0.93%) |
| Total | 2420 | 7.36% | 5548.50 | 1279.54 | 23.06% |

The bulk of profits have come in both 2017, 2020, and 2021, with a small return in 2018 and loss shown in 2019 (and 2022 to date, although there is plenty of time for this to turn around). This fluctuation in performance over this period is neatly illustrated by the graph below:



It should also be stated that Sporting Life have Ben's 2016 profits down as providing an additional 190.87 point return, although as we could not explore the individual tournament performance, we could give no ROI context to this figure. It is perhaps reasonable given the number of bets Ben puts forward in an average month that the ROI in 2016 would sit at around the 40% marker.

We wondered if there were – like many horse racing tipsters – certain times of year that Ben came into his own. Looking at the table below, it doesn't appear that there are. Notable though the losing months of September and October are, the data samples for each month are not yet large enough for us to be confident about any conclusions we can apparently draw!

Calendar summary (Variable staking)

| Month | Bets | Volume | Strike | Stakes | P/L | ROI |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| January | 176 | 7.27% | 6.82% | 416.00 | 10.72 | 2.58% |
| February | 204 | 8.43% | 8.33% | 458.00 | 153.43 | 33.50% |
| March | 268 | 11.07% | 6.34% | 602.50 | 74.15 | 12.31% |
| April | 228 | 9.42% | 7.46% | 533.50 | 441.86 | 82.82% |
| May | 205 | 8.47% | 8.29% | 434.50 | 22.95 | 5.28% |
| June | 215 | 8.88% | 7.91% | 473.00 | 89.11 | 18.84% |
| July | 235 | 9.71% | 7.66% | 519.50 | 321.39 | 61.87% |
| August | 231 | 9.55% | 8.66% | 534.00 | 257.53 | 48.23% |
| September | 179 | 7.40% | 7.82% | 429.00 | (65.07) | (15.17%) |
| October | 211 | 8.72% | 4.74% | 467.50 | (144.37) | (30.88%) |
| November | 186 | 7.69% | 6.99% | 461.00 | 113.86 | 24.70% |
| December | 82 | 3.39% | 7.32% | 220.00 | 3.98 | 1.81% |
| Total | 2420 | 100.00% | 7.36% | 5548.50 | 1279.54 | 23.06% |

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Unpacking these results further, we see the usual patterns of a golf tipster with regular lulls interspersed with big jumps in profit as a golfer wins at tasty odds. Ben clearly has an edge in this market, yet you do need to be patient for this to manifest itself at times.

Take the random period below I have extracted from his performance table as this illustrates the variance at play over a 12 month period running between June 2021 and May 2022.

| Month | Bets | Stakes | P/L | ROI |
|----------------|------|--------|---------|----------|
| June 2021 | 54 | 126.50 | 116.56 | 92.14% |
| July 2021 | 72 | 158.00 | 168.81 | 106.84% |
| August 2021 | 52 | 129.00 | (1.05) | (0.81%) |
| September 2021 | 48 | 114.00 | (25.88) | (22.70%) |
| October 2021 | 37 | 91.00 | 34.82 | 38.26% |
| November 2021 | 47 | 116.00 | 28.13 | 24.25% |
| December 2021 | 9 | 30.00 | 64.78 | 215.93% |
| January 2022 | 34 | 95.00 | (8.33) | (8.77%) |
| February 2022 | 43 | 97.00 | 95.81 | 98.77% |
| March 2022 | 76 | 163.00 | (88.96) | (54.58%) |
| April 2022 | 57 | 126.00 | 5.17 | 4.10% |
| May 2022 | 63 | 139.50 | (43.90) | (31.47%) |

Over the full 12 month period a 345.96 point profit was made at 24.97% ROI, a highly impressive achievement. Yet along the way there were all kinds of ups and downs to be contended with.

Of these 12 months – five saw a loss, but there were four months in which an ROI in excess of 90% was achieved. Two of those months saw the 100 point profit marker broken, with a third reaching 95 points.

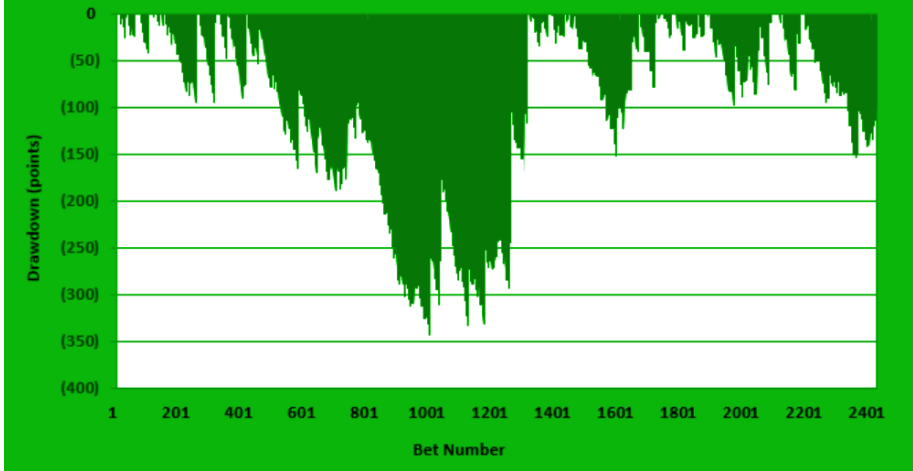
Interspersed within these profitable months are periods like January to May 2022, where a loss of 40.21 points was seen during the five month stretch.

In fact, over the course of the 62 months we have a record to examine, only 32 of them made a profit, only just over half. All this goes to highlight how you will lose just as often as you win when following Ben in on a monthly basis.

From a losing perspective, the worst run saw a drawdown of 344 points between April 2018 and July 2019 – something else that backs up the need to be strong mentally when betting on golf.

You can see the historical drawdowns in this graph:

Ben Coley (granular) - Drawdown



Experiencing these kind of runs whilst never enjoyable, are what we can expect from even the very best golf tipsters. As Ben alludes to in his interview, you are at the behest of some fine margins when it comes to either making a big profit or a small loss and it's only with patience can we see the edge truly manifest itself.

Mindful of the sizeable losing runs suffered at times, we advocate a betting bank of 600 points for following Ben Coley's advice.

Below you can see how the 600 point bank translates to Return on Capital (ROC), or bank growth, achieved on a yearly basis:

ROC (600pt bankroll) (Variable staking)

| Year | Profit | ROC |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| 2017 | 341.06 | 57% |
| 2018 | 34.33 | 6% |
| 2019 | (145.59) | (24%) |
| 2020 | 364.86 | 61% |
| 2021 | 691.54 | 115% |
| 2022 | (6.66) | (1%) |
| Total | 1279.54 | 213% |

Over this 6 year period, 213% ROC or bank growth will have been achieved and taken as an average, you can reasonably expect to make approximately 30 to 40% bank growth over a typical year.

PROGRESSIVE REINVESTMENT



Not all punters wish to stake the same each and every month, especially if following a profitable service, which delivers the goods. This is where our progressive reinvestment calculations come in, which calculate what would happen if you increased stakes by 2.5% after every winning month.

Through this sensible staking approach, we can often safely and gradually increase our staking sizes as time passes and as we build up a bank of profit.

In the case of Ben Coley, if adapting such a strategy from 2017, we would have boosted the points profit made from 1,279 to 1,956 points. The ROI is similar (22.98% vs 23.06%) yet the growth in actual real life profit is significant.

Period summary (Variable staking) with progressive reinvestment @ 2.5%

| Period | Bets | Stakes | P/L | ROI |
|--------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| 2017 | 272 | 613.77 | 362.45 | 59.05% |
| 2018 | 457 | 1247.92 | 35.05 | 2.81% |
| 2019 | 434 | 1312.52 | (199.88) | (15.23%) |
| 2020 | 393 | 1453.83 | 533.11 | 36.67% |
| 2021 | 552 | 2386.69 | 1244.58 | 52.15% |
| 2022 | 312 | 1496.85 | (18.99) | (1.27%) |
| Total | 2420 | 8511.58 | 1956.30 | 22.98% |

ODDS MOVEMENT & EXCHANGE STRATEGY



The issue of odds movement is one that Ben freely admits to in our interview that follows. It is therefore important to be aware of this before committing to back his tips as you will find occasions when the odds on his selections have moved beyond what you should reasonably take.

This is especially the case in the often weaker DP World Tournament events where the bookies know they are vulnerable and therefore significant moves for golfers can see prices move rapidly.

Every week there are also popular golfers who are backed in the days leading up to the tournament by several sources so it is not always just Ben who sees value in their odds.

To give a live example of the odds movement in action – below are the tips as put up by Ben for the Portugal Masters. I have listed the original odds put up by him at 5:23pm on the Monday 7th September 2020 alongside those available 24 hours later.

Note – Coetzee won with Laurie Canter 2nd to make it a very profitable tournament!

3pts e.w. George Coetzee at 18/1 (1/5 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)

Best odds 24 hours later: 15/1 (bookmaker) and 18.5 (Betfair)

1.5pts e.w. Jason Scrivener at 30/1 (1/5 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)

Best odds 24 hours later: 30/1 (bookmaker) and 44 (Betfair)

1.5pts e.w. Wilco Nienaber at 33/1 (1/5 1,2,3,4,5,6)

Best odds 24 hours later: 25/1 (bookmaker) and 29 (Betfair)

1pt e.w. Laurie Canter at 70/1 (1/5 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)

Best odds 24 hours later: 66/1 (bookmaker) and 75 (Betfair)

1pt e.w. Jake McLeod at 125/1 (1/5 1,2,3,4,5,6,7)

Best odds 24 hours later: 100/1 (bookmaker) and 130 (Betfair)

Of these 5 tips, there was the greatest support for Nienaber (33/1 into 25/1) and McLeod (125/1 into 100/1), although on the Betfair exchange, you can find at times equal or better prices on Coetzee, Scrivener, Canter and McLeod in the win market.

Therein lies our advice on how best to maximise your time following this service – to consider using the Betfair exchange as you can reasonably expect to get better odds here. We would also advocate not rushing in to take the first price available on Betfair in these markets. There is usually no rush to do so and often with patience and by requesting higher odds, you can sometimes get matched at a much more appealing price. Not always, but often enough to make it a worthwhile strategy, especially if placing a bet request on a Monday or Tuesday for a tournament that doesn't start until Thursday.

Time is also on your side when you bear in mind that golf is a 4 day event and so there is also an opportunity to get bets matched in-play as the tournament takes place if you so wish. It is a reasonable approach to leave a request for better odds once the golf starts as invariably it will be taken up. The caveat to this is that all bets on losing golfers will be matched, yet you can't always guarantee a winner will be so, yet usually if being realistic with the odds you request, this will be the case.

The obvious downside from betting on the exchanges is the fact you will only be paid out on the first 5 golfers that place, unlike as in the above example in the Portugal Masters where the bookmakers are paying out of the first 7 finishers. This can be counteracted by simply looking to put the 'place' element of an each way bet in a mix of the top 5 and top 10 markets.

To take the example above on George Coetzee at 18/1, who you can back to win outright on Betfair at 18.5 – close to the original odds advised by Ben. His effective 'place' market odds to finish in the top 7 with the advised bookmaker are 3.7.

Looking at the Betfair place market 24 hours after this bet was advised, you could have easily taken 4.6 on Coetzee to finish in the top 5 and 2.94 on him to finish in the top 10.

If taking this course of action, here is how the returns would vary if staking £100 with either the bookmaker at 18/1 or on Betfair as per the above.

Coetzee wins: £1080 Bookmaker profit & £1042.23 Betfair profit

Coetzee top 5 finish: £130 Bookmaker profit & £85.73 Betfair profit

Coetzee top 7: £130 Bookmaker profit & £27.47 Betfair loss

Coetzee top 10: £130 Bookmaker loss & £27.47 Betfair loss

*Note the above deducts 2% commission as standard of each bet on Betfair

Although in this strategy, you have made slightly less in the top 3 outcomes – you would have made a much lower loss if Coetzee were to finish between 8th and 10th than with a bookmaker. The only reason your Betfair profit is lower if Coetzee wins is because you are taking effective odds of 17.15 after commission versus the 18/1 with the bookmaker.

If you were to repeat such a strategy for some of the other tips in this market, such as McLeod, Canter and Scrivener – all of whom are available at a bigger win market price on Betfair than with the bookmakers, you will make a greater profit when they win. The place market returns will undoubtedly vary depending on when you take the bet and to what odds. Some you will get a slightly better set of odds for, some slightly worse.

It should be noted that in the above example, Ben's tip on Jason Scrivener finished 8th, so here is an example of where you would have had a better return with the above strategy than with the advised bookmakers.

The Betfair golf place markets – top 5 and top 10 are often illiquid early on in the week and are best used closer to the tournament. Don't be tempted to take any old price, instead – visit the Top 5 and Top 10 bookmaker markets on a site like Oddschecker to compare and contrast what is realistic.

In the above example, Coetzee was priced at 7/2 to finish top 5 with 3 bookmakers (4.6 on Betfair) and 7/4 to finish in the top 10 with 4 bookmakers (2.94 on Betfair).

Indeed, the bookmakers do offer you the ability to take a top 5 or top 10 finish bet and that also offers an alternative option to Betfair.

The above exchange strategy naturally will take a little bit of extra work, but it does outline how you can often match or get slightly better or worse odds on Ben's selections just by using the exchange shrewdly.

As ever, the more you put into something like this, the more you will get out of it!



Our own tracking of Ben's record highlights the fact he has made a tremendous profit of 1,279 points @ 23.06% over 2,420 bets since March 2017. Clearly Ben has a major edge over the bookmakers, and it is likely if we were able to add in the 2016 figures, which hint at a 40% ROI, then his actual real-life returns might well be above the 25% ROI marker.

For a free service that is highly commendable and there is no doubt of his golf tipping prowess.

The issues purely come in the matching of your bets as they often do for quality tipsters just like Ben who publish their tips for free. Word quickly spreads when such a tipster has an edge of note and before you know it, plenty of people start to chase the odds down on his selections – especially with bookmakers.

This is particularly the case during 'hot periods' of form such as in 2020 when Ben attracted the attention of several new followers, given the 466 points profit made that year. As Ben alludes to in the interview that follows, this attention does see greater issues getting the odds and it is likely only after he hits a bad run, that he will shake some of them off.

Sad as it is to acknowledge the reality that too many punters can't handle a bad run, it does come with perks for those of us able to hang on until the profit push hits once again.

So therein lies the reality of following Ben – a great tipster no doubt, but one where you might have to work and be shrewd to get the value odds. If able to do that and also willing to ride out the cruel nature of golf betting at times, then the rewards are clearly there.

Tipster Ratings

Returns: 4/5

Risk: 3.5

Cost: 5

Transparency: 3

Odds Availability: 2.5

Suggested portfolio weighting: 3.5

Customer service: 3.5

Overall: 4.5

Patience: 18 months

Rating: Strong Buy

Betting Bank: 600 points

INTERVIEW: BEN COLEY **ASKING THE QUESTIONS: PETER LING**



To accompany the above review of Ben's tipping output at the Sporting Life, he was good enough to answer several questions on his approach to golf betting and his tips in general.

Tackling all the key topics from his long-term performance to the staking plan used and of course – his thoughts on the odds movement of his tips!

Please note – this review was first put together in September 2020 and so the answers to some points would benefit from an update of sorts. We approached Ben to see if he would like to update the answers, yet he wasn't able to do so.

SBC: Hi Ben, thanks for agreeing to this interview!

You are a very well-known name on the golf betting circuit these days, yet can you begin by outlining what attracted to you to betting on golf?

Ben: A love of golf, primarily. I started playing from a very young age and was handy for a while and it was always my favourite sport to watch on TV. The betting side was of course just as important; as the son of a betting shop manager I grew up settling football coupons at the dinner table on a Saturday night and I got a job at the head office of an independent firm when I was 16, again through the old man. It very much runs in the family.

SBC: Most people know about you from your Sporting Life tipping columns on golf betting, which continue to be very popular. How did this come about and when did you start writing and tipping for them?

Ben: I've been very, very lucky, and worked hard. After studying journalism at university ('studying' used loosely), I went back to work at the same place I'd been at since I was 16 and could easily have settled in for the long haul. Instead I took a chance on a low-paid radio job in Leeds and moved there at 23, and I'm still here at 34. The radio gig was in the same building as Sporting Life, who were under the same umbrella at the time, as was the digital side of Sky Sports. That's how I met my first editor and Dave Tindall, who was working for Sky and Golf365 but writing betting previews for the Life, too. I'd been an avid reader of his for a long time and he was good enough to give me a chance. I think it was my second or third preview when Bubba

Watson somehow won a mad renewal of the Travelers at 50/1 and from that moment I became a regular contributor. I moved across to work full-time for Sporting Life not long after, and since 2015 I've been deputy editor there. I say that only to confirm that my job isn't just golf tipping, thank heavens.

SBC: What is your normal column schedule for Sporting Life and what time and day can readers expect to find them published each week?

Ben: I begin writing my first preview at around 3pm every Monday and typically publish around 7pm, much of the research having been done the previous week. It varies as to whether I begin with the PGA or European Tour but generally the former now as for obvious reasons they reach a broader audience. Whichever preview comes next, that would usually be out by Tuesday lunchtime but sometimes other things get in the way. Mainly Zoom at the moment.

SBC: You preview and tip in both the PGA and European Tour events. Do you have any preference as per which tour offers the best value betting opportunities?

Ben: 100% the European Tour. I would say my best-known winners have still been the PGA Tour (Russell Henley at 300/1 in the Honda or Andrew Landry at 200/1 in Texas) but year after year it seems the standard increases and it's very difficult to get the market leaders beat. Then you've got to establish whether it will be JT's week, or Rory's, or DeChambeau's, or Rahm's, and it's difficult – especially when you've a general tendency to take on board more risk for a bigger price.

That's why DJ winning the Travelers at 30/1 this year was so satisfying and why Koepka letting slip the St Jude at 33/1 was so infuriating. The European Tour is weaker, I would say those setting the odds know a little less about it, and there's greater variety in terms of courses and conditions. All those things present opportunity, the one caveat being that players are far less reliable as a rule and Sundays can be fairly brutal if you are watching.

SBC: Onto the main reason for our interview - the excellent long-term profits you have achieved.

Sporting Life have your record for the past 5 years as showing a 975.97 point profit since 2016. Do you have any idea on other key metrics such as your Return on Investment, number of bets or the average amount staked per month or year?

Ben: Most months I stake 60-70 points, and on average it'd be around 750 per year on outright markets, meaning around 800 when you add major specials. Number of bets would be around five and a half per tournament on average, as I typically vary between five and six, sometimes seven or eight but occasionally only two or three. ROI-wise between 20 and 25% from 2015 onwards but I do appreciate it can be hard to get on at the advised prices sometimes, so all numbers have that asterisk for all that I'm proud of my record.

SBC: Furthermore - Sporting Life don't list a record for you prior to 2016 but do highlight you were tipping between 2010 and 2015 and some of the winners you backed. Do you have any figures on overall profits, ROI etc... that you can share?

Ben: I'm afraid I don't and it's best I don't get into the why – might swear and/or get in trouble. Suffice to say those records, both individually and for the entire site dating back as far as 2003, have been lost. I have some numbers but without any means of proving them I have to rely on 2016 onward, which I do think gives a fair indication of what to expect. Hopefully, 2020 will be my best year yet and I won't have to bemoan the fact that 2012 and 2014 have been expunged.

SBC: Back to present day and you have been in superb form throughout this truncated golfing year with 400 points in the bag for 2020 already, yet in 2019 you lost 145 points. Do you feel this is 'par for the course' (pun intended) when golf betting and how patient do people need to be when golf betting and following your tips?

Ben: Yes, absolutely. I've probably improved in a couple of aspects, especially when it comes to the understanding and application of statistics. The PGA Tour has evolved rapidly in terms of breadth and quality of data and as a tipster you have to adjust, in the same way that a racing expert might now be incorporating sectionals and stride data.

It can throw you off, and I think that happened in 2019 as the European Tour also brought new numbers to the table – but the main difference between the two years can be described as rub of the green. I had a 100/1 play-off loser in December who ought to have won, and had he done so it basically takes care of everything; four or five tips won the week after I'd selected them, no end of close calls, and some potential season-changers just had difficult Sundays. Selections at 125/1, 66/1, 25/1 all leading with nine to play and not winning makes the world of difference and in 2020 things have just gone the other way. I've had 250/1 and 150/1 winners which went down the last, a 50/1 play-off winner who ought to have been beaten in regulation, and a couple of others who fell over the line somewhat.

Sami Valimaki winning in Oman at 250s was outrageous in the way the cards fell and last year I'd probably have been on Brandon Stone, who had been on my shortlist for the event and had his pocket picked on the very last hole. That's golf betting in a nutshell.

SBC: I can certainly relate to that as I am sure many readers can given how all-or-nothing betting on golf can be at times.

Given the above, I am interested to know how you cope with the frustrations that golf betting can bring. What advice do you have for punters following you in on dealing with the inevitable losing runs?

Ben: I take to twitter, basically. Otherwise I've been doing it long enough that I can generally get over things quickly, after a tweet storm or a WhatsApp or two, and a sleep. I would also say that golf is a bit different to most other sports for those reasons – even the strongest favourite on the PGA Tour now might have a 15% chance of actually winning.

I write long, detailed previews, and fortunately numbers remained strong when the tips weren't going well. That means I can sit down the next Monday and type knowing it's not for nothing, whatever happens. Relatedly I think in general, there aren't many people who follow every point and every selection. They read the analysis, read someone else's, combine it with their own ideas, and might take one or two of mine. And at risk of sounding glib, if ever there was a time to remember this job is a bit daft – like, its very existence sometimes seems amazing to me – it is now. So what if things don't go well for a while. I know what I'm doing, I'm trying my best every single week, and I feel lucky to have a loyal readership who understand the nature of the sport.

There's some pressure, but not stress, and I think that's an important distinction. Plus it helps that my wife really couldn't care less and my son is far too young to. It's hard to justify dwelling on things for too long.

SBC: Some good advice there – it sounds like you have a good mindset and setup on how to cope with the stress and strains of golf betting, especially when as a tipster you have a lot of people following you in each week.

Given the fluctuations across a standard 4 day golf event, do you ever trade on your tips in-play? For example if you back a golfer at 100/1 before the tournament starts and he is leading going into day 4. Would you lay him at a short price and lock in profit or simply let it ride out?

Ben: I used to, but trading was never really my forte. Enhanced each-way terms in golf also mean it's less important, at least at a recreational level, and I pride myself on a record which can't legislate for that. I put up Justin Thomas at Muirfield Village this summer and he led by three with three left, went 1.04, and didn't win. I know some of my followers got out in front, some backed him each-way, but my win-only recommendation goes down as a loser. Silly as it may sound to your readers – serious, dare I say semi-professional punters – the things I value most in my job are the quality of my work and the record it helps produce. What I win or lose is secondary and always has been. I get paid to do it and that's my priority.

SBC: A good staking plan is important whatever you bet on - can you outline how yours work and how you judge how much to risk on any given player or tournament in total?

Ben: I'm going to sound like a politician but there are many people with much brighter things to say about bankroll management and there's nothing much I can bring to that table. I started off following the template Dave Tindall set for the website a long time ago and while the total investment has nudged up a little, a reflection of playing for seven or eight rather than five or six places, not much has changed. I tend to go win-only at shorter than 16/1, two points each-way from around 16 to 33, one from 40 to 200 and maybe a half from there, but it does vary according to confidence levels and each-way terms. I know some traders will tell you every price is bang on these days but I think that's a total nonsense and if there's a player I like at 250/1 who I think should be closer to 100s, I'll go the full point, and so on. Sorry, this is a bit of a non-answer.

SBC: Finally, given your popularity in golf betting circles, what advice do you have for those worried about the odds on the golfers you identify being forced downwards by the bookmakers? I ask this as I note at times the odds do come under pressure!

Ben: I get asked this a lot and appreciate it can be difficult, although bookmakers do tend to be a little short-termist with it – six months ago most of my tips held in the market but now they shorten immediately. It's a shame they can do so without laying a bet but I understand that side of the industry and the job they have to do. In terms of advice, have as many accounts as you can, be prepared to walk into a betting shop, and also keep an eye on the exchanges on a Wednesday.

Once things have died down you'll often see my selections drift out again and while not reflected on the high street as it were, if you are an exchange punter you'll often get a considerably bigger price, particularly if they overreact to the weather forecast which does happen a fair bit.

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