



KEVIN O'NEILL / STAFF ARTIST

# Whole in one

Masters' website provides complete coverage

**R**obins, crocuses and grown men swinging metal sticks at little white balls (and then cursing profusely and breaking the sticks when the ball goes the wrong way) are sure signs that spring is finally here. Don't be fooled by the snow and freezing temperatures, golf season has arrived.

The Masters tournament, which is played the first full week of April at Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia, is the first major golf tournament every year. If you want to follow the tournament online you need look no further than the official tournament site, [www.masters.com](http://www.masters.com).

The only golfing I ever do involves miniature windmills and astroturf. Watching golf is for me almost as exciting as watching fishing. Despite my lack of experience and aversion to watching others play the game, I wish I had time to play it myself. There are worse ways to spend a summer afternoon than playing a game in a park-like course with friends, and finishing up at the 19th hole with a few cold ones.

## The long shot

For the benefit of my many golf-loving friends I thought I should do a column on the Masters. I visited the website fully expecting to be bored out of my skull and being forced to scramble to find a more interesting subject. Much to my surprise I found a very engaging, well-designed site with enough content to satisfy both rabid fans and those with only the slightest interest in the game.

## Masters schedule

Coverage of the tournament will be offered on [www.masters.com](http://www.masters.com):

■ **Monday** – 9-11 a.m. coverage of practice rounds; 9 a.m.-5 p.m. live player interviews

■ **Tuesday** – 9-11 a.m. coverage of practice rounds; all day live player interviews

■ **Wednesday** – 9-11 a.m. coverage of practice rounds; 12:30-5 p.m. Par 3 Contest coverage

■ **Thursday** – Round 1 live video and radio coverage, Masters 3D live video, highlights and replays from 8 a.m.- midnight

■ **Friday** – Round 2 live video and radio coverage, Masters 3D live video, highlights and replays from 8 a.m.- midnight

■ **Saturday** – Round 3 live video and radio coverage, Masters 3D live video, highlights and replays from 8 a.m.- 7 p.m.

■ **Sunday** – Final Round live video and radio coverage, Masters 3D live video, highlights and replays from 8 a.m.- 7 p.m.

Augusta National Golf Club conjures images of bluebloods and manicured lawns, and the website lives up to that image. You won't see gaudy pop-ups or banner ads on this site, just the discretely placed logos of their well-heeled sponsors, IBM, ATT and ExxonMobil.

Thin black bands across the top and bottom of the page contain small, light-gray type, creating a sophisticated looking navigation system. The tiny Masters logo sits unassumingly in the upper left corner like a little pony on a polo shirt. Background images for the various pages range from pristine, sun-dappled fairways to mirror-still ponds to sun-drenched panoramas.

A video pans over the lush greenery of the course when you first log on to the site (Flash Player 10 is required to view it). Then there's a featured retrospective of Arnold Palmer, the legendary four-time Masters champion. A tab at the bottom of the page reveals more videos covering past champs, tournament traditions and club history.

## Birdies, eagles and bogeys

There's a wealth of information on the site. There are histories of the club and tournament, as well as profiles of the founders. An interactive timeline provides an illustrated tour of the club's history. Photo galleries depict every hole and landmark of the famous course.

An archive of historical stats on winners, scores, records and more can be organized by different criteria, such as holes-in-one or most victories. A past winners section features a sliding timeline with photos of all the winners and summaries of the games.

An online shop offers photos, books, DVDs, apps and more. If there were still tickets available you could buy them on the site. The Newsroom section offers articles, video interviews, updates, photos and more. There are player profiles, schedules and visitor information for those attending. Stats will be updated live while the tournament is in play.

Masters.com is a good example of the Web done right. It's well thought out, organized and visually engaging. It's intuitive and the quality is top notch. It's almost enough to make me want to watch the game.

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