

AN UNAPPROVED TRAVELER'S GUIDE TO THE MONDO

It is an understandable question: Can a person win the Mondo without actually playing in it? The answer may surprise you: No.

So with this unfortunate fact in mind, here is a guide to navigating the Mondo's unruly landscape.

Parking. No matter where you park at the Madison Golf Course, the inside of your car will be greater than or equal to 212 degrees Fahrenheit when the round is over. Think that looks like shade? It is not shade. So best to park somewhere where your auto will not be hit by golf balls or vandalized by locals. Equally impossible.

Entry Fee. \$50. Most of you ain't getting any of it back. So best to pay it and forget about it. Its all gone.

Warm up. There is no driving range. There is no chipping green. There is a putting green with a "no chipping" sign. So if you want to be loose before the round, you have to do it elsewhere. To wake up those tight muscles, one popular approach is an early visit to Kartville for a few spins around the track. Actually, anything non-golf related might help.

Tees: Use the approved Mondo at Royal Madison tees. If available. That is, if the tee maker has remembered to get them made on time. In this way, you will be reminded before every drive, as you set up your ball, not to take this shot or any other shot seriously. Notice I did not say "too" seriously.

Foursomemates: Know your opponents. Know their strengths. Are they happy go lucky types? Or vengeance driven crazy bastards? Know their weaknesses and exploit them.

Powder: Keep it dry. But remember, you can't take it with you. More about this later.

Here's where it starts getting really confusing...

The Four Events. Low Net, Skin Game, Ballybunions, Carnousties

Low Net. Easy. Not too hard to figure this one out. This is the \$100 question on Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

Skin Game. Is it gross score or net score? No one can ever remember that. Check the rules.

Ballybunions. Keep a list of these hole by hole events handy. And think well ahead. Not knowing what is coming up can and will hurt you. Will you be the dork who issues the gimmie on 11? Or is it 12?

Carnousties. Make sure you get the points you earned after each hole. Check with the scorekeeper to see that he got it right. Without a doubt, this is where most points are unnecessarily lost due to record keeping challenges.

Also, a point squandered here is a point gained there. For example, if you miss out on a Tiger by booming one into the rough, you can still collect an Arnie for making par. A lot of it evens out. So keep your wig on, Peter Lawford, and play thru it.

Others: Holy crap. If you are still coherent at this point, you will now face your greatest challenge.

Mulligans and Shapiros. Knowing the difference is just one small fraction of the problem. Knowing how many you get and have left is another tiny piece. Knowing WHEN to use them is the key. You must consider their effects on each of the four games you are playing. For example, you know you are accumulating Carnousties at an incredible rate. So you might want to forgo that Tiger you just hit in order to pick up a Ballybunion for Tee Shot Closest to the Road. But if you do use the Mulligan here, you will not have it later to correct a really lousy tee shot. Your Low Net score will be put in jeopardy. Also, how might it's use affect the skin game? See? Still, this is all just child's play until now...

Anti-Shapiros. "Not So Friendly Fire", "The Collateral Damager", "The Nuclear Option", "The Final Solution", "Devil Spawn", "Leonard Smalls' Armpit", "Hydra's Nine Piles Of Vomit" and "Rosemary's Baby". All common aliases for this evil creation.

You each have one to use, launch or thrust into the gut of your opponent if you will. The effects can be severe and unpredictable. Without going into too many details, its use has been attributed to causing every bad thing from ooh poor me faces to thrown bags to ten year sentences.

Be prepared to deal with anti-shapiros in any form they may take. Creativity and unconventional thinking can lead to some tragically unexpected outcomes.

As with Mulligans and Shapiros, study the rules and know at what points it is legal to employ these strategies. Watch out for others quickly getting off a shot while you are still deciding whether to use your Anti-Shapiro. By then it is too late. Your moment of indecision may have just cost you the tournament.

And whatever you do, don't finish the day with unexploded ordnance of any kind on hand.

Champion: Usually determined the same day. And usually the correct player is identified. However, if you win, don't answer your phone for at least a week. If you don't win, keep checking your email.

Conclusion. The bad news is - you're in over your head. There is no way to keep all of this straight. The good news is - it probably doesn't matter. Somebody is going to win and I guarantee you they haven't heeded any of this advice.

Good luck in your endeavors.

A Mondo Veteran

