

THE HACKER

14 (July 2011)

$G=(IFp>30,pb^2,p)$

Having given it careful consideration, cerebration, cogitation and thunk, I have decided that this there Einstein chappy was actually quite a clever bugger. He had a fair old brain on him, I'll give him that. But he mixed this considerable intellect with a healthy dose of wit. Take for example his great theory of relativity which to be fair, to the layman, is not the easiest of notions to get your head around. That is until he illuminates it with a little humorous clarity:

Put your hand on a hot stove for a minute, and it seems like an hour. Sit with a pretty girl for an hour, and it seems like a minute. THAT'S relativity!

Not that he kept himself to science, love also got a look in with this nugget:

Any man who can drive safely while kissing a pretty girl is simply not giving the kiss the attention it deserves.

But as you may have suspected, it is equations for which he will be most remembered. But instead of the obvious $e=mc^2$ I much prefer his little insight and advice for climbing the ladder of success:

If A equals success, then the formula is: $A = X+Y+Z$. Where X is work; Y is play; and Z is keep your mouth shut.

So it is with this backdrop that I most humbly ask for your charity to allow me to have a stab at creating an immortal theoretical equation of my own that perhaps will go down in the annals. I have for some time had trouble in understanding a rather strange habit that all we golfers seem to have picked up. It is a strange phenomenon that allows us to take failure and with a little alchemical wizardry turn it into success. Let me start by reminding us all that the definitive line between success and failure in stableford is, putting aside for ease both SSS and CSS, 36 points. Equal it or better it and you can rightly and justly enter the club house with your nose ceiling-ward and chin cutting a swath for the bar. Conversely, fall short of this number and at best you can sip your tippie from your buffer-zone, or worse face the humiliation of failure and a handicap increase if your score becomes a gap wedge away from three dozen.

Or so you would have thought. Not happy to face this potentially regular fate, it seems we have created ourselves a 'Get out of Jail' card. An escape route from Stalag 34 (points) or less. And wow, what a creation it is. It is in fact a Monster and in true Shelleyesque style we gave it life and a name: The Blob.

At first it started out harmless enough, a fun word to describe the squiggled nought one might make with the pencil when you can't put any points due to your ineptitude at playing the hole. And let us be clear - ineptitude it most certainly is, to not get one measly singular point on a hole. Whether it was a pulled drive, a shanked approach or just a lipped putt; for some reason you couldn't achieve a net bogey even when taking your handicap into consideration. I therefore hope that I am clear - a Blob is not a good thing, it has been created to describe failure. In case the nail has not yet been driven home, let me quote from my Oxford English Dictionary:

Failure (feɪljər)/n - **1** lack of success, failing **2** an unsuccessful person, thing or attempt **3** non-performance, non-occurrence

I think by now you've got it. Blobs are failure. Blobs are bad.

How then have they taken on this persona of an unfortunate mishap? Nowadays, with the useful Blob in your armoury your demeanour in the clubhouse has been transformed. Instead of a mumbled, barely audible "thirty four points" to your peers in the 19th, you can now reply "Thirty Four points with two blobs!" Suddenly your performance has been transformed and a benevolent wave of admiration percolates through the bar at your skill. Clearly, you must have

played brilliantly for 16 holes to secure your 34 points if the other two holes were lost to Blobs. You hold your head high. Oh those nasty, nasty blobs ruining your brilliant performance.

Equally amazing of course is the fact that the more Blobs you have, whilst still returning a score of 30+, just adds to your amazing performance. If I may undertake a little plagiarism, your golf brilliance is therefore all relative. Relative to the score you return in conjunction to the number of Blobs you get. That is to say: If your score is greater than 30 points then your golf brilliance (golfability) is equal to your stableford points plus Blobs squared. If the result of this equation happens to end up higher than the one returned by the so called 'winner' of the competition then you should immediately write to the committee, cry foul, and demand a recount based not on the namby pamby stableford system, but the Thoery of golfability.

And so I give my equation to the world: $G=(IFp>30,pb^2,p)$

So IF p (your stableford points) is greater than thirty then G (your golfability score) equals p (your stableford points) plus b (number of Blobs) times b (Number of Blobs). IF p (your stableford score) is not greater than 30 then G (your golfability score) remains at p (your stableford score). And clearer than that I could not be.

Call it alchemy or slight of hand, I know not which. But somehow we have managed to camouflage the facts with our take on Blobs. The facts are that it is an 18 hole competition, not a 15, 16 or even 17 hole comp. 34 points is failure. I may have missed it but I can't recall The Open ever being won by the player with the best score after 70 holes (though don't mention the possibility to Jean Van de Velde who would have been quite happy to call it a day after 70 or 71).

Actually, although I have singled out the Blob, you only have to listen to the talk in the bar afterwards to understand that golfers have perfected a list of excuses that are all designed to convince themselves and their fellow players that despite a rubbish score they actually played very well. Listen out next time and you will hear talk of how well the back nine was played (so what happened on the front?) or the other chestnut is the three putt. A score of 33 points with four three-putts is as equally admired as the Blob ridden round. But given that our handicaps are, as I have bemoaned in this column before, driven ever downward, is it any wonder that we build ourselves a few safety nets?