

Refreshing honesty

November 24, 2008

He didn't have to do it. Nobody would've known. But [Hayes](#) disqualified himself from the [PGA Tour's](#) qualifying school, a move that sliced him out of guaranteed participation in the 2009 PGA season.

[Jay Busbee](#) tells Hayes' [story](#) on the [Devil Ball Golf](#) website. Here's a short, non-golfer's version of what happened:

Bad news on the 12th

On the 12th hole of a qualifying round of the Q School, Hayes realized the ball he was using was not the same model Titleist (I've always wondered why it's "Titleist" instead of "Titlist." But we'll leave that to another day.) he played to start his round. So, he knew he violated a rule stipulating a player must use the same model for an entire round.

Violation of this rule results in a two-stroke penalty, which didn't hurt Hayes all that much. Even with the penalty, he played well enough to advance to the final round of the Q School and play for the right to participate in the entire 2009 PGA season.

It gets worse

But then Hayes realized he may have used a ball that wasn't approved for play. Turns out, the ball was a manufacturer's prototype—an experimental ball Titleist had provided so pros could try them out, but not one certified for competition.

So, Hayes reported himself again. But this time, he couldn't take a stroke penalty. He knocked himself out of the qualifying school.

OK, I don't know enough about the PGA to explain exactly what Hayes did

to his professional prospects, but it had to hurt. (Here's a pretty good [explanation](#) of how tough this is, but it's from a golf site, and golfers are about as bad at using insider language as techno-geeks.)

Courageous integrity

Bottom line: J.P. Hayes put integrity above job security, prestige and the kind of possible future millions of golfers only dream about.

Last Sunday, our Bible study class talked about integrity. The surest test is doing right when nobody has to know, when doing right isn't in your favor.

If all Christians had this kind of integrity, we would make a profound and immediate impact on the world. ...

Obviously, I don't pay much attention to the PGA Tour. But next year, if J.P. Hayes can make it into any tournaments, I'll be rooting for him.