

COLUMN

Going for Goals

Compleat Golfer's playing editor Louis Oosthuizen talks us through his start to 2017 and offers expert instruction advice to readers

GOOD LIE, BAD STANCE

Here, I'm around 160m to the 18th green at Pinnacle Point with a good lie, but the ball is way above my feet. It's too risky a shot to take on and go for the hole. The thing to do is play out way to the right, with a shorter carry over the trouble. It's a par five and the idea is to keep bogeys off your scorecard. It's still going to come out with a big hook so I'll move a bit back in my stance, and allow for the hook. The important thing is don't fight it, otherwise you'll steer it to the right.



GABRIEL VON NELSON/NSW IMAGES

Originally, going back to Australia to play in Perth wasn't in my plans for 2017. As I said in last month's issue, I am concentrating on tournaments in the US, where I am based with my family most of the year.

My main goal for the year, apart from the Majors, of course, is reaching the top 30 in the end-of-year FedExCup, where there is a \$10-million jackpot on offer. I know there was some criticism about a few of us not playing at the SA Open in January, but in all fairness, I didn't enter and withdraw. It wasn't part of my 2017 schedule.

I opened with a tie for 41st at my first tournament, the Farmers Insurance Open,

which I announced in *Compleat Golfer's* last issue. The following week I managed to finish third at the Phoenix Open, which was a good start and already an improvement in the FedExCup rankings compared to 2016.

I finished only one shot behind and had a good week. The key was my putting. I closed strongly with a final-round 65 and Old Faithful, my reliable putter, is back in my bag and I've been putting well with it.

I've got 'only' the one career victory on the PGA Tour - the 2010 Open Championship, which was at St Andrews in Scotland - and desperately want to add to that tally in 2017. I've got five runner-up finishes and now, after that

solid third in Arizona - just a shot behind Hideki Matsuyama and Webb Simpson - I'm feeling good about my game.

Just one thing about the crowds at TPC Scottsdale. I think there was something like 650 000 people who came through the gates for the full week (Monday to Sunday) and that is a PGA record. So, to shoot a bogey-free 68 and 65 in the final two rounds was a massive positive.

Mid-February saw me return to Perth, where I won in 2016 on my first trip to Australia, so the memories are good. The crowds are brilliant and Lake Karrinyup CC is one of my favourite courses. But, the real attraction was the format for the ISPS Handa World Super 6 Perth.

It was going to be a 54-hole strokeplay format and the top 24 on the leaderboard were to qualify for the Sunday's round, which switched to a six-hole matchplay knockout system.

It's something different and at a time when golf needs to attract younger crowds and new faces, I thought it was an interesting concept and I decided to sign up for it. ☺

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