



Links Players

FAST FORWARD 1: THE CREATOR

In the beginning, God... (Genesis 1:1)

IT SEEMED LIKE ALL OUR LIVES, if we were into sports at all, the last thing we wanted to be was the goat. You know, there were heroes and there were goats. Heroes won the games; goats lost them. *Let me be anything, Lord, but please don't let me be the goat.*

Then along came the GOAT. Acronyms are everywhere these days, so it makes sense that we'd get one for Greatest of All Time. But as far as acronyms go, this one was pretty backwards. It took some getting used to.

But now we can join the discussion. Which player is the greatest ever? Which era was best? And in golf, which course or which designer ranks right up top?

When it comes to sports, questions like these are great for the fairway and the fade shop. We all get to have our say, and nobody really needs to win the argument (how can they when Old Tom Morris will never match up against Harry Vardon, nor Vardon against Bobby Jones, nor Jones against Jack Nicklaus, nor Nicklaus against Tiger Woods?). You might be warming up for such a conversation even now.

Can I encourage you to spend that energy elsewhere for a few minutes today? Let's focus on the one and only GOAT. Let's talk about God.

This may be a new business for you, and it may seem more than a little whimsical. Before this moment, you've been OK with letting people have their religion and talk to "the man upstairs." Everybody needs a little something to dream on, right? But then someone suggests we turn to Genesis 1, where the plain reading points to God's making the world in six days and all that, and suddenly you're outside your comfort zone, caught in cahoots with people who think this is all far truer than the myth you've been brought up to believe it to be.

Look, I'll say it right up front: Not every Christian believes those six days were, well, six actual days. I'm not here to get into that tangle, though. Obviously, other people believe it's critical to stand by those days as literal. Again, I'll let that pass. But what none of us can let pass is God himself, the one who was there long before "the beginning" and the one who set our universe and our world in motion. This God was hands-on then, and this God is hands-on now. He is the GOAT because he is the Maker of time, space, and matter. And in Genesis 1, we only start to meet him.

Written by Jeff Hopper ©2021 Links Players International. A video introduction for this study may be found here: <https://youtu.be/JyHPxlc7vJ0>.

Opening questions In golf, who's your GOAT? How about in other sports, or in movies, or in business? How do these people match up to God? What do you think God's definition of a GOAT is?

READING Gen. 1:1-2; John 1:1-3; Proverbs 30:1-6; Colossians 1:15-17

God's place (Genesis 1, John 1)

Who was at work in these opening verses of these books? If you were to describe God to others, what value does knowledge of creation add to your description?

The God we only barely know (Proverbs 30)

Do you ever feel like Agur, lacking in knowledge of God? In what ways would it be meaningful to understand more of God? How can you add to your knowledge of God?

The living, working Trinity (Colossians 1)

Paul wrote here of Christ's role in creation and his present work of holding all things together. What does it mean to you that the same Trinity at work "in the beginning" is at work now?
