



# Links Players

---

## What's In Your Bag?

*So then, with endurance, let's also run the race that is laid out in front of us since we have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Let's throw off any extra baggage and get rid of the sin that trips us up....(Hebrews 12:1)*

In the late 1960s and 1970s, there was a theory of training athletes to increase their running speed and strength by strapping ankle weights on and then running, jogging, and sprinting.

Today's improved training techniques and teachers would tell you the risks associated with this method: stress on the ankles, knees, hips, and spine, in addition to stress fractures in the feet. So far, it's only resulted in two knee surgeries for me!

I wouldn't even think about walking with weights on, much less running. As men and women who have trusted in the finished work of Jesus and are now following Him, we are told to run the race (life) with perseverance, keeping our eyes on Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith.

At the beginning of Hebrews 12, we read that we are to "throw off any extra baggage," "strip off every weight that slows us down," "lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely," and "throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles."

It's very difficult to play golf anytime, but it's even more challenging in the winter when we are encumbered by so many layers to keep us warm. It's also very difficult in daily life to have extra and unnecessary "baggage" physically, mentally, or emotionally while trying to be effective or productive.

What's the extra baggage you're carrying today? Is it a sin that continues to entangle, hinder, and trip you up? If so, maybe there is a friend in your Links Fellowship that you can ask for help.

The kind of teammates I want in life are those who will speak the truth in my life and help me run well.

I'll close with a true story about the 5'4" Welshman and 1991 Masters Champion, Ian Woosnam. "At the 2001 British Open, he was in contention to win his first Open at Royal Lytham & St. Anne's. Tied for the lead with three others, he began the final round with a birdie at the opening par 3. Then, the drama unfolded.

His caddie, Myles Byrne, approached him and said, “You’re going to go ballistic” – “We’ve got two drivers in the bag” as he pointed out the extra driver. That meant Woosnam was carrying 15 clubs, a two-stroke penalty.” Source, “A Life In Golf”

If you have a 15th or more club in your bag (Rule 4.1b), you take a 2-shot penalty per hole, with a maximum of 4 shots for the round that you play. What might have happened if his caddie or the official at the first tee had asked him how many clubs he was carrying? It might have been Ian Woosnam’s name on the 2001 Claret Jug rather than David Duval.

It's fascinating to see how life and this crazy game of golf have so many wonderful illustrations, comparisons, and examples. If learned, they can benefit us in the fairways of life and golf.

If you are reading this devotional and you are a golfer, I hope we get to play golf together. If we do, you have my permission to ask me to check what’s in my bag or my life that I am carrying that I should lay aside.

It’s not hard to look in a friend’s golf bag to see they have 14 golf clubs. Let’s honor one another with the same in life.

I would much rather you show how much you truly care about me by asking me what I may be carrying in life that I need to throw aside. Why? So we can run toward the finish line, looking towards Jesus, and do it very well.

**Prayer: Holy Spirit, show us what we need to throw off, and use our friends to help us see what may hinder us from running well.**

—

Jose Alvarez

Copyright 2024 Links Players International

The Links Daily Devotional appears Monday-Friday at [linksplayers.com](https://linksplayers.com).