



THIS WEEK'S PROGRAM

December 19, 2023

2023-2024 Board Members

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Ron Green Jr., Author / Sports Journalist

by **Elly Clary**

“My dad once wrote,” said Ron Green Jr., “being a sportswriter will never make you a millionaire, but you get to go places millionaires can’t. I’ve been fortunate to do that.”

Green Jr.’s dad wrote sports for The Charlotte News and then The Charlotte Observer for decades. Both senior and junior have won the “Lifetime Achievement Award in Journalism” given by the PGA of America.

Green Jr. covered sports for The Charlotte Observer for 23 years. Now he’s senior writer for Global Golf Post.

Speaking to Rotarians, Green had much to say about money in sports, especially professional golf. He also opined on the NFL Charlotte Panthers. Yet most enlightening might be insights on his sports-writing career.

“I’ve had long conversations with Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods,” he mused, then named other sports figures he’s communed with, including Mike Krzyzewski, Dean Smith, Joe Namath, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Dale Earnhardt, and others.

NASCAR Hall of Famer Junior Johnson took Green on a spin on Wilkes County back roads where Johnson once hauled moonshine. “I asked him to take me to a still,” Green said. “I could do it,” Johnson replied, “but I’m not going to.”

Green's wife Tamara is chief communications officer for Tepper Sports & Entertainment, which owns the 2-12 Carolina Panthers. Of billionaire Panther owner David Tepper, his family, and associates, Green said, "I know they want to win. If they're guilty of anything, they're just trying too hard."

He added: "It feels like it's become personal with the media and the Teppers, and that's too bad."

Transitioning to golf, he said what's happening is "pretty disheartening to somebody who loves the game. Greed and arrogance is a pretty dangerous combination and that's where the game finds itself right now."

He was referring to the split between the PGA Tour and LIV Golf, a Saudi-funded upstart spending billions to lure some of the world's best players. Of LIV, he said, "Instead of changing golf, I think they broke it."

Spaniard Jon Rahm took somewhere between \$300 million and \$500 million to join LIV, Green said. "I don't know the numbers," he added, "but I do know he's not worth it."

The PGA and LIV agreed in June to combine assets but left details to be ironed out by yearend. He thinks negotiations will stretch into 2024.

Meanwhile, the Wells Fargo Championship Charlotte has hosted for two decades has lost its title sponsor. Movement on that front will happen when the golf governing bodies come to terms, Green believes.

"Charlotte is too good a market," he said as he praised the Queen City's Johnny Harris, a business, civic, and sports leader who built the Quail Hollow course for tournament golf. There's no better spot for Charlotte's championship competition, he added.

"We're fortunate here," Green said of Charlotte. "We've had leaders who've seen the value of sports and what they can do for the community."

A recording of the meeting can be found here: <https://vimeo.com/896621611>
The speaker's introduction begins at approximately 23:50 minutes.