

Christopher Smith knows only one speed on the golf course – full speed

Christopher Smith is a speed freak. It's not like he races around the streets of Portland looking to race, but on the golf course, he is fast. If there is no one in front of him playing, Smith is the fastest golfer around.

Don't believe it? Just check the record. Last summer in an 18-hole round at Jackson Park Golf Course in Chicago, Smith shot a 5-under-par 65 in just 44 minutes, 6 seconds – the best round in the history of speed golf.

The 43-year-old Smith, a teaching professional at Pumpkin Ridge, also has gained some attention recently not only for his speed golf, but what he carries in his bag. Maybe we should make that, doesn't carry, in his bag.

When Smith finished tied for first at the Oregon Open this summer at Eagle Crest Resort, he carried just nine clubs in his bag. No big deal, until you realize that you are actually allowed to carry 14 clubs. You'd think that a golf pro trying to win one of the Northwest's major championships, would want every advantage he could get, like carrying 14 clubs.

But not Smith. When he plays his speed golf rounds, he carries just six clubs anyway. The nine clubs were a bonus during the Oregon Open, where he lost to Scott Krieger in a playoff.

Smith carried a driver, 4-wood, 21-degree hybrid, 5 iron, 7 iron, 9 iron, gap wedge, lob wedge and putter.

"It wasn't a big deal with only nine clubs, besides it made the bag lighter," Smith said with a laugh. "All I did was adjust my grip and swing when I had to worry about the distance of an iron shot."

Smith doesn't play much competitive golf, he spends most of his time teaching and coaching. Besides, these Northwest tournaments means he has to carry more



Steve Turcotte

clubs, spend time watching other people hit shots and worry about rounds taking over four hours.

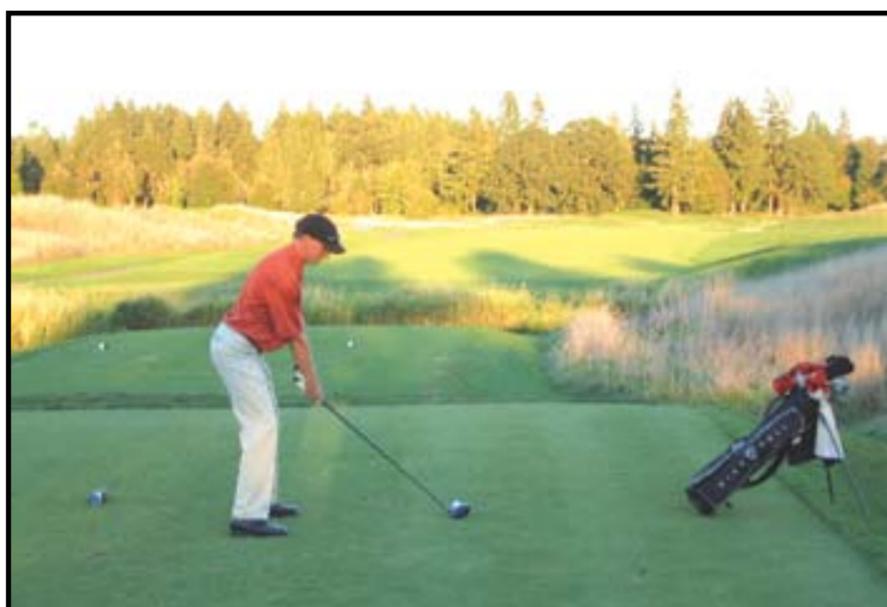
Smith is into speed golf. Yes, there is actually a group of golfers who play competitive, worrying about score and speed. Smith is fast. And the record shows that he is the fastest to ever play a round of golf and go low. He got into speed golf in

1998 with a fellow pro named Tim Scott. They both were fast runners and good golfers, so they figured why not mix the two. There were a handful of speed golf events around the country and they two were good. In fact, Smith has become so good that he is asked to do exhibitions and demonstrations around the country. Last October, he set a record with his 65 in Chicago in just over 44 minutes.

What does Smith think about slow golf? "It's tough," he said. "When I play a round, at about two hours a buzzer goes off in my head and I'm just about done, it's hard for me to be out there so long."

It didn't seem to affect him at the Oregon Open, but it was in the back of his mind. "I'm just a fast player," he said. "It's hard for me to play slow."

Steve Turcotte is editor of Inside Golf. He can be reached at sdturcotte@comcast.net.



Christopher Smith tied for first in the Oregon Open, playing with a bag of just nine clubs.



Bob Marlatt
Publisher

Steve Turcotte
Editor-Advertising

Kathy Marlatt
Operations Manager

Contributing Writers

Jeff Coston, Brett Wilkinson,
Kathy DeNeui, Alfie Lau, Mike Peluso
Cartoonist: Harold Bluestein

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Corporate Office

460 Dennis Blvd
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Mailing Address

P.O.Box 1890
Port Townsend, WA 98368

Phone

(360) 379-4080
Fax: (360) 379-4092

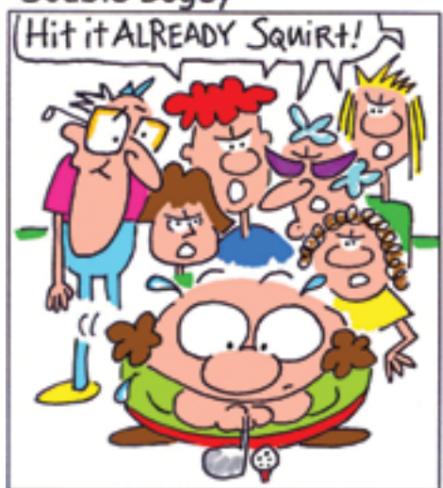
E-mail Address

InsideGolf@cablespeed.com

www.insidegolfonline.com

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Double Bogey



Harold Bluestein PGA



Rules Answer

Answer: True. The use of the word "opponent" automatically indicates the form of play is match play. There is no penalty and the concession stands. There is no penalty for a wrong ball played from a hazard, Rule 15-3. And per Rule 2-4 "a concession may not be declined or withdrawn".

•Editor's note: Thanks to Paul Lucien for his rules insights.



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