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Seve Ballesteros gave a great quote in his first interview since being diagnosed and treated for brain cancer six months ago: "I've been given the mulligan of my life," he said. "The proof is that I'm alive, that I can do things that I speak and I'm perfectly able to reason. I've had a lot of luck, which is the truth."

Tiger Woods will be getting a \$3 million appearance fee when he plays in Australia later this year, but Robert Allenby says he'll never play there again no matter what they pay him. "I'll definitely go back to Australia but only to see my family," he said. Allenby said his feelings about playing in Australia had been building for some years but they were brought to a head last year at the Australian Open when he was heckled at the 17th hole, the so-called Party Hole. "That was the last straw," he said. "My mum was dying and some of the comments that came out from the drunks at the back of the green towards me were disgusting. Obviously, I broke down on 15 green at the (Australian) Masters. My mum came out and I knew how sick she was. I broke down. I lost it, because I knew she wasn't going to be there for much longer."

Tiger scored well in the ratings, too! NBC Sports' final round coverage of the Arnold Palmer Invitational earned the best overnight rating for a golf event since the 2008 U.S. Open and the highest for any non-major PGA Tour event in more than two years, according to Nielsen Media Research. The Bay Hill rating outperformed two of last year's major championships: 48 percent higher than the final round of the British Open (3.3) and 75 percent greater than the final round of the PGA Championship (2.8).

For the past few years I've been saying the Masters feels like a different tournament since they changed the course by lengthening it. Now others are saying the same thing, including Tiger. "Some of the fun of playing the Masters has disappeared," Woods says. A national magazine asked on its cover this week: "Where are the roars?" It was a reference to the lack of thunderous moments that for so long provided the tournament's soundtrack. For all its natural beauty, Augusta National is now a narrow, long unforgiving beast. Consider this: Trevor Immelman took a two-shot lead into Sunday last year, shot 3-over-par 75 – and won by three.

Remember back just a few short years as some players rallied while others took chances and lost it all to the huge crowd responses. You always had the feeling the back nine on Sunday would decide the event. How many times was the winner crowned because of great play on 18? This year could be different. The subtle changes made to the course since last spring are largely designed to give officials more options for course set-up.



Another week, another win for SST

2009 is shaping up as another record season for SST PURE as a player with a history of asking SST to PURE his clubs has won for the seventh time already this year. This week the winner was Paul Casey who first asked SST to PURE his clubs several years ago. He beat another player with PUREd clubs, J.B. Holmes, in a sudden death playoff at the Shell Houston Open.

How about Fred Couples and his great play this weekend? The 49-year old President's Cup captain PUREs his clubs (even had some clubs PUREd this week). Couples finished in a third place tie with Henrik Stenson, who also has asked SST to PURE his clubs. Couples is playing great golf and may have won if the fatigue of having to play under the strenuous conditions this week hadn't tired him.

Once again players with SST PUREd clubs dominated the top 20. Casey won with Holmes in second followed by the third-place tie of Couples and Stenson. Tommy Armour III, Ernie Els, Jonathan Byrd, Kevin Na, Ryan Palmer and Bo Van Pelt all finished in the top 20. With this continued domination the total money won by players who have asked SST to PURE their clubs will also be on a record pace when I total up the figures for the first time this year following the Masters.

Speaking of the Masters it kicks off on Thursday and SST PURE will be well represented. In fact you could say SST will be there right from the very first shot. The King, Arnold Palmer, will hit the ceremonial first drive with his newly PUREd Callaway driver. SST PUREd his new set of clubs last week at Bay Hill.

SST PUREd clubs in Houston this week for a large group of players including Mark Calcavecchia, K.J. Choi, Derek Fathauer, Fred Couples, Pdraig Harrington, Bob Estes, Dean Wilson, NBC announcer Roger Maltbie, Garrett Willis, Tim Petrovic, Kris Blanks, J.L. Lewis, Brad Adamonis, Tommy Armour III, and J.J. Henry.

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