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**Padraig Harrington has won three major championships** but he rates The Masters as in a class by itself. "I rate it incredibly highly," said the two-time British Open and 2008 PGA champion. "The Open is very close to my heart, but in terms of sternness of test and ability to play golf, if you can win The Masters you can really play this game," he said. "Whenever I'm practicing I'm always thinking, 'Is this up to the standard that will get me around Augusta?' You're not going to win the Masters by luck. You're going to be on top of your game and you're going to have the ability to play golf in all departments of your game."

**Here's the story behind that Friday "fuss"** when, for a few hours, the weekend fate for young Rory McIlroy was up in the air. When he failed to get his ball out of the bunker on the 18th hole, he took a swipe at the sand with his right foot. Players are forbidden from testing the surface before hitting any shots in a hazard, and a penalty would have disqualified McIlroy because it would change his score after he'd already signed his card. McIlroy was long gone from the course when word filtered out that the rules committee was reviewing what he had done. It wasn't until a few hours after play finished that McIlroy was cleared to play the weekend. Here's why: In the rules it says a kick, and a kick is defined to be when you take your foot out of the sand and back in, is a method of testing the sand. "I smoothed the sand," McIlroy told the rules officials, "I might have done it a little vigorously, but that was my intent. It wasn't my intent to test the sand."

**My friend Arnold Palmer had the honor of hitting the ceremonial first tee shot** at Augusta. "What can you say, I made contact," Palmer said, tears welling up in his eyes. "It's a great thrill. This is my 54th year here and not once did I not enjoy it. This means everything to me." Arnie looked as if he wanted to keep playing after his tee shot but decided to stay put. He put on his green jacket, went to have breakfast in the Champions Locker Room. The King's love affair with Augusta National started when he was a boy growing up in Pennsylvania, and he said he thinks about that a lot.

**"From the time I was a little boy,** I thought about coming here and playing," said Palmer, who won four times and played in 50 Masters. With Jack Nicklaus no longer playing in the Masters and Gary Player saying that he played his last Masters, there has been speculation that Palmer might have some company for the ceremonial opening shot next year. The big three would be an inspirational way for the Masters to begin.



## SST PURE Sweeps the Masters

**SST swept the Masters as all three players in the sudden death playoff have** a history of asking SST to PURE their clubs. Angel Cabrera, who beat Kenny Perry in the second hole of the playoff, first asked SST to PURE his clubs before winning the 2007 U.S. Open at Oakmont. Both Perry and Chad Campbell both asked SST to start PUREing their clubs several years ago.

**The Masters victory is the third major in a row won by a player** with a history of playing with SST PUREd clubs. Padraig Harrington won the British Open and PGA Championships last year.

**As impressive as it was to have three players vying for the Championship** in a playoff, the SST domination of the 2009 Masters is all the more impressive with a look at the top 20. After the top three, in a sixth place tie you find Steve Flesch, Tiger Woods (who *Golfweek* claimed that both his gamers and backup irons were PUREd) and Steve Stricker. Tied for 10<sup>th</sup> are Sean O'Hair and Jim Furyk. Camilo Villegas and Tim Clark tied for 13<sup>th</sup>. Aaron Baddeley finished 17<sup>th</sup> and four players with SST PUREd clubs tied for 20<sup>th</sup>.

**The Masters victory now raises the SST PURE total to eight victories in 2009** by players with a history of playing with SST PUREd clubs. SST has won the past four in a row on the PGA Tour.



**When Arnold Palmer teed off as the honorary starter** for this year's Masters the SST PURE label was clearly seen by millions worldwide.

**Now the PGA Tour moves on to Hilton Head where Boo Weekley,** who has asked SST to PURE his clubs, defends the title he's won for two years in a row.

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