

Frankly Plank

By Duane Plank

Okay, the Tiger Woods brouhaha has been reported on ad nauseam, since the greatest golfer in the history of the world, carelessly backing out of his driveway, nicked a defenseless fire hydrant, and scratched the bark of a tree. Incarcerate the guy forever! Mama mia! Or, I wonder, is that even close to what really happened?

Tiger and, it is assumed, his handlers, chose to bunker down in the mansion, avoiding the paparazzi and the very public scrutiny that ensued. Much like *Plank* hides out in the mansion on the weekend following the publication of one of his columns that may have been not up to par. An *FP* that may have missed the mark, not exactly stirred the masses. Okay, that is not exactly true. In fact, I hand-deliver copies of the paper on Thursday to a select few, *even* if the column may not be as riveting as hoped for.

Anyway, all Mr. Woods accomplished by cocooning in his palatial Florida digs was opening the floodgates for entities like TMZ and the National Enquirer to take dead aim on any and all of his, shall we say, indiscretions. And by only communicating with us through his website, where he hoped to control the message, Woods missed the opportunity to mitigate the damage to his reputation, and left himself wide-open for both reckless and spot-on speculation.

Six days after the defenseless fire-hydrant was maimed, Woods, on his website, penned this: "I have let my family down and regret those transgressions with all my heart. I have not been true to my values..." Blah, blah, blah.

Time and time again folks, it has been proven that the best defense to a screw-up, no matter how monumental, is a good offense. And, really, what colossal offense has Woods committed? Bad driving? Slow-reaction time cuz he couldn't evade the golf club that ticked-off wife and mother of two baby Tigers, Elin, was wielding as she chased him out of the house at 2:30 a.m? Partaking in multiple affairs?

Is it up to us out here in the Peanut Gallery to pass judgment on Woods? Do we really care who Woods sleeps with? Has he held himself out as some kind of moral icon, or is he just arguably the greatest golfer in the history of the fairway?

I have said it before, and will probably say it again, so it is time that y'all take me at my word. *When*, not *if* you screw-up somehow, get out in front of the deal, admit your mistake or even admit to more than the mistake, and immediately try to make amends. Not that I have any experience in this area.

Back to Tiger, who wussed out and didn't attend his SoCal golf tourney last weekend. Which not only disappointed a lot of golf fans and corporate mucky-mucks who were counting-on an expense account weekend watching the best in the game, but also short-changed my kid, Phillip, who was allowed to play hooky from school last Friday and attend the tourney.

Instead, my kid had to suffer through watching a tournament that featured the likes of no-names like Graeme McDowell. Couldn't pick him out of a line-up if he was wearing a name-tag. He replaced Woods when the Tiger hid in his room. First heard that McDowell was replacing Woods, and I figured that it must be the old Cleveland Indian hurler, "Sudden Sam" McDowell. Or maybe they added a lady to the field, so help me Gloria Allred, and the last-minute replacement was the fine actress, Andie McDowell, who probably still looks pretty hot in an electric-blue pair of designer knickers.

But no, it was Graeme McDowell, ranked 55th in the world. Graeme equated himself well in the weekend money-grab, actually finishing second.

And I didn't watch more than 30 seconds of the four-day event. Tisk, tisk. Wonder if the kid would rather have attended class as

opposed to slogging through the muck at Sherwood?

Watching the recent titanic NFL Monday night tilt last week between the undefeated New Orleans Saints, and the Bill Belichick led Patriots. Just watching the game, pretty much minding my own business. Didn't really care who won the game, but as a Fantasy geek, was rooting for Saints' wide receiver Marques Colston to score a couple of TD's so that I could maybe catch up to the kid in our league match-up. Which I actually did. Or Colston actually did. Dude racked-up 20+ points, Saints tight-end Jeremy Shockey went missing, and I won the darn game against the kid.

Who could have cared less, he is already in the playoffs that start in a few weeks.

Anyway, a young lady was also watching the game, rooting big-time for the Pats. She was a tad bit chagrined because the Pats were going down. Had a great line to add right here, but had to delete it because it was too ribald. Anyway, I asked her an innocuous ice-breaking question, trying to be friendly, and she shot me down in flames, called me a very dirty name.

Well, sister, lighten-up! No need to take this thing so seriously that you can't be gracious to all of us who really couldn't give a darn about the Patriots. They still have the divisional lead in the AFC East. Relax, girl. What the heck has happened out there, folks? To quote a notorious petty criminal, "can't we all just get along?"

Getting a little head-start on the column this week, cuz ya never know what may come-up at the end of the week. Listening to the all-unimportant hockey game between my LA Kings and the Ducks of Anaheim. Listening on a cheap transistor radio as I sit by my lonely self in the front-room of the mansion, because we still hadn't received the new access card from DirecTV.

So the wife retreats to the boudoir to watch "her" shows, the kid is bunkered down in his wing of the estate, doing homework, I hope, and I am left by myself in the living room, tapping out my words of wisdom, listening to an enthralling hockey game on a \$10 transistor radio.

But you know what, picking the game up on el radio is okay with me. Used to be the only way, back in the heyday. Used to listen to the Dodgers and Vin Scully and Jerry Doggett, or the Lakers with Chickie-burger and sidekick, or the Rams and Dick Enberg. Or Enberg and the tremendous Big-D Drysdale, trying to keep us Angel fans amused as the Angels tanked another season.

And if there is one reader out there who remembers the original radio voice of the Kings, the guy who used to broadcast some of those tape-delayed late 1960 games to about ten of us diehards, email me at franklyplank@gmail.com. I know who it is, by the way.

Speaking of announcers, kinda was bummed that Rex "Reefer" Hudler was canned by the Angels. While being a total homer for the Halos, Hudler was an amusing announcer when he did the TV broadcasts. But, he was sorely lacking on the radio, having a whole lot of trouble running down the opposition's line-up when he was asked to speak. Had more than a tad bit of trouble pronouncing names. But the dude was and is a character, and a great Halo rep. Sure that an enthusiastic guy like Hudler, who has had his share of ups and downs, on and off the field, will make the best of his next broadcasting opportunity.

And in other Angel news, the club offered arbitration to front-end hurler John Lackey and erstwhile lead-off man and third sacker Chone Figgins. But it appears that Chone was set to sign a free-agent contract with the Seattle Mariners. Lackey was still reportedly seeking a \$70 million dollar payday, with teams like the Yankees and the Red Sox in the mix.

In Dodger news...no money, no news.

Tiger or Cheetah?

By Duane Plank

Had enough of the Tiger Woods story? Well then maybe you should quit reading this must-read ditty, because I have a few more pearls of wisdom to add to the buzz. Second thought. Read on, look at the ads, and continue to support.

First, I assume that you perused last week's column, the one with the headline "Sometimes You Can't See the Woods for the Tree." Brilliant, eh? Wrote it myself, on my own little laptop PC. Sometimes I submit moronic headlines with my column, which the brilliant editors rightfully change. But occasionally, I hit one out of the park. Kudos to me. From me. I will take all of the congrats for that witty headline.

Ran into *LSU Randy* last week, and he chimed in on the Woods deal. Randy, a single guy as far as I know, quoted the renowned comedian/actor Chris Rock, who, when speaking of possible marital infidelity, said, according to Randy, "A man is only as faithful as his options." Interesting. Just passing the info and the wit on to the faithful readers, folks.

Speaking of Randy, who was an unabashed supporter of maybe the worst NFL QB still on anyone's roster, one JaMarcus Russell. Boy, that sentence was a fragment. Should do better than that, but you can get away with a few things when you write a column. Look how well the Raiders do when your guy plants his butt on the bench. And takes a nap. Congrats, Raiders. *D-Girl* was pleased with the Raiders' shocking win over the Steelers, and because she also sports a somewhat dated Saints' jersey occasionally, she hit the pro football exacta last Sunday with the Saints come-from-behind win over the Redskins.

You probably didn't notice it last week, what with all the media hysteria surrounding the alleged infidelities of a certain iconic golfer. But a great take on the brouhaha was voiced by golfer Jesper Parnevik, who introduced Mr. Woods to Miss Elin. Said Parnevik, who probably won't be invited to the next Tiger Woods golf tourney that the host doesn't attend due to facial lacerations, "I would be especially sad about it- I really feel sad for Elin- since me and my wife were responsible for hooking her up with him. We probably thought that he was a better guy than he was." And then the obviously ticked-off golfer added the kicker, "I would probably have to apologize to (Elin) and hope she uses a driver next time instead of a three-iron. As the iconic radio voice Jim Healy would add, "Whoooooeeeeeeee!"

Sometimes there may be a factual error or two in one of the multiple columns that *Plank* is allowed to write. I blame the many fact-checkers that I personally employ to make sure all the stuff that I write is accurate, but stuff happens, right? And I do feel fortunate to have this platform to rant, to vent and to pontificate.

Anyway, *RJ the Golfer* mentioned a couple of weeks ago that I owed him some type of apology for something that I may have said about him. Okay, will get all of that garbage out of the way right now. Sorry, *RJ*, for anything that may have been misstated about you or your sports opinions. There. Now you can relax, bro.

By the by, as I wander the environs, searching for kind comments from my readers, haven't had one of the multitudes ask me about *the Golfer*.

But they do ask about *Dodger Girl*. Who is that girl, they ask? At first I thought that they were asking about *That Girl*. You oldsters out there may remember the TV sitcom *That Girl*, which starred the cutie Marlo Thomas in the late '60s. And her boyfriend, Donald Hollinger, who was played by the has-been actor Ted Bessell. Hollinger was a writer. Small world, eh,

Anyway, other than the complainer *RJ*, none of the true identities of the *Plank* cast of characters will be intentionally divulged. And speaking of the cast, shout out to the *Soccer Coach*, who attempted last week to make up for the fact that he hosed me out of Galaxy soccer tickets this season. He called to offer me some seats for a Kings' hockey game, but I had a prior engagement. He claimed that the seats were "good," but I gotta believe that they were way up in the rafters with the unwashed masses who are forced to sit in the nosebleed section at Staples. Wasn't able to attend, but thanks for the offer, Coach.

Week 14 of the NFL schedule is upon us, and features games between Cincinnati and Minnesota, San Diego and Dallas, Philadelphia and the NY Giants, and the Monday night game between the Kurt Warner-led Arizona Cardinals and the hanging-on-the-edge San Francisco 49ers. And the winners will be... Minnesota, San Diego, Philadelphia and Arizona. Take it to the bank, folks.

Back to the puck. There was some mayhem on the ice in the NHL last week. Which shouldn't surprise some of you non-hockey fans out there, who think hockey is all about fists and fighting fury. But here is a different twist. Seems that Florida Panther defenseman Keith Ballard was undressed by Atlanta Thrasher superstar forward on Ilya Kovalchuk on the way to a Kovalchuk breakaway goal in the Thrashers 4-3 win over the Panthers.

Nothing to be ashamed of for Ballard. Kovalchuk is a fantastic talent, who has made many a defender look foolish before he deposited the biscuit in the basket. But Ballard was so distraught that he decided to take out his frustrations on the defenseless net, attempting to whack the poor twine with a two-hander. But alas, the twine was spared because Ballard's baseball-like swing connected, instead, with the head of his own goalie! Yup, Ballard pole-axed goalie Tomas Vokoun. Hit him in the head, which was fortunately covered with a mask. Vokoun was carted off the ice on a stretcher and taken to the hospital, where he was treated for a nasty ear laceration and, thankfully, released.

Working on the column one evening, work, work, 24-7, and who pops up on the front-room TV, which is finally back online? One Ex-MB resident Rod Stewart. Dude used to live right up the street from the folks, cohabitating with the much younger hottie Rachel Hunter. Rocket Rod was crooning some tune on some taped show that was emanating from New York. Think it was the Rockefeller Christmas Tree lighting show, but who knows? Mr. Stewart, who looked to be about 80-ish, was vamping some tune called "Love Train." Good for him, we all need to pick up a paycheck in this holiday season, right?

And finally, mercifully, some may say, like to thank reader Julia Tedesco, who responded to a recent column that mentioned garages. And the fact that some of us don't actually use the garage to store our vehicles. As I thought about it a bit more, I was struck by the fact that we protect our garage garbage behind lock and key and/or remote control opening device, but put our valuable vehicles out on the street, making them easy prey for the criminal riffraff of the world.

Ms. Tedesco wrote, "I am a Neighborhood Watch captain and almost every week we get a report on problems in our area. What are they? Vehicular burglary! Why? Because people do NOT park in their garages for the most part.

My neighbor got his cars, both of them, broken into all in one today." Thanks for reading and taking the time to write, Ms. Tedesco. Your response to my somewhat cheeky riff about garage space will make me reconsider trying to squeeze the limo inside the garage, where it rightfully belongs. Read and support, folks. •