



Bobby Jones

Robert “Bobby” Jones is best known for being the only person in the history of golf to win the Grand Slam – all four major championships in the same calendar year. That’s right; even Tiger hasn’t been able to do that! He won an impressive 13 majors in his short 15 years on tour, before retiring...as an amateur.

But he could have won 14 majors if he hadn’t let his character “get in the way.” In June of 1925, Jones found himself embroiled in a *second* 18-hole playoff against Willie McFarlane, for the US Open Championship, arguably the greatest golf tournament in the world.

On the eleventh hole at the Worcester Country Club, Jones hit his shot a little to the right, and found the rough. It wasn’t too terrible, and he still had a shot, but there was lots of grass around his ball. After selecting the club he wanted to play the shot with, he addressed the ball, and according to Jones, it moved a smidge.

Now in the silly game of golf, if the ball moves...*at all...even by accident...*it’s a one shot penalty. But no one saw the ball move except for Bobby himself. There wasn’t a TV camera pointed at him. No one saw the ball move save him – not a gallery member, not his caddie, not even his competitor. But Jones called the one shot penalty on himself, anyway.

The officials gathered round and began to question him. “Are you sure? I didn’t see anything.” They asked members in the gallery, they asked each other, and they even asked Jones’ opponent, McFarlane. But nobody saw anything. Not a soul. But Jones was sure he had inadvertently moved the ball and was certain he should be penalized one stroke. So he was.

The officials told him he was to be congratulated. He disagreed. He looked them in the eye and said, “You may as well praise a man for not robbing a bank.” Jones knew only one way to play the game, and that was with integrity. Because he was a person of integrity, you’d think God would supernaturally intervene and allow Jones win the US Open Championship, right?

Well, that didn’t happen. He ended up losing the US Open to McFarlane. Want to guess how many strokes separated the two players? Yep. You guessed it. Just one.

Robert “Bobby” Jones was one of the greatest influences on the game of golf. Not only did he design Augusta National, home of The Master’s, but he also developed golf clubs and made instructional videos that are still popular 40 years after his death. But, to this day, his real legacy is the Bobby Jones Award, an accolade given by the Professional Golfers Association to one golfer who played the game like Jones with integrity.

Moral

Character has often been defined as what you do when no one else is watching. Choosing to do what is right, even if no one else sees it, strengthens your character. A strong character is something you give yourself and it is something that only you can take away.

Questions

- 1. How do you define Character?**
- 2. Do you think Character is important? Why or Why not?**
- 3. Who is the best example of character that you know? Why?**