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GOLFING BUZZ



ARMCHAIR OFFICIALS BARRED UNDER RULES SHAKE-UP

Golf chiefs announced that tournament officials will no longer act on evidence from television viewers as they attempt to avoid a repeat of the fiasco which scuppered Lexi Thompson's title hopes at the 2017 ANA Inspiration tournament. The change was announced in a joint statement from the United States Golf Association (USGA) and Royal and Ancient (R&A) which had set up a working group to create a new set of protocols for video review. In the most significant rule change, tournament rules officials will no longer accept "call-ins" from members of the public watching on television concerning possible rules violations. From January 1, an individual or group of officials will be assigned to monitor the television feed to ensure no possible rules infractions occur. Thompson's case triggered an outcry from professional golfers, with Tiger Woods and others lining up to condemn the influence of television viewers. "Viewers at home should not be officials wearing stripes," Woods remarked on Twitter. In addition to the video rules, the USGA/R&A statement said players would no longer incur a two-shot penalty for signing for a wrong score if it could be shown they were unaware of a penalty.

BA NA HILLS GOLF CLUB WINS NATIONAL AWARD

The only golf course in the world designed by Luke Donald is the best new layout in Vietnam when it won 'Best New Course 2016-2017' at the annual Vietnam Golf Magazine Awards ceremony in Hanoi. The award, which was based on the results of an online survey and input from a panel of golf course design experts, is the third of its kind to come the club's way in less than a year. Last November, Ba Na Hills GC was tabbed 'World's Best New Course' at the World Golf Awards in Portugal and 'Best New Course in Asia Pacific' at the Asia Pacific Golf Summit in Thailand. In collaboration with IMG, Donald conceived a championship-standard course that blends seamlessly into a rolling piece of terrain that sits at the foot of a towering mountain range and is accentuated by lakes, streams and lush vegetation. Among the course's standout features are its flexibility thanks to five sets of tee boxes, its comprehensive lighting system, and its views. The most breathtaking vantage point comes at the par-3 12th, which plays downhill to a bunker-guarded green with a dense forest as its backdrop that stretches to as far as the eye can see. Ba Na Hills GC is managed by IMG and owned by Sun Group, one of the leading investors in Vietnam. The InterContinental Danang Sun Peninsula Resort, Novotel Danang Premier Han River Hotel and Ba Na Hills Mountain Resort are among the other properties in its portfolio. For more information visit banahillsgolf.com.



BALI'S BUKIT PANDAWA NAMED 'WORLD'S BEST PAR-3 COURSE'

That's a distinction Bukit Pandawa Golf & Country Club now holds after the World Golf Awards ceremony in South-eastern Spain. The year-old layout won 'World's Best Par-3 Course 2017' at the annual celebration of excellence in golf tourism. It was the first time in World Golf Awards history that voters could select the world's top par-3 course. Opened in October 2016 on the southernmost tip of Bali, Bukit Pandawa Golf & Country Club (www.bukitpandawagolf.com) is the flagship course of AccorHotels in Asia and the recreational centrepiece of Bukit Pandawa Resort & Golf, a 150-hectare integrated luxury resort development taking shape on a limestone cliff-top overlooking the world-famous surf breaks of Bukit Peninsula. The 'World's Best Par-3 Course 2017' was determined by the results of an online survey conducted on the World Golf Awards' website earlier in 2017. Votes were cast by the public as well as professionals working within the golf travel and tourism industry, including senior executives, travel buyers, tour operators, agents and media professionals.

