

HOW TO WATCH GOLF

even with the blustery Scot Colin Montgomerie. “Monty’s on 12,” I said to my sister. “Let’s make our way back there. He’s always a good show when thing’s get tight. Maybe he’ll take someone’s head off.”

We were walking through the woods beside the 13th fairway toward the tee when, suddenly, we were stopped by a loud crack above our heads. We froze. Two seconds later, a golf ball fell through the branches of a tall fir and settled by our feet. “Don’t move,” I said to my sister. “Stay right here. Whatever this is, it’s going to get interesting.”

And that’s how my sister and I were ringside for the pivotal moment of the great, storied Ryder Cup of 1999.



Serendipity has a lot . . .

No, serendipity has almost everything to do with pleasures gained in watching golf live. On television, thanks to the filter of a commentator’s interpretation and the psychological hammer blows of taped replays shown a fifth and sixth time, it’s the big moments that you remember: Jack Nicklaus’s putt at Augusta, Larry Mize’s chip in overtime, even Van de Velde’s boink, then his splash. In person, it’s the little things as well as the big, the surprises, the unguarded off-camera glances and grimaces that reveal the athlete compleat. These are what you file away, mentally, under Serendipity.

Having said that, I would caution: do not equate the notion of serendipity with happenstance or pure luck. You can do things on course to improve your chances of a serendipitous experience. And depending on the kind of golfing event you’re attending, the things you do to better your odds vary. Here are a few tips.

How to Watch the West Oshkosh All Comers Classic

If you go to the course for a college match or city championship, pick a horse and ride it all the way. Most of these things are so