

## YOU'RE STILL AWAY

On Sunday, the game's afoot. I like to go out with the fourth pairing off the lead, then gradually drop back (or stay with a pairing, if one golfer makes a charge). I don't bring a folding chair because I like to travel light, but those umbrella-style seats look like a pretty nifty idea. I also don't use those cardboard periscope jobbers to peer over the tall fans. If I'm on site, I like to see the action with the naked eye or through binoculars. A new on-course aid that was in evidence at the Ryder Cup—new to me, at least—was a tiny radio with special frequency that gave constant updates from around the grounds. Ingenious, surely. But it seemed to me many of the fans were spending time concentrating on their earpieces rather than on what was ensuing in front of them.

By the time the cheer goes up somewhere else, buddy, you've missed it.

So, then: We have arrived back at the Ryder Cup.

The ball dropped out of the tree and my sister and I froze. Quite quickly, a crowd gathered, and officials started moving us back from the ball, clearing a prospective path to the fairway. Olazábal, very evidently concerned, strode to the ball and began surveying the situation. His pulled drive had come to rest fairly deep in the forest. He lay down on his belly, peering through the low branches to see if there was a way—any way—to advance the ball. It was high, immediate drama. Sadly, the fans who gathered were not nice—"I'd pick up!" laughed one twenty-something, while his beered-up buddies snickered. "Hopeless, José!" offered another. The incident became transformative in more ways than one: my sister and I decided, then and there, that we had to root for Europe. For José Maria's part, the dire straits forced him to concede that a punchout was his sole option. And thus he lost the hole and thus he began to unravel and thus Justin Leonard was even in the match by the time he sank a 45-foot putt on 17 to put unbearable pressure on the Spaniard and thus Leonard's unsportsmanlike teammates trampled 'Olazábal's line to the hole before he putted and thus did Olazábal miss the putt and thus did the U.S. of A. win the Cup and thus and thus and thus . . . and see you at the Belfry in England in 2001.