

be linear at the extremes, a natural birdie will be associated with marked utility.

Second, handicap adjusting gives the high handicapper a greater chance of converting a bogey to something positive and a par to something really impressive. Not only is there a chance of halving or winning the hole, there is the psychological advantage of matching points with an inferior score.

Finally, high handicappers know in advance that there is a good chance that they will experience an automatic 10-fold improvement in utility for every hole on which they receive a handicap adjustment. Over the course of a round, this could be a deciding factor. After all, golf is 90% mental and 10% mental.

In summary, we believe from our findings that Stableford devised his scoring system with GRQOL in mind. It is interesting to note that the first health-related QOL measures date back to the 1930s and 1940s with the New York Heart Association classification<sup>4</sup> and Karnofsky's performance scale.<sup>5</sup> Stableford may have been aware of their development and seen potential applications in medicine and elsewhere.

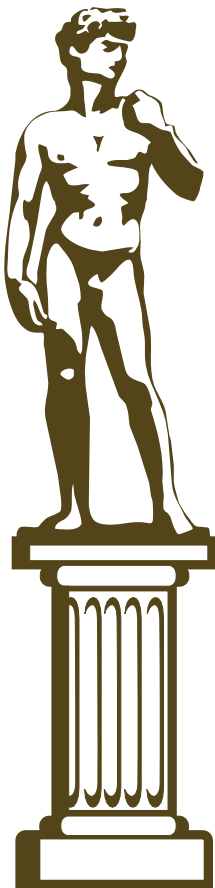
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*Competing interests:* None of the authors is a professional golfer (or even a good golfer for that matter), and none owns shares in a golf club or company that manufactures golf equipment.

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## Ignobel (1): dressing for success

The IgNobel prizes have honoured a diverse range of ground-breaking scientific studies. The awards, presented annually for scientific research that "cannot or should not be reproduced," are sponsored by the science humour magazine *Annals of Improbable Research* (see [www.improbable.com](http://www.improbable.com)). They are handed out by genuine Nobel laureates during a tongue-in-cheek ceremony held every October.

That "ground-breaking research" trend continued again this year, when one of the prizes went to a study of the asymmetry of the testicles found in Greek sculpture. The ancient Greeks showed a keen interest in realistic depictions of the nude male form, but it turns out that their sculptures show left testicles to be lower and larger than right ones. Evidence shows that the right testicle is usually higher and also larger than the left one, at least in right-handers.

Chris McManus of University College, London, received the 2002 IgNobel Prize for Medicine for a letter he had published

in *Nature* in 1976. McManus, a medical student at the time, cited research showing that the right testicle tends to be higher in right-handed subjects, whereas the converse is true in left-handers.

A holiday in Italy allowed McManus to examine 107 antique sculptures. "I like going to art galleries, and it is the work of a moment to look at each [sculpture]. And in some ways, it made each gallery more interesting — would they have any more sculptures to add to the collection?" explains McManus.

He discovered that in most sculptures the right testicle was higher, but the left (lower) testicle was larger. McManus doesn't know why ancient sculptors were dressing to the left, as it were, but speculates that it may be symbolic. The Greeks believed that the right side was associated with the male and the left side with the female — male children were thought to come from the right (higher) testis and female children from the left. — *Carolyn Brown, Ottawa, Ont.*