

THE PERFECT ROUND

by

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www.theperfectround.com

In memory of my brilliant brother Matt

On a warm, sunny, summer afternoon, high in the sky, Kele was onboard Professor Vernon's experimental new turbine prototype aircraft. He was busy analyzing micro-measurements in air pressure, air temperature, wind velocity, water vapour and molecular suspension density. It was a big day for everyone on the team. After many long years of labour and research, they were gathering critical data that would revolutionize weather prediction.



Kele was a highly classified, top secret “black ops synth” created at Professor Vernon’s *Meteorological Research Facility*. Due to his extremely delicate sensors, it was absolutely forbidden for Kele to make contact with any organic surface, any living person or any unknown external electronic device. His advanced technology was never to be exposed, corrupted, contaminated or revealed to anyone outside the lab. In terms of monetary value, Kele was truly priceless. Worth billions of dollars in research and unique micro-ware, he possessed an unparalleled array of custom integrated, electronic chips, circuits and processors. If the slightest physical vulnerability was ever detected, a self-destruct program would launch automatically.



While flying, Kele could scan surface geometry and analyze topographical influences on air currents. Combined with data collated, this enabled him to calculate variances in trajectories for objects moving at any speed from very slow to hyper-sonic. With his extraordinary mega-processing power, he could simultaneously measure the flight paths of a million fruit flies within 12 miles and generate navigation charts to plot and predict their activity for hours. That's how the developers described his computational capacity in their speculation abstract. His potential, however, was still virtually unproven, untested and mostly theoretical.



Meanwhile, on that very same day, on the surface below, just a few miles ahead, a team of scientists at the *Shen Kuo Magnetic Containment Laboratory* were preparing to start up their latest radiation enclosure for the very first time. After many long years of research and development, they were going to have a very big day of their own.

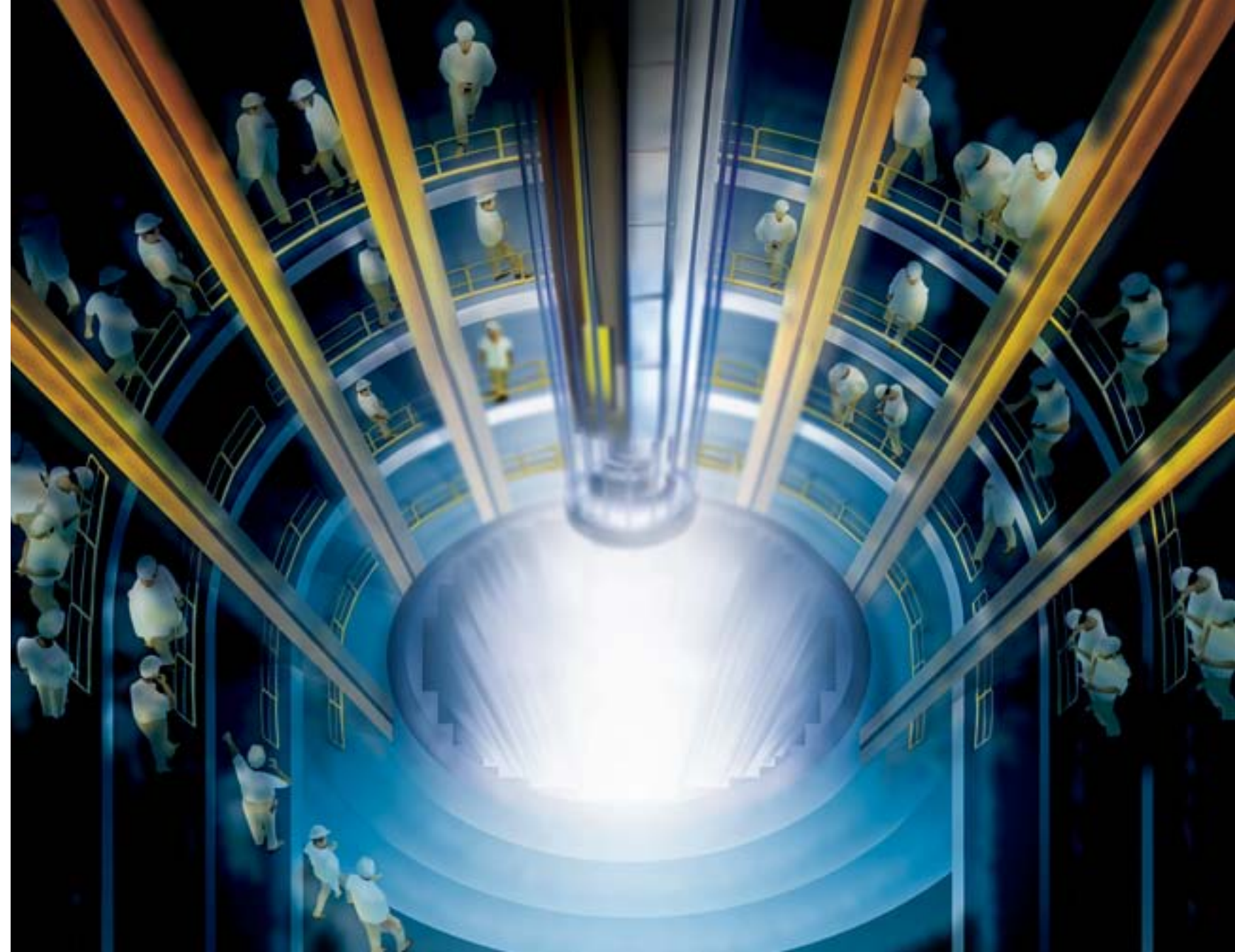


Unlike traditional reactors that use thick walls of lead and concrete to enclose dangerous atomic radiation, the revolutionary SKM containment enclosure incorporated an ultra-powerful, magnetic field. Housed inside the main dome, the “field” exhibited no sign of its existence, but even though it was invisible, it was stronger and safer than any physical substance currently known to science. No force could penetrate it, melt it, or alter its boundaries.



The amount of energy it required, however, was so enormous that during its initial power-up, the generator produced a colossal, but extremely short, electromagnetic shock wave.

It only lasted a microsecond (one millionth of a second), but it radiated for a thousand miles.



There was no immediate danger to any living creature and no lethal radiation was released. It just happened to take place while Kele was in the vicinity. At that moment, he was looking out his window. He could see the lab, but it was of no significant interest to him or his mission.



Then the shock wave hit.

It was so powerful it made his entire neuro-network skip a micro cycle. It felt like a contraction ripple forcing its way through the electronic ether. All systems managed to traverse the event without interruption except one: The pilot ejection sensor was ultra twitchy and discharged immediately without warning.



Kele suddenly found himself outside the aircraft at 18 thousand feet. He was still travelling at 500 miles per hour, but now he was falling toward the ground with nothing to protect him.



Long before he reached the surface, however, his EGR-NSS (*Emergency Gravity Repulsion-Navigation SubSystem*) kicked in so he could touch down gently and safely. It was all automatic, but it was a surprise to Kele. He didn't even know he had one.



On the ground, it felt very strange. There was no need to compensate for local vibration displacement. Internal gyroscopes were nominal. Motion sensors registered virtually imperceptible values.



He sat down on the grass to run a diagnostic on gyroscopes and motion sensors. Kele's ship, meanwhile, continued on its course. The micro-ripple effect of the shock wave had not damaged, disrupted, crashed or halted any process. There was no blackout, brownout, grayout or reductive curtailment of any kind. So the ship flew on, only now it no longer carried its irreplaceable passenger.



While measuring millions of simultaneous environmental conditions, a proximity alarm suddenly went off. A small sub-sonic object was approaching on a potential collision vector. It was going to be very, very close. Kele stopped and waited for the object to pass. A dimpled, white orb shot in front of his face less than half a centimetre from his nose. It's velocity was 72.141592653589793 mph with compass bearing S51.335°E. Kele calculated the object's point of origin and turned to see what had launched the projectile. There were four humans, along with their transport vehicles, at those coordinates.



The four golfers were surprised to see Kele sitting in the middle of the fairway.

“Where the heck did that guy come from?” asked the man in the yellow shirt.

“He wasn’t there a minute ago!”

“What’s he doing sitting on the ground?” asked the man in the blue hat.

“Did you hit him?” asked the man in the white shoes.

“No way.” said the man in the yellow shirt.

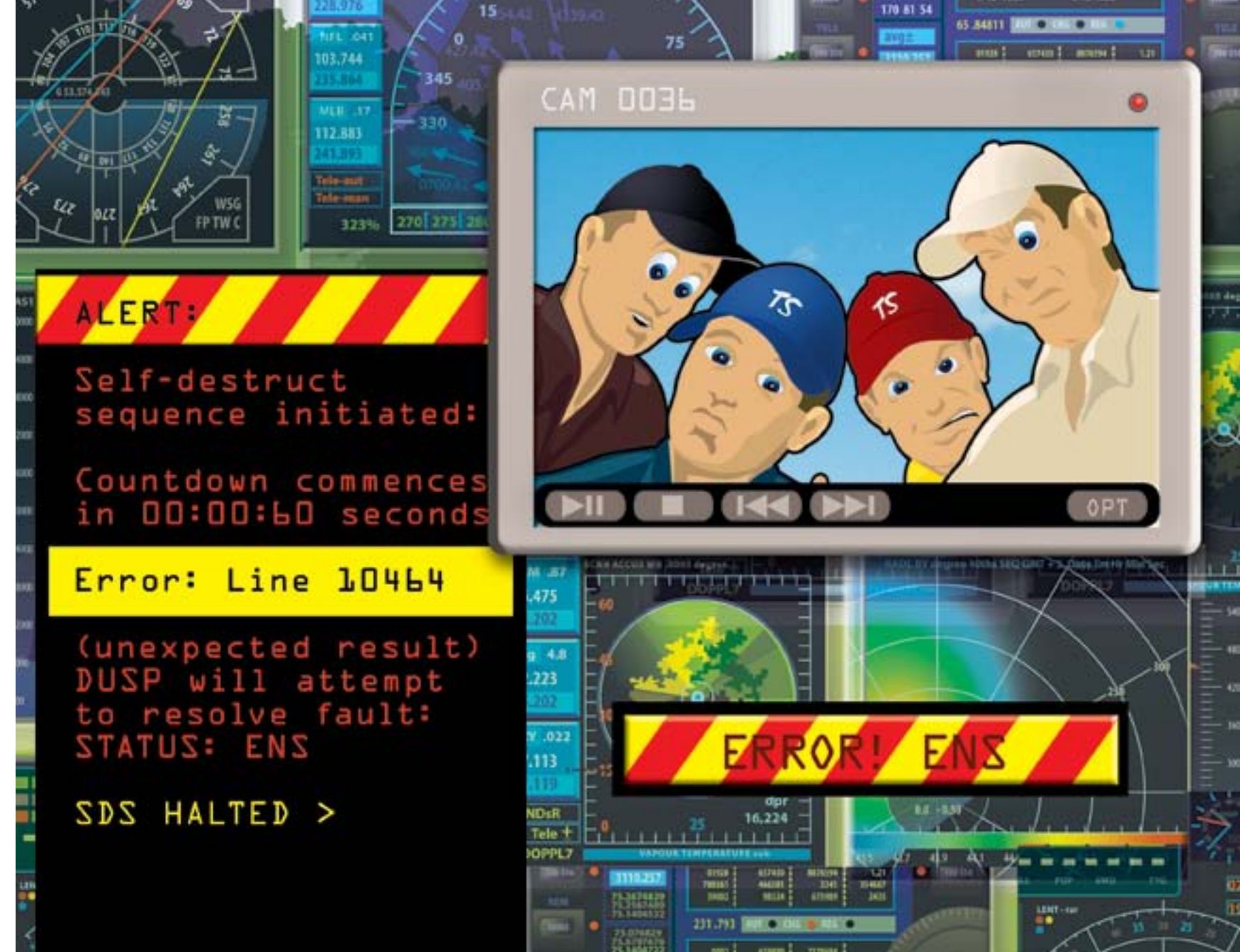


The four men drove their carts to where Kele was sitting. As they got closer, they were surprised Kele did not move or react. When they got out and walked up to him, he still didn't move. It was as if he was completely unaware of them.

The man in the yellow shirt spoke first. In a calm, but firm tone he said, "Hi there."



Upon initial detection of unfamiliar humans, Kele's primary operating system indicated entering an "extreme non-interactive" mode. Apparently, an unexpected value had manifested itself in the self-destruct program and the sequence entered an interrupted state. Unable to convert or transform the anomaly, the program failed to execute and generated an error. This launched a recognition analysis sub-routine which was currently stalled in a recursive loop. Instead of terminating Kele's existence in a furious explosion, the operating system was advising him to stand by. All external interaction would be declined.



That's why Kele didn't move or speak.

"Are you OK?" asked the man in the green trousers and he reached out a hand toward him.



The proximity of the approaching hand, however, initiated Kele's isolation protocol which over-rode the non-interactive priority mode. In order to avoid physical contact, his non-interactive state was terminated. He suddenly turned and announced, "I am on a training exercise."

The golfers were startled when Kele spoke, but the man in the yellow shirt seemed agitated. "Really?" he asked. "You're an instructor? You sure don't look like one. Where are your clubs? Where's your golf bag? Where's your cart and where are your shoes?"



Kele said, “I am responding to an emergency situation. I am standing by for instructions.”

The four men looked at each other slightly perplexed. Then the man in the blue hat said, “Well we can’t wait here. It’s too dangerous.”

“I was knocked out by a ball once.” said the man in the green trousers. “Right in the head! Never saw it coming.” and he pointed his finger to the spot where it hit him.



The man in the yellow shirt pointed in the direction of the majestic clubhouse and asked Kele, “Are you a member?” Without waiting for an answer he asked, “Are you a guest or do you know someone who is a member of *The Toastberry Springs Golf and Country Club?*”

Before anyone could speak, the silence was broken by the sound of men shouting in the distance. When they turned around to look, they could see other golfers approaching who had been trying to get their attention for some time.



“We should let them play through.” said the man in the blue hat and waved to the other golfers. “We’re in the way. We should get off the fairway.” he said.

“What about our game?” asked the man in the white shoes.

“We can’t ignore the situation.” said the man in the yellow shirt. “We need to resolve it right away, right now, but we can’t do it here.” he said and he pointed at Kele and motioned toward the golf carts. “You better come with us.”



When they started to walk toward the carts, the man in the yellow shirt said he was not actually going to go with them, but would walk back to the clubhouse on his own. He said he had a call on his phone, but as he walked away it looked more like he was scrolling and searching.



When Kele and the golfers arrived at the clubhouse, there was not a soul to be seen. There was no one in the pro shop and there was no one in the lounge. There was no one in the dining room or even in the bar. There was no one at the starter's booth and no one on the tee. All the members of the club were out on the course.

It was such a perfect day.



As Kele's companions prepared to tee off, the man in the yellow shirt arrived. His mood had changed. He seemed more calm and at ease. He turned to Kele and said, "I tell you what. You play this round for me." The other golfers looked at each other. "No. Really. Go ahead," he said. "I'll catch up with you later." No one spoke. "I don't mind," he continued. "No need to ruin a perfectly good afternoon for everyone," and he nudged the man in the blue hat and handed him his score card. Then he turned and headed back toward the clubhouse.

"Can he use your clubs?" asked the man in the green trousers. The man in the yellow shirt just waved like he didn't care and didn't look back.



The man in the blue hat looked down the fairway. Kele looked too. There was a small flag barely visible to the right, partially hidden behind trees in the distance. The man pointed toward it and said, “It’s 430 yards, par four. I like to shape a shot around the dogleg and lay up about 80 yards below the pin so I can chip it hole high with my nine and drop it from there. I don’t even bother going for birdie.”

The other golfers winked at each other.

“Or par.” said the man in the white shoes.



The man with the blue hat struck the ball. It curved toward the trees, but fell short of where he said it would go. “Nice shot,” said the man in the green trousers. “but I’m not laying up like you.”

“You’ve got as much chance of making a birdie as me putting the ball in the hole from here.” said the man in the white shoes and laughed.

“If you could do that, I’d buy dinner for everyone at the club.” said the man in the blue hat. Then he laughed too.



“If I put a ball in the hole from here, would you still buy dinner for everyone?” asked Kele.

When they heard that, all the golfers laughed.

“I sure would!” said the man in the blue hat and winked at Kele with a big smile.



Kele stood absolutely still and entered full operational mode. He scanned the physical environment and analyzed peripheral contiguous thermal differentials.

Immense volumes of data were being stored and collated in his memory buffers.

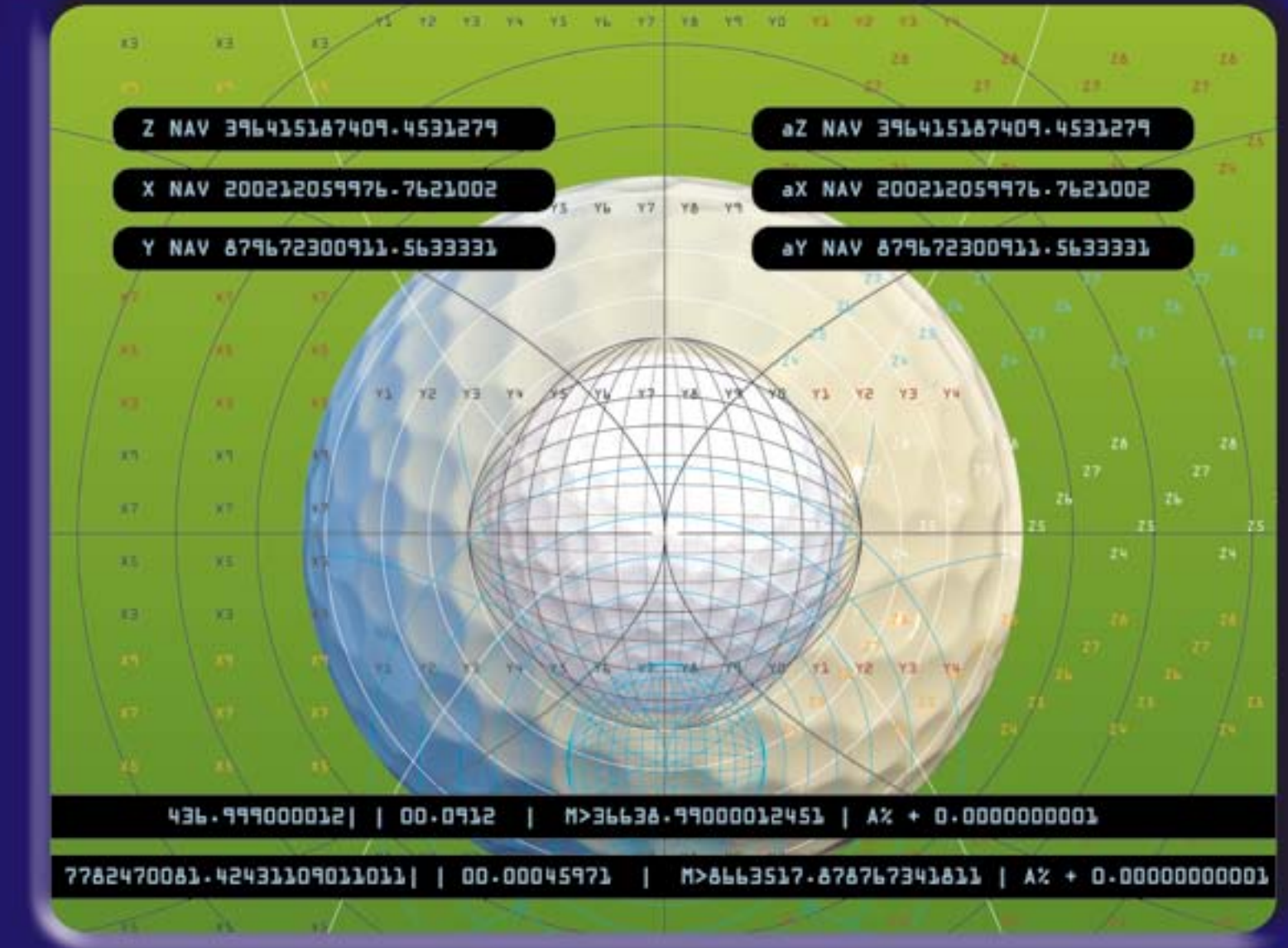


Next, he measured molecular densities and calculated a full set of dynamic relational projections taking into account influential variances on velocity, distance and trajectory for the complete flight path.

It was the only way to be sure the ball would arrive at the precise target coordinates.

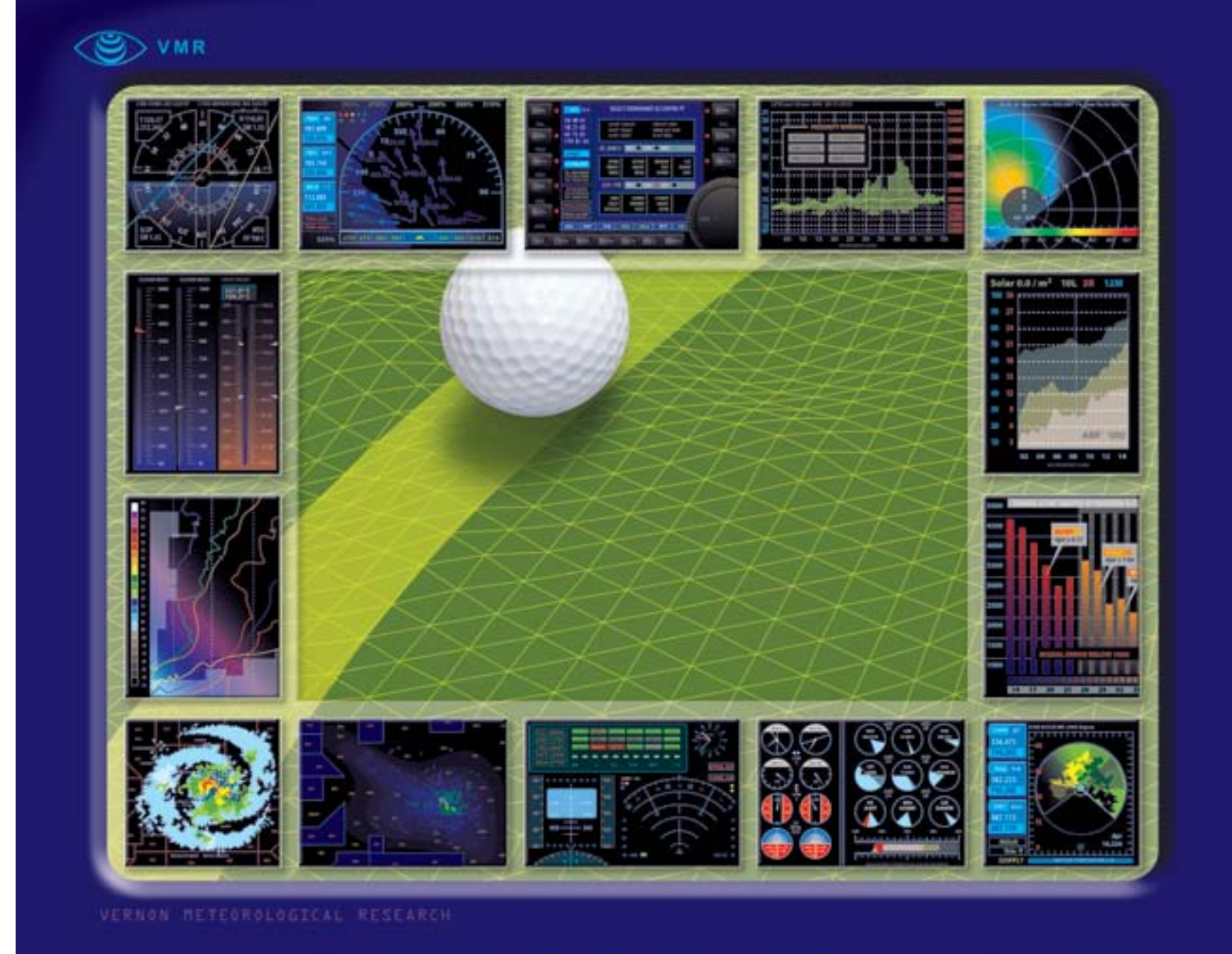


He examined the dimpled white orb and placed it precisely on the tee at the exact height at which he calculated it needed to be. He identified the exact point of impact where the club would make contact.



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While continuously updating his trajectory analysis, Kele was also scanning the parametric topographical geometry of the surface area surrounding the receptacle aperture indicated by the flag. With his optical ability, he could zoom in and render the virtual path a ball would follow to this destination. Along the path he calculated the influence of each blade of grass on the green that would make contact with the dimpled orb. With instruments and sensors updating billions of calculations and measurements simultaneously, Kele struck the ball.



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Kele's swing was smooth and effortless. The ball took off like a supersonic missile. As it accelerated and climbed, the man in the green trousers said, "You've certainly got some power."



They watched it fly up, up and on and on, further and further, beyond where any golf ball had ever flown before.

They began to wonder if it would ever come down.



When the ball finally reached the apex of its climb, it began to descend. It was a long way off, but it was heading straight for the green.

“I think it’s going to land on the green!” said the man in the blue hat.

“I can’t believe it!” said the man in the green trousers.

“That’s impossible.” said the man in the white shoes.



When it finally landed, the ball bounced toward the centre of the green and began to roll slowly toward the flag.

It curved a little to the right and then it curved a little to the left, but as it rolled along it got closer and closer to the hole. It looked like it was heading right for it.



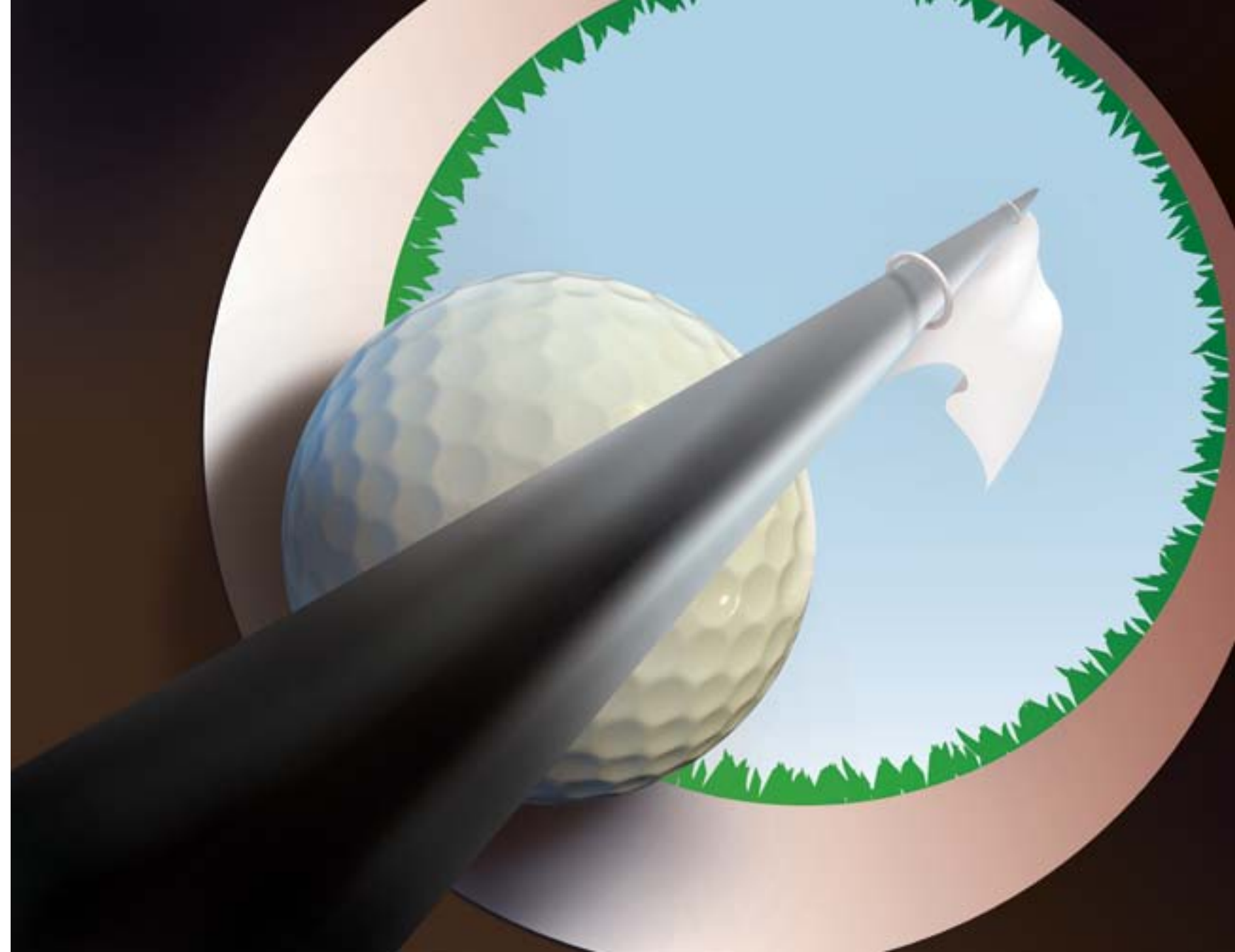
THE PERFECT ROUND

It rolled right up to the rim of the hole and seemed to a hesitate for a moment...



...but it didn't stop. It dropped right into the middle of the cup.

It was so far away, the golfers couldn't really see it very well. The ball just seemed to vanish from the green without a trace. One minute it was there and then it was gone.



The man in the green trousers yelled, “I think it went in!”

“It did!” shouted the man in the blue hat. “It did! I saw it! It went in!”

“No.” said the man in the white shoes as he shook his head. “No way. It couldn’t have. No one ever got it on the green in one. Nobody. Not ever. Never.”

“You can buy everyone dinner now.” said Kele to the man in the blue hat.



After standing in shock and shaking their heads, they finally realized there was nothing else to do, but go and get the ball.

On the next hole, Kele had the honour of teeing off first. He stood absolutely still for a few moments while processing. Then without hesitation or a practise swing, he just hit the ball.

The men ran up the fairway to see where the ball had gone. Then they all ran back to their golf carts and took off toward the green. It looked like Kele had done it again.



At the third tee, Kele waited for the man in the blue hat to identify which green was the next target. He could see more than one. One was further away than the other. It didn't matter to Kele, though. He could reach either one.

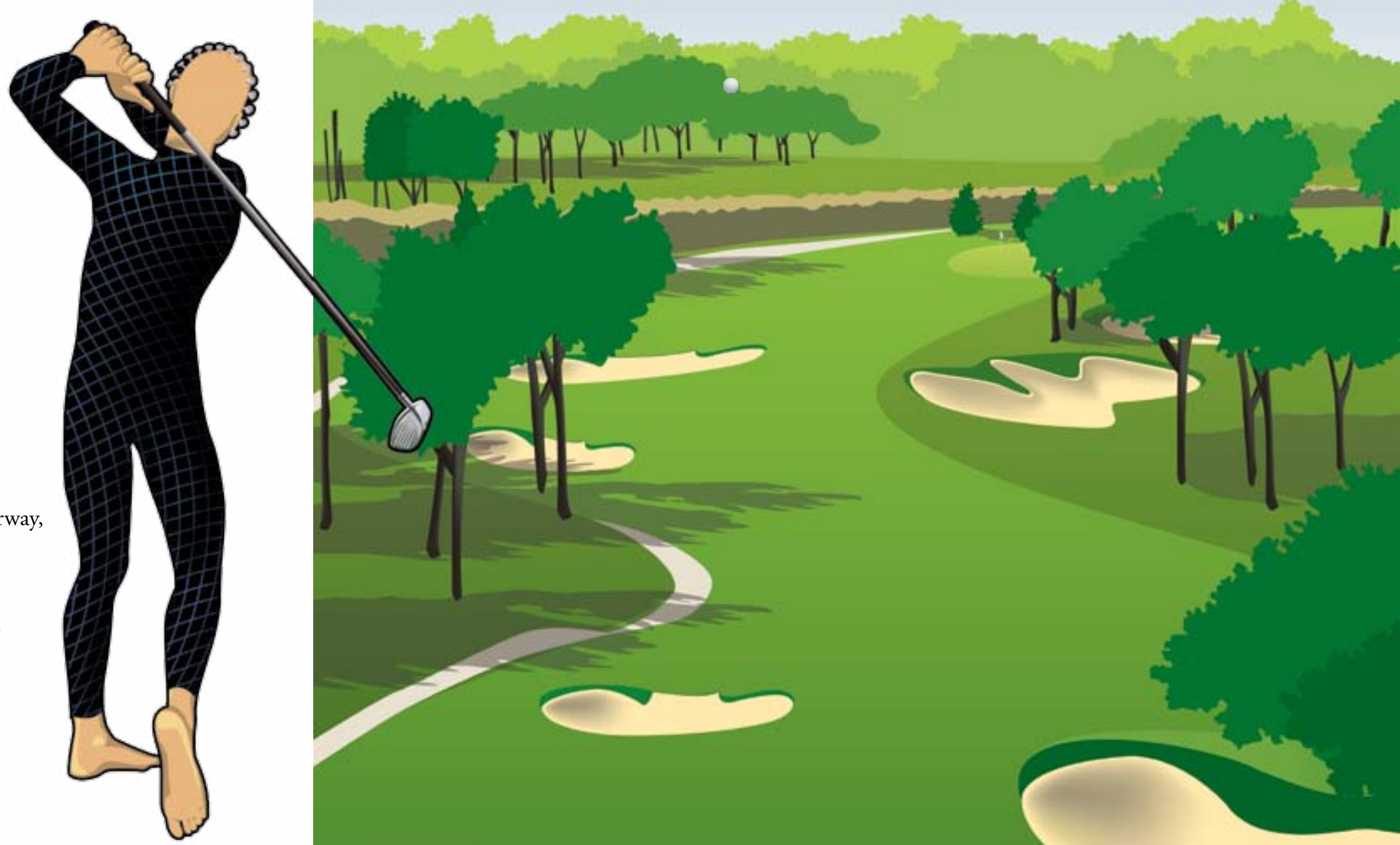
When the man in the blue hat realized Kele was waiting for him, he motioned with his head and pointed with his finger at the green straight over the water. He couldn't believe he needed to do that. Once Kele knew where to aim, he was ready. He put the ball on the tee and stood absolutely still for a few moments while processing. Then without hesitation or a practise swing, he just hit the ball.



Of course it went in.

On the fourth hole, despite hazards of trees and bunkers and a narrow fairway, Kele simply hit over the obstacles and dropped it with one stoke...again.

In the history of the *Toastberry Springs Golf and Country Club*, no one had ever hit consecutive holes-in-one like this before.



There had only been one golfer who scored more than one legitimate hole-in-one during a single round of 18 holes here. According to statistics, the odds of doing that are about 67 million to one.

In 1897, Robert Van Johannsen made two holes-in-one during tournament play, but did not finish in the top ten. Surprisingly, Mr. Van Johannsen came in dead last, despite getting two aces. Apparently, his terrible eyesight was a contributing factor to his losing score.

“Lucky” Larry Millwheeler claimed to equal Mr. Van Johannsen’s record 27 years later in 1923, but amid some controversy over losing several balls in water hazards. The technicality resulted in his score not being validated. Kele, however, was still playing the same ball he started with when he dropped his fifth hole-in-one.



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The beautiful sixth had a blind green to the right behind a hill. For this one, Kele had to extrapolate the precise position of the hole using geometrical optics and isotropic deviation with coherent pulsed Doppler signal processing.

It worked.



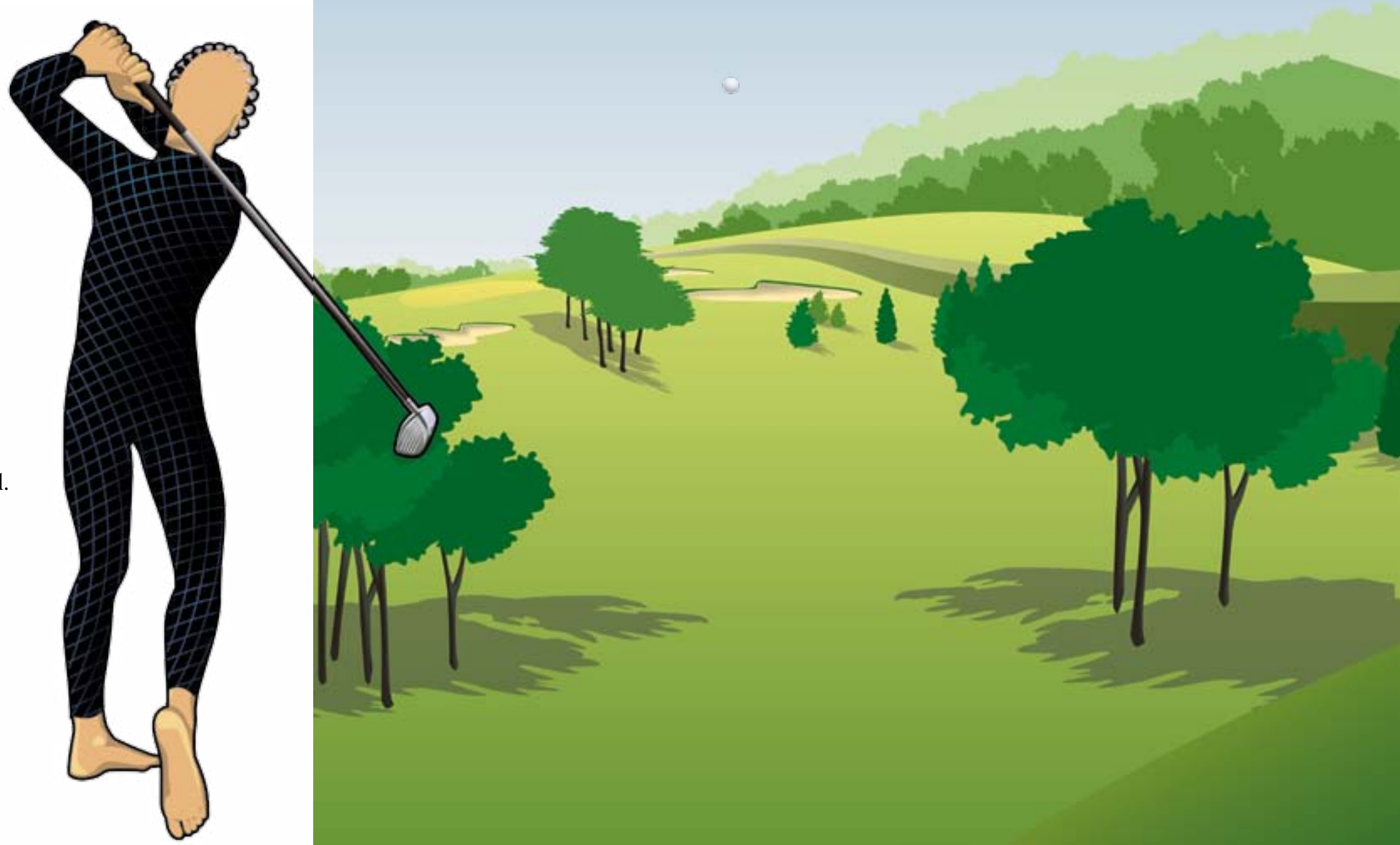
On the seventh hole, Kele got his chance to set the new driving record. As the longest fairway on the course, it was an intimidating par 5. Hitting a ball onto the green was inconceivable. It was 690 yards from the tee to the pin.

Kele attained the unattainable.



On the eighth hole, all three golfers missed Kele's drive. Maybe it was the bright sunlight. Maybe it was the wind. Maybe it was the speed of the ball. Whatever the reason, they missed the launch. Then they couldn't find it in the sky and they didn't see it come down.

It didn't matter. It went in all the same.

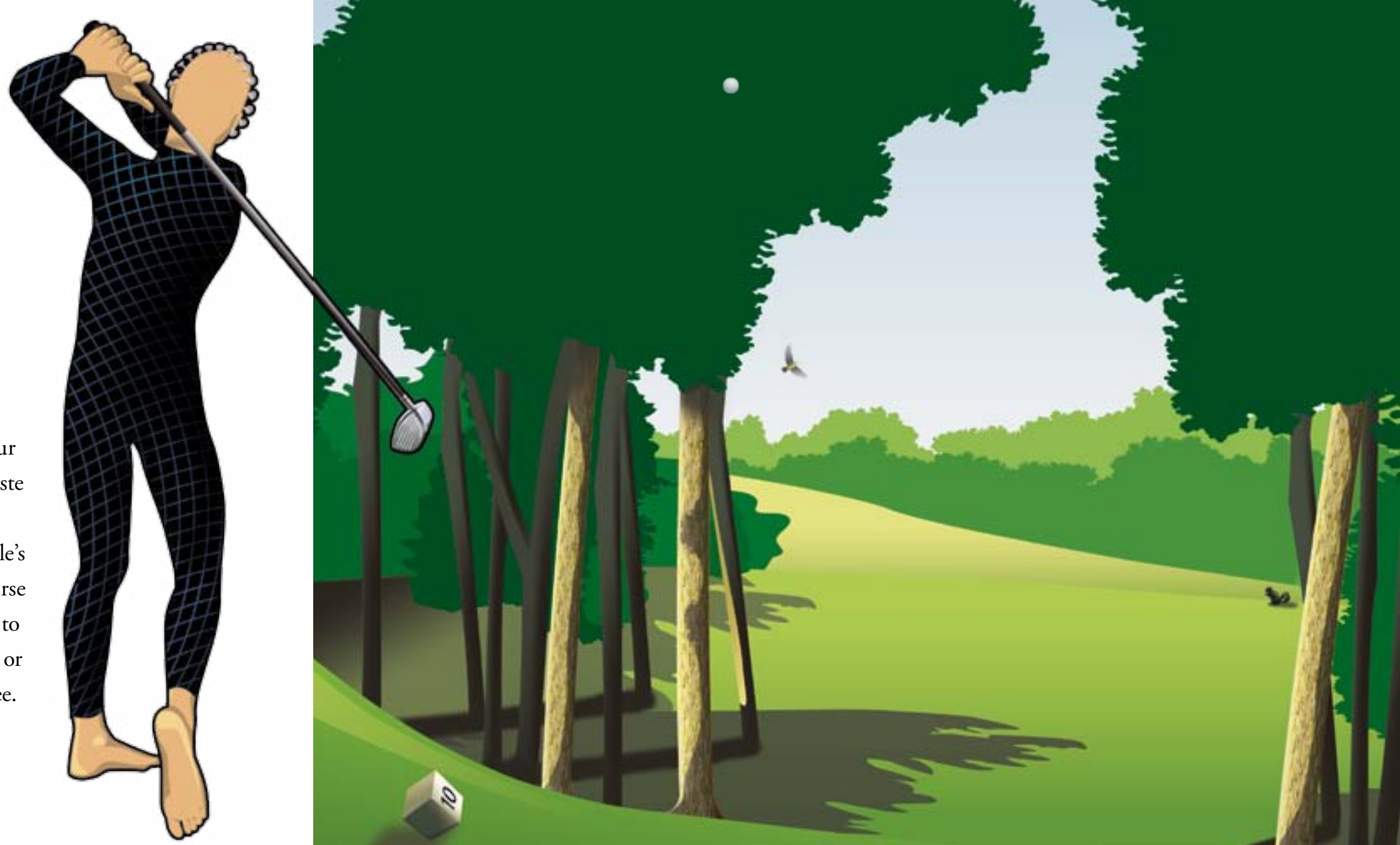


Heading back in the direction of the clubhouse, the lake on the ninth had a reputation for ruining the front nine for high handicap players. Apparently, more of their tee shots landed in the water than landed on the fairway.

The water didn't phase Kele though. He put the ball on the tee and stood absolutely still for a few moments while processing. Then without hesitation or a practise swing, he just hit the ball.



The golfers looked at their watches and found it had been only half an hour since they teed off at the first hole. No one wanted to stop for lunch or waste time getting a beverage. No one wanted the streak to stop. So they moved directly to the Tenth. They had stopped playing their own games after Kele's third hole-in-one. Now, they were just accompanying him around the course like a team of caddies. Kele, however, didn't need a caddy. He didn't need to consult anyone or ask anyone's advice. There was no need to change clubs or use an iron or a putter. All he needed was a driver and a ride to the next tee.



By the 11th, Kele's group caught up to golfers who set out long before them. The man in the blue hat wanted to drive up and ask if they could play through, but it didn't matter. Kele had already struck the ball and put it in the hole.

It wasn't exactly proper etiquette, but the other foursome never knew. So, instead, they all just waved to each other as they went by on their way to the 12th.

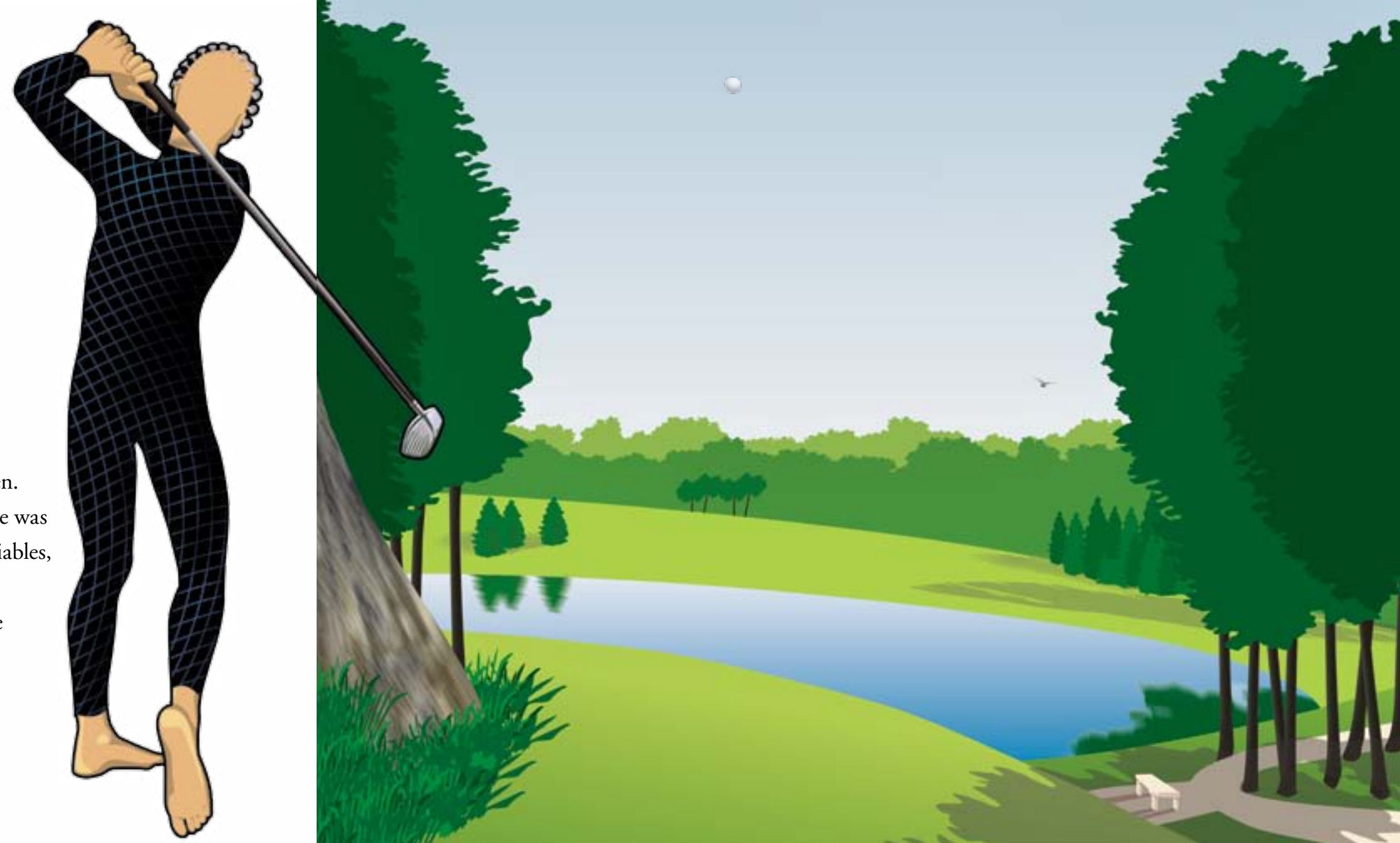


The physics of force, mass, inertia and acceleration were all second nature for Kele. They were rudimentary values referenced in standard formulas, but the golfers urged him on whenever he appeared to get distracted by wildlife or wind.

“That’s twelve” said the man in the blue hat. It wasn’t hard to keep score. Each frame of the card showed a single stroke.



The tee with the highest elevation is the thirteenth. It requires the player either to draw to the left or pull a lucky hook in order to get near the green. In Kele's world, however, luck or chance never entered the equation. There was always a micro-margin for anticipated divergence between contingent variables, but based on his analysis, an object at the farthest edge of any calculated allowance would still, without doubt, arrive at the target destination. Kele would have been more shocked if the ball did *not* go in.



The 14th's green is long and narrow and slopes left to right. It is also surrounded by the largest bunkers on the course. Hole placement is traditionally to the right behind the bunkers. So golfers tend to aim to the left in order to avoid them and putt uphill to the hole. It's a matter of physics. Downhill putts have more momentum and more break due to gravity. Uphill putts have less break with less momentum. The Gravity Variable was built into Kele's calculations, so he didn't even have to think about it. It was all automatic.



The 15th is one of the *Toastberry Springs* signature holes and where the club got its name. An artesian spring sends pure, clear water to the surface through a series of caves and intergranular fractures resulting in a series of ponds, lakes and streams. It's the reason why there are so many water hazards on the course. Kele, however, didn't notice the beautiful view or the trees reflecting on the surface of the cool, calm water. He just ran his programs, made his measurements, performed his calculations and dropped another ace.



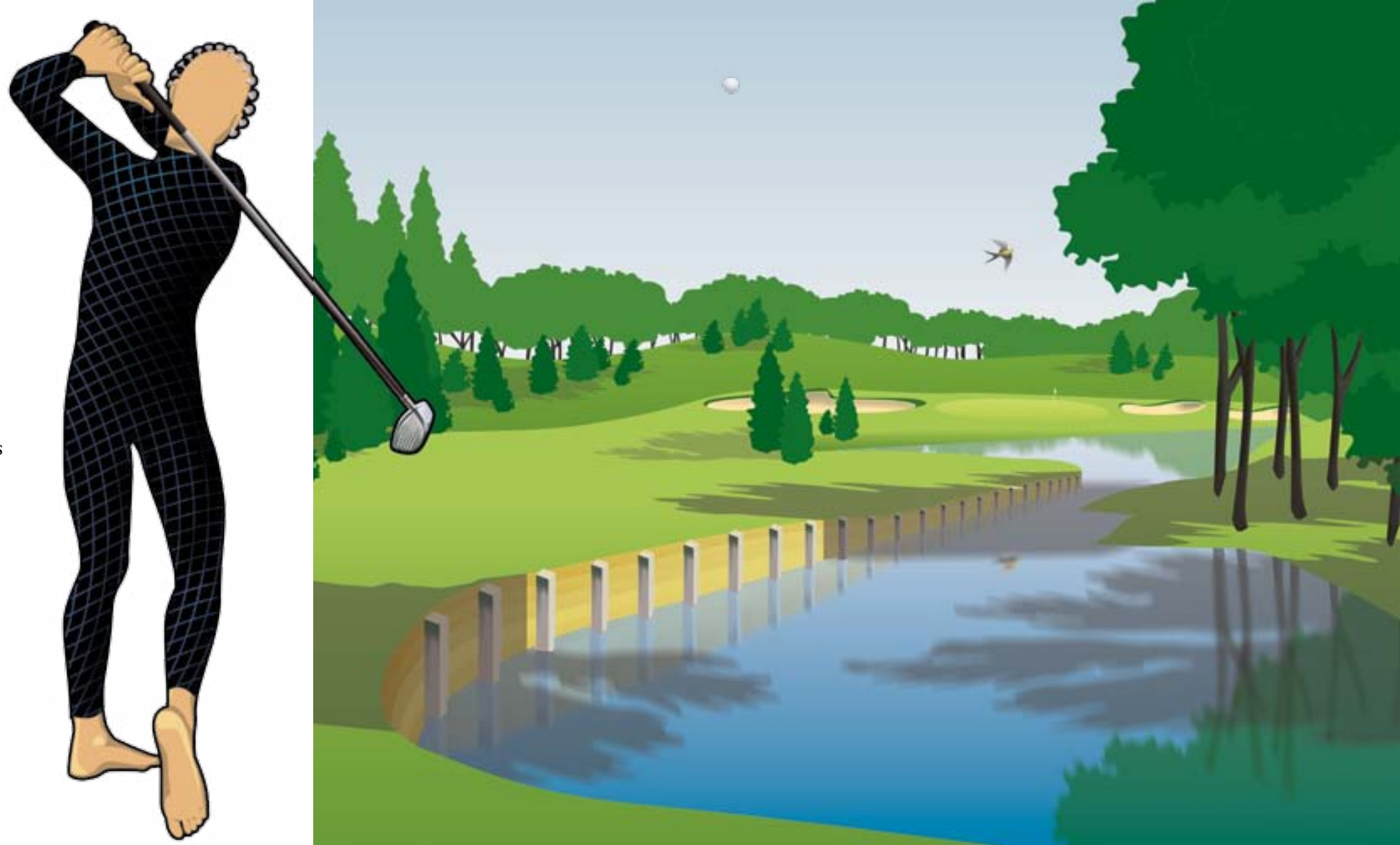
When it came to the score, there was never any question about Kele's integrity or honesty. For him, the concept of cheating was irrelevant. He could play 18 holes or a thousand. It didn't matter how many. Only extraordinary circumstances could prevent him attaining a perfect score every time.

"What will we do if he gets 18 holes-in-one?" asked the man in the green trousers.

"Take him on tour." said the man in the blue hat. "We'll make a fortune."



At the seventeenth, when Kele hit the ball, the golfers knew the magic was still there. It looked like Kele was going to play what could only be called the perfect round.



On the eighteenth tee, however, the unexpected happened. Kele put the ball on the tee and stood absolutely still for a few moments while processing, but for the first time, he halted. He stood there without moving. Kele had not done this before.

The golfers waited. They began to get uncomfortable. They looked at each other, wondering what was going to happen. They didn't know what to do.

"What is it?" whispered the man in the blue hat.



Then they heard a voice they had never heard before. They turned to see who it was.

“I finally found you!” exclaimed Professor Vernon with obvious relief and joy. He was stepping through a doorway that had suddenly appeared out of thin air. “We’ve been looking for you everywhere!” he said. “I was worried sick about you!”



The golfers were startled by the Professor's sudden appearance out of nowhere.

"Where on Earth did you come from?" asked the man in the blue hat.

Professor Vernon wondered why there were all acting so surprised. It was just a simple transmat portal. He'd been materializing subjects via digital teleportation for years. He turned to Kele and asked, "Are you alright?" He was studying him very closely.

Kele had been interrupted by the Professor re-establishing network protocols and restoring links since he was separated from his aircraft. The Professor wanted to run a series of tests to check for damage, contamination and system integrity.



“Do you know him?” asked the man in the blue hat. He pointed at Kele.

“He’s the greatest golfer we’ve ever seen!” said the man in the green trousers.

“We can make him famous.” said the man in the blue hat.

“We’ll all be rich!” exclaimed the man in the white shoes.

While the golfers talked to the Professor, Kele successfully re-activated his comm link. He ran a diagnostic, re-calibrated and restored system settings and began scanning, analyzing, measuring and calculating just as he had for the last 17 holes. Then without hesitation or a practise swing he just hit the ball.



“I’m sorry gentlemen,” said Professor Vernon, “but Kele isn’t really a golfer.”

The men laughed when they heard that. “Are you kidding?” said the man in the blue hat. “There isn’t anyone better than him!”

The Professor calmly smiled and said nothing.

After a long moment of silence, the man in white shoes finally asked, “Alright, I give up. What on Earth is he then?”

“Why don’t you ask him.” replied the Professor and he nodded toward the man in the yellow shirt who was approaching, accompanied by some police officers.



As the man in the yellow shirt got closer, he called out, “Where is he?”

They all turned around, but Kele and the Professor were gone.

Meanwhile, Kele’s dimpled white orb dropped into the cup on the 18th green with quiet perfection.



Please be sure to visit
www.theperfectround.com
for more information about the
Vernon Meteorological Research Laboratories,
Shen Kuo Magnetic Containment Laboratory,
Toastberry Springs Golf & Country Club,
as well as the author, illustrator
and, of course, Kele