

The Business of Luck(hurst)

Mick Luckhurst has built a pair of successful careers on beating the odds with timely long shots.

As the placekicker for the NFL's Atlanta Falcons from 1981-1987, the English-born Luckhurst was called upon to boot footballs through narrowly spaced uprights 50 yards away with games on the line. His precision established Luckhurst as the Falcons' all-time leading scorer, a position he held until 2000 when he was passed for the top spot by Morten Anderson.

Since 1990, however, Luckhurst has been getting his kicks in other forms, namely by rewarding others for hitting great golf shots. Along the way, he's positioned Buford-based American Hole 'n One (AHNO) as the nation's leading hole-in-one insurance provider. It's a business based on the estimated 18,000-to-1 odds of golfers finding the bottom of the cup from par-3 tee boxes – heightened with riches on the line.

Luckhurst, AHNO's president and CEO, and partner John McPherson have backed prize promotions for golf tournaments, radio stations and direct mailings that have offered life-changing payoffs ranging from houses to \$2 million in cash to a trip to the moon if it ever becomes commercially available. The company dabbles in custom signage and promotions for other sports, but its primary focus is golf events, including tournaments hosted by Michael Jordan and Dan Marino.

"Basically, you name the

tournament and we're probably involved in it," Luckhurst says.

According to Luckhurst, AHNO, which is underwritten by Great American Insurance Company, has paid off on "thousands" of holes-in-one during his tenure. The first was to current PGA Tour player Jason Bohn in 1991. Bohn, then a member of the University of Alabama golf team, accepted the \$1 million prize for his ace and forfeited his amateur status and place on the Crimson Tide team.

Golf has always played a prominent role in Luckhurst's life. He began playing at age six and held a 2 handicap as a junior. Three of his closest playing buddies growing up went on to play professionally, including Ken Brown, a five-time European Ryder Cup player and now a golf commentator for the British Broadcasting Corporation.

Luckhurst, 46, now plays to a 6 handicap at TPC of Sugarloaf, his home course and site of the PGA Tour's BellSouth Classic. With five children, a business to run and time donated to community

charitable causes, he averages just two rounds a month. Yet like most golfers, he wishes he could play more often.

"I grew up around golf," Luckhurst says. "I love the game and still have a true passion for it – though it tends to get the better of me most of the time." •

– Patrick Jones

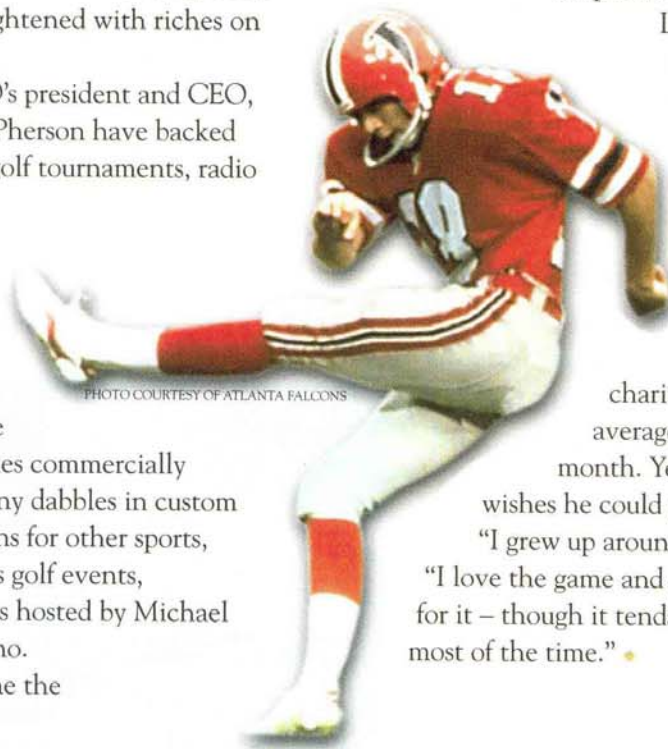


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