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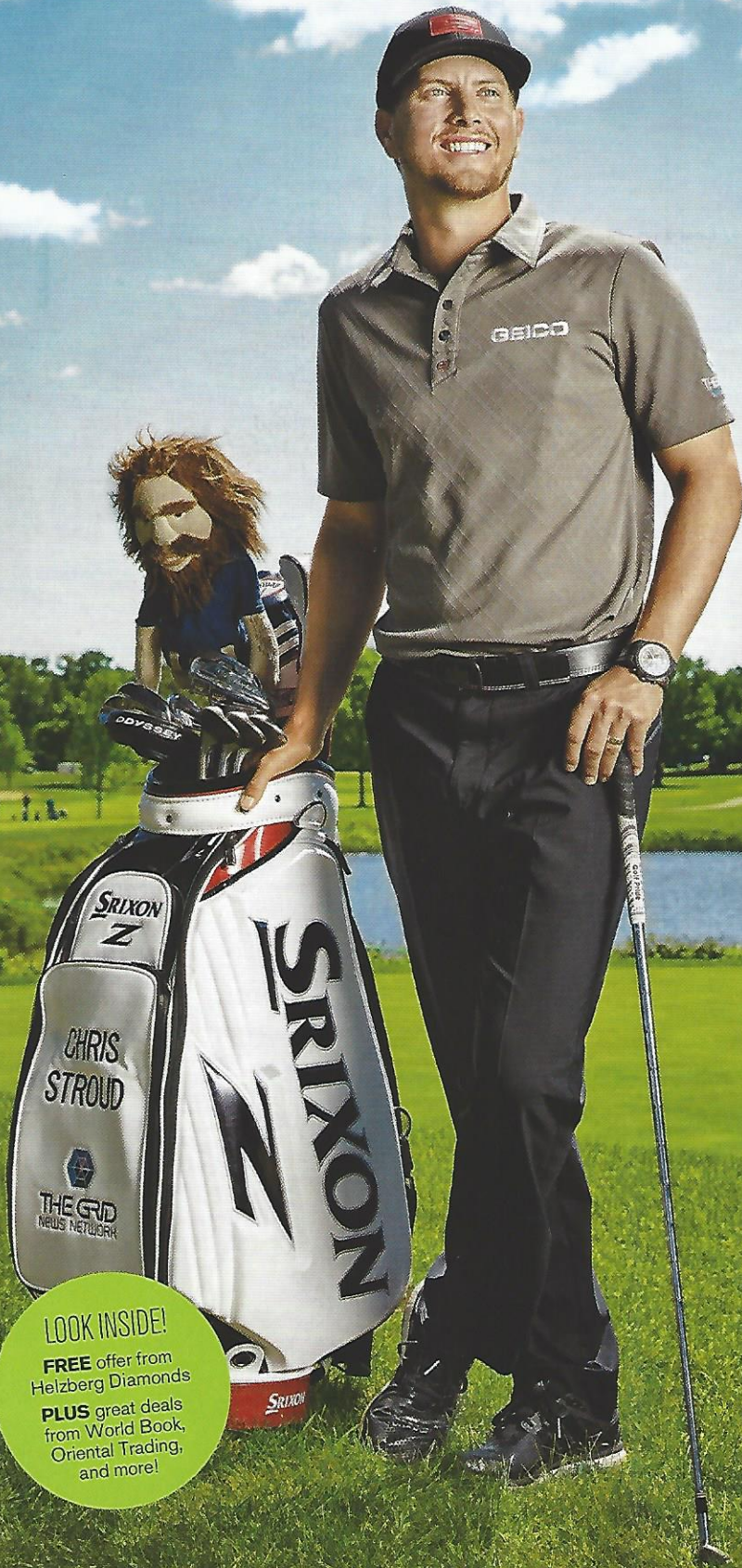
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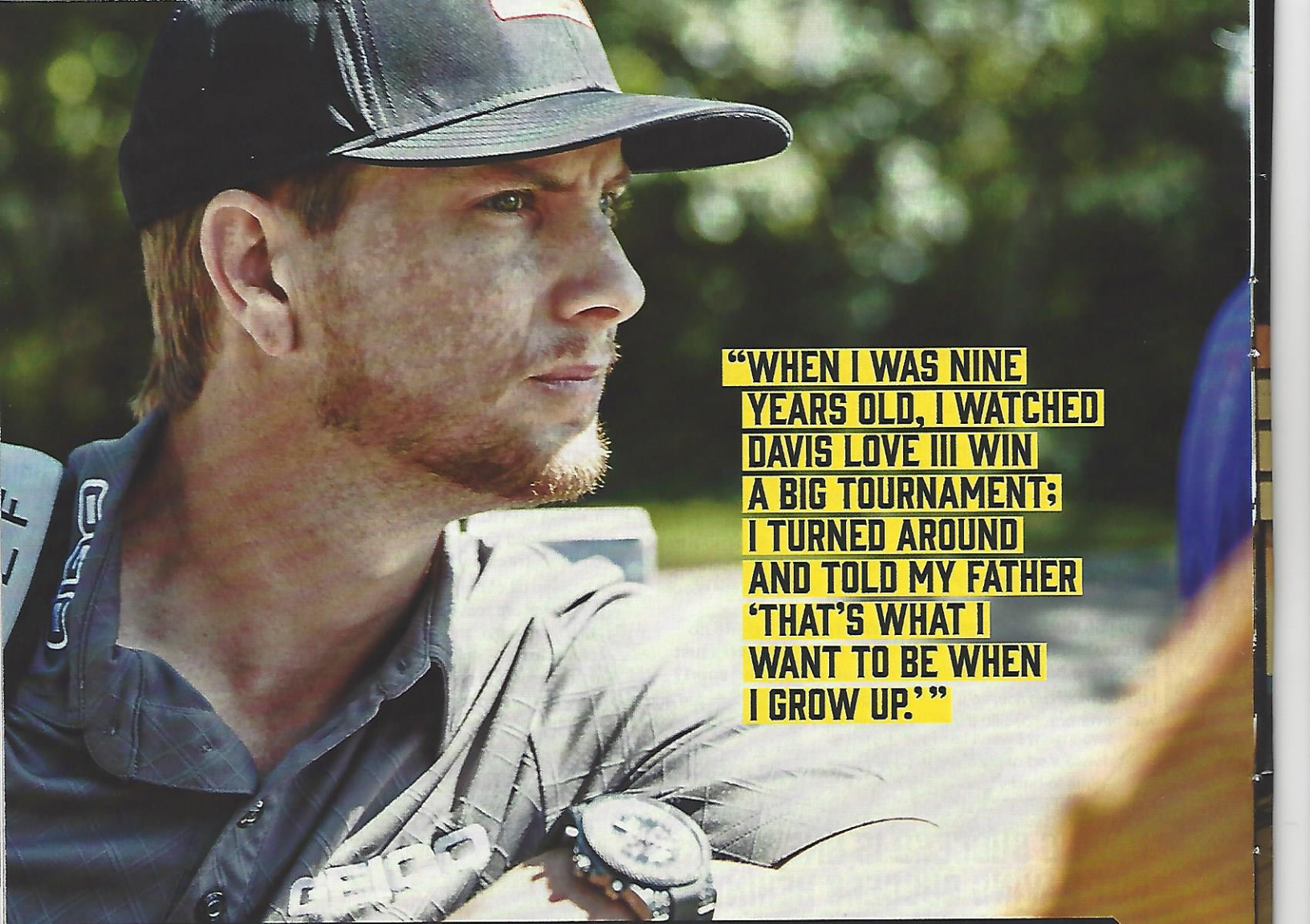
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“WHEN I WAS NINE YEARS OLD, I WATCHED DAVIS LOVE III WIN A BIG TOURNAMENT; I TURNED AROUND AND TOLD MY FATHER ‘THAT’S WHAT I WANT TO BE WHEN I GROW UP.’”

CHRIS STROUD

PGA TOUR PRO GOLFER

Growing up in the small Gulf Coast town of Nederland, Texas, Chris Stroud was a multi-sport athlete who excelled at baseball and football. He chose a career in golf because he figured it would be the most demanding. He turned pro in 2004, and has been a fixture on the PGA Tour since 2009.

Tell us a little about your route to the PGA Tour.

As a young kid I played everything: baseball, basketball, football, golf, soccer, swimming. I went to a really big high school, and the coaches wanted the players to be dedicated to one sport. I played baseball for 10 to 12 years and football for eight years, but I chose golf because I was kind of tired of the team sport atmosphere. I liked golf because it was an individual sport, and it was the hardest.

When I was nine years old, I watched Davis Love III win a big tournament; I turned around and told my father, “That’s what I want to be when I grow up.”

You’ve been a regular on the PGA Tour since 2009. Are you handling the pressure better now?

Absolutely. I was playing with three amateurs the other day and hit some of my best shots in front of big crowds. One of the guys I was playing with said, “Wow, you save all your

good stuff for the big crowds.” To be honest, the more people watching, I tend to focus better. That goes for most of us on the Tour—we thrive on that pressure. We want that nervous tension, because over the years we’ve learned how to focus more intently. A lot of times when you’re out there by yourself you get a little bit lazy and you’re not as focused.

What do you think is the potential for your career?

As long as I keep getting better,

I know the wins will happen. I feel like I can win multiple times. Jimmy Walker is one of my best friends out here on the Tour, and he didn’t win his first event until he was 35. Now he’s won five events the last two years. Ben Hogan didn’t win his first event until he was 36, and he was one of the best players of all time. Unlike football or basketball or baseball, this is a long career. I’m one of those guys that’s going to consistently get better and better.

Photography: [Stroud] Jonathan Bielecki; [Weber] Thomas Strand