



HOW TO

PILE THE PLASTIC

THE KENTUCKY DERBY MAY BE the most exciting two minutes in sports, but no one offers a better six seconds than dynamo cup stacker **Steven Purugganan**. Here are some keys to turning doing the dishes into a party trick. —NEIL JANOWITZ



1. The point is to stack cups into different pyramid configurations, then stack them down again—fast. Sounds simple, but it requires some keen hand-eye work. Plus, there are rules, like completing one stack at a time, righting overturned cups before continuing an upstack and downstacking in the same order as you upstacked. Makes for a heady six seconds.



2. As a rook, Purugganan relied on feel. "I'd slide the top cups over until I felt the edges of the cups below, using my pinkies as guides," he says. Three years later, he can complete the cycle—a 3-6-3, 6-6, 1-10-1 sequence—in 5.93 ticks. That world-record time makes him the favorite among 150-plus 11-year-olds at worlds in Denver, April 18-19.



3. Stacking and unstacking specially made plastic cups seems basic enough. But record speed comes only with practice. Purugganan, like countless top stackers around the world, logs hours a day training. But there is a limit to dominance: When stackers get too tall for the 30-inch standard table, and their hands grow larger, times falter. Aging, so cruel.



4. When Colorado PE teacher Bob Fox promoted the sport in the late 1990s, he saw it as a safe, competitive exercise for kids. The global tourney scene emerged around 2001 and now features video reviews and hand sensors to time runs. Trophies and the attendant glory aside, competitors don't earn endorsement deals or prize money. Yet.

CHECK OUT VIDEO OF STEVEN'S CUP-STACKING WIZARDRY ON ESPNTHEMAG.COM.

ELSEWHERE IN SPORTS ...

THE LATEST NEWS YOU DIDN'T KNOW YOU NEEDED TO KNOW FROM PLACES YOU'VE NEVER BEEN. **ON THE RADAR BEMIDJI, MINN., POP. 13,419**

Everyone is still abuzz over the Bemidji State men's hockey team's run to the NCAA Frozen Four, the first No. 16 seed to advance that far. "It was very hectic," says coach Tom Serratore. "But I'm tickled pink" ... The season openers of Bemidji High's softball and baseball teams were postponed when they couldn't dig out from under all the snow in time for the April 2 games. "We're used to getting

dumped on," says activities secretary Sheila Guest ... The Bemidji Curling Club—featuring 2006 Olympic bronze medalist Pete Fenson—wrapped its season on April 4. "Back to counting the days," says member Terry Matson ... The Boy Scouts' pinewood box derby gets rolling at Paul Bunyan Mall on April 18 ... Wins by



senior Lumberjack **Nate McGriff** in the 200 meters and long jump lifted Bemidji High's indoor track team to second at the Paul Bunyan Invitational ... Ground was broken on the \$45.6M Bemidji Regional Events Center on April 3. Bemidji State's hockey teams will move to the 4,000-seat arena in time for the 2010-11 season. —AMANDA ANGEL

I'M ON A CART

AS RAPPER T-PAIN REMINDED US with his teeth-loosening backstage crash last month, golf carts are nothing more than electric-powered agents of destruction. Just look at the toll they've exacted on the athletic community.



ERIK JOHNSON Last September, the Blues blueliner snagged his right foot between the throttle and brake while stepping out of a cart. He tore two ligaments and was lost for the entire season. The cart didn't even get a minor.

JARRON COLLINS Days before Johnson's gaffe, the Jazz center tipped his cart, causing his passenger (and twin), Wolves center Jason, to rupture a triceps. Driving responsibilities in the Collins household have been transferred.

JERRY WEST While on vacation in 2007, the hoops legend was pinned under his flipped cart for 15 minutes until help arrived. C'mon—even with the resulting dislocated shoulder, The Logo would have been much quicker with the assist.

JIMMIE JOHNSON In 2006, JJ missed a month with a broken left wrist he suffered falling off the roof of a moving cart. Who says people don't watch golf for the crashes?

RICH BEEM At the 2000 MCI Classic, a cart became entangled in a rope, which then entangled the future PGA champ. Flipped to the ground, Beem was knocked unconscious and out of the tourney. Not even a stiffed caddie would do that.

THE LIST

TEAMS THAT WON A TITLE AT NEAREST "NEUTRAL" SITE

AND YOU THOUGHT MICHIGAN STATE (91.1 MILES FROM DETROIT) HAD AN EDGE.

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|-------------------|--|
| 0 MILES | 1984 USC women's hoops (LA) |
| 5.4 MILES | 1950 CCNY men's hoops (New York City) |
| 16.6 MILES | 1968, '72 UCLA men's hoops (LA) |
| 29.7 MILES | 1985 San Francisco 49ers (Palo Alto, Calif.) |
| 77 MILES | 1974 NC State men's hoops (Greensboro, N.C.) |
| 77.9 MILES | 1958 Kentucky men's hoops (Louisville) |
| 82.1 MILES | 2003, '07 LSU football (New Orleans) |
| 132 MILES | 1975 UCLA men's hoops (San Diego) |
| 289 MILES | 2005 Pittsburgh Steelers (Detroit) |

ALL NEWS Callaway poll: 78% of men would rather play Augusta than date Bar Rafaeli ... Lead-up to Playmate Kendra Wilkinson's wedding to Eagle Hank Baskett to be on E! ...