

the scintillating attacking play of those who were billed as minor characters. The event was ignited around lunchtime, just as some of the remaining marquee names, such as Justin Rose, Martin Kaymer and Lee Westwood, 'were completing their third average rounds of the week.

Fleetwood, a Lancastrian who is intent on upgrading his status from young prospect to dangerous contender, started it on the par-five fourth hole by holing his seven-iron second shot from 198 yards for that

under par. "It was just a perfect shot. It spun left and went in. That's the first albatross I've ever had," Fleetwood said.

Moments later, and two holes behind, Jimenez, the Tour's hole-in-one specialist, holed with a short iron from the second tee. His ball landed three feet beyond the pin and spun back to disappear. That was Jimenez's 10th hole in one on the tour — surpassing Colin Montgomerie's nine, such a shame — his third this season and his second in a fortnight,

imaginary scabbard, perhaps like a matador who has dispatched the bull. Jimenez's playing partner, James Morrison, also seemed to benefit. He made a birdie. Thereafter, Morrison, who won the Spanish Open last week, fell away. But Jimenez completed a four-under-par 68 with a birdie at the last that brought a huge roar from the grandstands. Already the oldest winner on the Tour, he is playing well enough to extend his record.

It was soon after Jimenez's

lead. A charming man from humble beginnings, Jaidee served as a paratrooper in the Thai Army before turning professional at the age of 30.

The much younger and bigger Byeong-hun An signalled his intentions by hitting his approach at the tough first hole to within six inches. With fireworks exploding all over the course, Molinari may have felt threatened, but he showed no sign of it. He merely continued with the stately, almost faultless progress. "I could hear the roars for the eagles and the

second. My putting may not be the best, but at his best, which is clearly his happy state at present, his irons are as accurate as anyone's. At the third and seventh holes, he made putting irrelevant by hitting his approaches to within a few inches in each case.

Fleetwood, meanwhile, was having a much more adventurous time. He flew a five-iron over the green on the par-three fifth and manfully holed a 12-foot putt to save par and momentum, but carelessly missed a short putt on the ninth

the fairway with his best drive but that left him well over 200 yards to the green. His four-iron shot, hit flat out but with perfect balance, was majestic. It was a further example of the way that Molinari is able to compensate for his lack of length from the tee with impeccable iron play.

Only Molinari seemed able to avoid dropping strokes, but he faltered at last on the par-three 14th through poor club

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tournament on the PGA Tour. He has had three top-10 finishes in 2015, including a third-place finish at the Honda Classic, when he slumped to a final round of 74. And although he was sixth at The Masters, that was largely due to a final round of 67.

He is one behind Kevin Na. Poulter could have been in a better position had he not taken a double-bogey six at the 10th hole. ■ *Final round, today, Sky Sports 4, 6pm*

Grobler rows against tide in medal hunt

Britain's rowing coach breaks up a winning team in pursuit of glory. By Andrew Longmore

ROWING

IN THIS country we say: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" The German equivalent is: "Man soll nichts reparieren, was nicht kaputt ist." It has clearly eluded Jurgen Grobler in both his native and adopted tongues.

Despite winning gold medals in the men's coxless four and the eight at the world championships in Amsterdam last season, the coach shuffled his men's heavyweight squad for this week's European championships in Poland, breaking up the unbeaten four of 2014 and piling all his top athletes into a superstar eight.

It takes a coach of some experience and confidence to make so many changes to a successful team. Grobler has a reputation as rowing's "finkerman", but this is serious surgery.

Though his hand was forced by the illness which has ruled Andy Hodge, double Olympic champion and stroke of the 2014 four, out for the season and the temporary absence of "Stan" Louloudis, a natural replacement, Grobler has dismantled his unbeaten four by shifting George Nash, Moe Sbihi and Alex Gregory into the eight alongside a core of the crew which won the world title so dramatically in Amsterdam. Olympic qualification for the eight is more competitive than the

four, but Grobler still had to persuade Nash, Sbihi and Gregory that vacating their seats in an unbeaten four, potentially the fastest of all the recent GB fours, was for the common good. Sbihi has spent his life trying to get out of the eight and into the four. It is some reflection on the level of trust and belief his crews have in Grobler that a meeting which could have

been full of tension passed off in relative peace.

"I don't like to talk about 'breaking up' the four," says Grobler. "We want to have a strong strategy for next year but first we have to qualify. Even when you look so great like last year, you have to do it all over again.

"The guys in the four have been part of the process and they know my thinking. They could've been selfish, but they are team players. They said, 'OK, fine, I see the point'. To me, it's not gambling. I don't want to end up with a good team and no highlight."

In 2004, Grobler broke up the world championship winning pair of Matthew Pinsent and James Cracknell at the last moment and

formed a four which won gold in Athens. The rest of the men's squad was angry and demoralised, but Grobler and GB rowing had their gold and more funding from the National Lottery.

Several times, most notably in 2000 when Steve Redgrave's four was heavily beaten in Lucerne and Redgrave was suffering from illness, Grobler has turned around the fortunes of a crew in a few weeks. So, the air of control that he pervades from his office overlooking Caversham Lake, the headquarters of the GB rowing squad, is understandable. If Hodge recovers, his best four will be back together in time for next summer.

The problems have changed

since 2004. Instead of having too few contenders for the seats in the three heavyweight sweep boats — the pair, the four and the eight — he has too many and the intensity of the competition has demanded subtle handling. "I try to create a positive critical atmosphere and let the athletes take responsibility," says Grobler. "Someone might come to me and say, 'Oh, X needs to work harder', so I say, 'Did you tell him?' It's their project, not mine. We have to find a good way to respect and trust each other. I'm very happy with this group of athletes."

After 45 years of winning medals with the old GDR and now with GB Rowing, Grobler has to motivate himself each



Grobler: not afraid of change

morning. If he has mellowed, it did not show one winter morning when he pushed his squad through a series of tests and time trials on the water that even Sbihi, the strong man of the group, said was the toughest day of his life. "I knew they would find out more about themselves and I have respect to them for what they did," Grobler says. "If they have a hard race, they might think of what they came through in December."

A great admirer of Sir Alex Ferguson, Grobler has fostered a culture of self-motivation, self-analysis, the setting down of standards and expectation reminiscent of the Manchester United dressing-room of Roy Keane, Paul Scholes and Ryan Giggs. The coach needs to guide more than intervene; in turn, at the age of 68 and for all his record of achievement, Grobler wants more than ever to be challenged and pushed.

"What counts is not that I have a good history, what counts is the next one," he says.

"In one way, it is nice to have people thinking 'OK, he has always done it'. But I want to create a critical culture. The athletes don't care what's in the past either. 'OK, I'm here. What do I have to do to win?'" The answer, as most know well enough, is to do what their head coach tells them. With Grobler, results tend to speak for themselves.

No hiding place in a hi-tech era

Andrew Longmore

TO the outsider, the boat looks like any other. Only on closer inspection do the adaptations become apparent: sensors attached to the gates, a black box on the stern.

Rowing is a sport which likes to keep secrets, but with the European Championships in Poland this week marking the start of the competitive season, a rare glimpse inside the GB squad's boat shed at Caversham shows that times are changing.

The work of the team's biomechanics department is enhanced by partnership with SAS, one of the world's largest analytics companies.

"In a sense, this is inches by inches stuff," says Jamie Thomas, one of two full-time

biomechanists. "It might be worth 0.2 seconds, but that could be the difference between gold and silver."

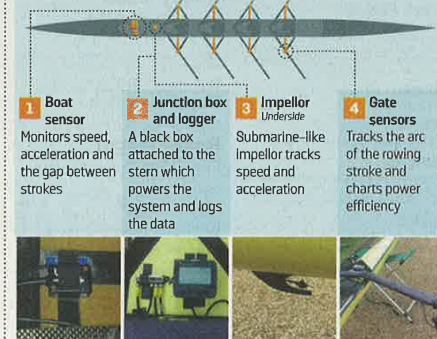
Thomas and his colleague, Jack Mercer, can rig up as many as 14 different boats at a time, compiling reports which give the coach insight into each individual's technique, power, speed and efficiency.

Sensors attached to the gate — where the oar clips into the outrigger — track the arc of the stroke from entry of the blade into the water (the catch) to exit (finish) and chart how effectively power is applied.

"We can measure every angle of the catch and finish and the total stroke length of each athlete," says Mercer. "There is no hiding place in the biomechanical boat."

Technology to help Great Britain win gold

High-powered technological equipment used by Rowing GB in training can analyse each rower's stroke, giving them a crucial edge



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BMW PGA Championship

Player of the day

Peter Uihlein



Two years ago, the 25-year-old American finished in a tie for twelfth place on his debut at the BMW PGA Championship, a week after winning his maiden European Tour title.

No more titles have followed so far for the former Walker Cup player, who has chosen to ply his trade on this side of the Atlantic even though his father, Wally, is chief executive at Titleist and could probably secure invitations on the PGA Tour. Having started the third round outside the top 50 at Wentworth yesterday, Uihlein, who is a former world No 1 amateur, moved into contention with a six-under-par round of 66. Uihlein birdied four of his first five holes, having had four birdies in his last eight the night before to make the cut, and then picked up two more strokes coming home with birdies at the 10th, 12th and 17th to counter a bogey at the 15th. Because he started early the greens were smoother than in his first two rounds and that "made a big difference" Uihlein said.