



The Math Colloquium
Department of Mathematics
San José State University



Peter Winkler
Dartmouth Univ./MSRI

On Playing Golf with Two Balls

APRIL 11, 2012, MH320

Abstract: When we are faced with a choice among irrevocable options, we know (in principle) how to quantify them: compute the expected outcome for each, and choose the best. But suppose you can choose one course, then if things go badly, change your mind? It turns out that there is still a way to quantify the choices. We will describe the method (due to John Gittins) and a variation of Richard Weber's delightful proof that it works. Joint work with Ioana Dumitriu (U. of Washington) and Prasad Tetali (Georgia Tech).

Background: Experience with discrete math (e.g., Math 42).

About the speaker: Peter Winkler is William Morrill Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science at Dartmouth College. His research is primarily in combinatorics, probability, and the theory of computing, with forays into statistical physics. He writes books on mathematical puzzles (and will be speaking on that topic at a BAMA talk in the evening).

SNACKS IN MH331B AT 2:30 PM
TALK STARTS AT 3 PM

For more information, see our full schedule at:

<http://www.math.sjsu.edu/~hsu/colloq/>