



Jeff Pint: A Home-Grown

by Dave Kazmierczak, CGCS

When you first meet Jeff Pint, Superintendent at New Prague Golf Club, you might not believe that you had just met an amateur golf version of Superman. But do not let the Clark Kent-style easy manor or humble way fool you, for Pint's big red "S" and cape come out right about the time he steps to the first tee.

Not that he would admit it, but

one mighty swing at the golf ball and any mere mortal would agree: Superman just launched one.

For Pint, the game of golf is both his livelihood and his passion. When he is not caring for New Prague Golf Club in New Prague, Minnesota, he can usually be found playing the game on the course he cares for or other area courses. Sometimes it is just for fun, but



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more often than not it is competitive in nature. Pint has played in most of the Minnesota Golf Association events he is eligible to compete in at age 38, and has fared quite well in many of them.

But perhaps his best and most endearing achievement, is the fact that he has won the Minnesota Golf Course Superintendent's

Association tournament six times over the last 15 years or so, a feat equaled by nobody. Quite an accomplishment from a small town kid who now works, lives and plays in the same home town he grew up in.

Pint got his start in golf in the same manner most players of the game do, through his family. He would play with both his father and

his mother at New Prague Golf club but it was his mother who would drag him along with her women's club events not only at New Prague but surrounding courses.

"Thank God she did," explained Pint, as he revealed how he came to love the game at an early age. While the love of the game was nurtured, the skill acquired to be good came later. Pint said he really did not start playing the game at a high level until his senior year in high school.

"Until then I was just so-so," he said. "But I really enjoyed it."

From there it was on to St. Thomas University where he played on the golf team. He graduated with a Business Management degree but wound up back at New Prague Golf

Club working on the maintenance crew. From there he became an assistant superintendent and eventually was asked to be the Head Superintendent when the previous one left. When asked of his management style, Pint said he was definitely old school.

"A dinosaur," as Pint would say.

But this dinosaur is far from extinct. It roams the range at New Prague with a passion for the game, and a passion for turf maintenance. Pint related that there truly is no job he would rather have.

"To work maintenance and make a golf course good, it just doesn't get any better than that," Pint said.

The same passion he carries for the care of his course has always been poured into the refinement of his game.



However the key to Pint's game, other than some obvious natural ability, is his length, particularly off the tee. It is routine for Pint to hit a driver 325 yards and sometimes much farther. This is the space golf pros occupy, not golf course superintendents, but Pint can hit it with the best of them. When asked what generated this power he said he had no clue, just God-given ability. He also said he considers himself very blessed for that ability. He also works hard and practices all aspects of the game. The game takes time, and Pint realizes that being a single man gives him the opportunities other superintendents with families just do not have to refine their golf game.

While humble in his assessment of himself and his game, there does burn a competitive fire. Along with the six MGCSA titles, Pint and his partner Nate Proshek captured the 2003 MGA four-ball title with a state-record score of 20 under. He is the four-time New Prague Golf club Champion, and competed in the GCSAA National Championship the last two years finishing 20th in Palm Springs last year and 6th in San Diego this year, pretty good for a snow-bound Minnesota guy.

Any golfer will tell you that it takes a lot more than length to win a golf tournament, however the intimidation factor is there when watching Pint play. And while he



Above: Jeff Pint six time MGCSA Champion

Opposite: Jeff makes a 'super' save from the rough at the GCSAA Tournament at Torrey Pines

doesn't like to admit it, there is a certain satisfaction crushing the ball.

"The second hole at Torrey Pines (site of the 2013 GCSAA Championship) is a short par four, and I hit a good shot close to the green and it is fun walking up the green and seeing the look on the faces of the group ahead saying who the heck is this guy?," Pint said.

But for Pint it really is not about where he places, or how many

competitive events he can play. He revealed that the most important thing he gets out of playing in golf events is the camaraderie, and the opportunity to play with new people who love the game, especially superintendent events.

“Even more than that (winning) means to me, is the guys I meet playing in the events. These guys I meet, I now hang out with and become friends,” Pint said. “What a great opportunity we all have to be able to do that, and we take it for granted.”

Pint has played in every MGCSA championship since 1998. He has won six times in that span and that is quite a feeling of accomplishment. When asked about it though, he takes it in stride. While he wants people to look at the name on the trophy somewhere down the line and say to themselves that guy must have been pretty good, he likes to think of the guys that have bested him.

“This sounds strange, and I don’t mean it (egotistically) but when someone else wins, that look on his face that he beat Jeff Pint is pretty (satisfying),” he said.

The fact that playing the game of golf at a high level takes very good concentration has paid off for Pint in other aspects of his life. Besides the patience it takes being a superintendent, Pint applies his mental capacities in other activities such as bowling and hunting. Pint carries a 220 plus average with the large ball and likens the skill it takes to be a good golfer to that of being a good

bowler.

“It’s all about repetition,” Pint said. “You have to be focused on repeating the exact same shot. You have to completely focus for a few seconds, and then there is a lull, and you have to be able to get that focus back again.”

When asked how long he might be able to stay on top of the local superintendent golfing world Pint just smiled and was non-committal. He said he hopes to keep playing at a high level if his body will let him. At age 38 it does not seem like Pint is anywhere near the back nine of life, but he does admit time has made him change his thinking. If anything, it has made him wiser. In his early years Pint would essentially be bombs away, which would get him into trouble sometimes. Pint said now he does take pause and thinks shots through a lot more often.

“You can’t win it (a tournament) on the first hole but you can lose it, as time goes by you become more strategic,” he said.

With spring right around the corner Pint is hoping for another solid season both with the care of New Prague Golf club and his overall golf game. He is scheduled to play in a handful of events, including the defense of his MGCSA title at Prestwick Golf Club in August. Along the way he is hoping to connect with old friends and make some new ones. His competitors had better bring their A game as well.

Or a bag if Kryptonite.