



## Summer Golf, Fun, & Yes, Beer

By Gary Skolnik

Four summers ago, I decided to embark on a "Let's get together, play golf, and have fun," mission. And I'm sure if you ask any of the participants involved, they would surely tell you that the "mission" has been accomplished.

Originally, the Sonoma County Golf Course Employee Tournament consisted of Andy Trinkino and the guys from Fountaingrove; Dave Saly, Jose Flores, and their staff from Rooster Run; Rick Hansen, Pablo Rosales, and their staff from Windsor; Chester Manni, Tom Farrell, and their staff from Bodega Harbor; Ed Bale, Robin Hackett, and their staff from Northwood; and last but certainly not least, Chris Robertson and Bill Penn from the extremely unique Robertson Golf Links in Sebastopol.

Created in 1980, the beautiful Robertson Golf Links sits on twenty-five picturesque acres in West Sonoma County. The longest hole on the course is 246 yards and the shortest being a tricky 109 yards long. This gorgeous piece of property hosts numerous parties and weddings annually and several movies have been filmed at this amazing hideaway. In addition to golf, the Robertson's property includes tennis, volleyball, trampoline, hiking trails, boating, swimming, and fishing.

Since the Employee Tournament's inception in May of 1999, we have added Scott Stewart, Jeff Calhoun and their staff from Adobe Creek in Petaluma, and recently Dick Rudolph, Deepak Lal and their staff from Foxtail Golf Club in Rohnert Park.

So what does all this really mean? First and foremost, there is no cost (and never will be) to anyone involved, period. Secondly, all golf course employees are allowed to play which includes employees from various pro shops, outside service attendants, marshals and even a few of our most generous vendors who have helped all along the way to keep the momentum going. Finally and most importantly, all those who choose to attend must relax, have fun, play golf, and drink; whether it be beer, soda or water. It's basically whatever floats your boat.

The interesting aspect of these monthly gatherings is the diverse environment each and every one of us comes from. We have people coming from courses like those with 1.2 million dollar annual maintenance budgets like Fountaingrove or from basic tracks that spend about half that keeping it playable for upwards to 100,000 rounds per year. In our opinion, it just doesn't matter at all. Well, nobody cares anyway in Sonoma County!

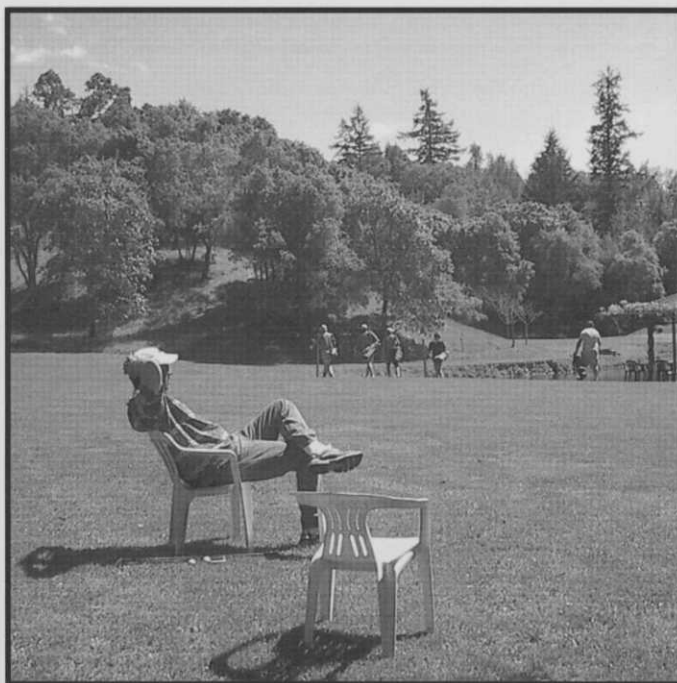
Typical discussions are about water quality, poa annua seed heads, mowing patterns, hiring principles, vendors, sprinkler nozzles, rodent control, tournament preparation and on and on.

Skins (depending on the number of people who show up) are \$5.00 each and can pay anywhere from about \$20.00 to \$100.00. And by the way, it's all on the honor system. Bumping it or "mulligans" are not happening either. We don't do name badges, some courses have dress codes and some just don't care. That is why my favorite nine in our beautiful county is at Northwood. Just show up in jeans, shorts, tank tops, and even bring your ice chest! Then head to the tee and grip it and rip it. Northwood's Assistant Superintendent Robin Hackett has even designed and built trophies that have ranged from a sprinkler head to a golf ball wedged between the sharp talons of a local hawk.

So, does any of this sound cool to you, my fellow colleagues? If it doesn't, I really don't care anyway! One thing for sure, there is nothing better than an afternoon of barbecue, refreshments, golf, and good friends to hang out with. It sure beats the hell out of working.



Some of Sonoma County's EGT participants



An afternoon of Golf in Sonoma County