

Inside the Ropes

James McNair
Orchard Valley G.C.

The sand was firm in the fairway bunker. One hundred twelve yards to the pin. Whack! Good, got it clean! It had some juice on it. Plop! Bounce, spin, stop! Whoeee! Eight feet from the pin! Arnie smiled and Jack nodded. I raised my hand in acknowledgement as I flipped my gap wedge back to my caddie. Wow, what a thrill indeed!

Just a few hours earlier, we had driven in the access road to Oakwood C.C. near Moline, Illinois. The fear level had begun to rise as the many trailers associated with a PGA Tour stop came into view. Fairways and greens surrounded by bleachers and corporate tents. Concession stands and electronic scoreboards. Yes, this was going to be the big gig in Moline.

This was my chance to play in a PGA Tour Pro Am. Also my first chance to walk with a caddie since I gave up caddying thirty-two years ago. The chance to walk and play inside the ropes! Hopefully, most shots would stay inside the ropes. Hopefully, I wouldn't hit anyone or embarrass myself. Hopefully . . .

My boss, Robert Vaughan, director of the Fox Valley Park District, and I had won one of ten spots in the GCSAA John Deere Employer/Superintendent Recognition Program. The ten winning superintendents and their employers earned the opportunity to play in two golf events and other activities associated with the Quad City Classic, July 6-12, 1998. It was an opportunity to get away for a few days and meet some colleagues and great people

from John Deere and Company and the GCSAA officers and staff.

To summarize the golf events, I must admit that we played pretty well. In the Quad

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City Classic Pro Am, we tied for fifth, six shots back. In the John Deere VIP tournament, we tied for third, due mostly to the drives of Holly "Long Ball" Gilmour.

But the story here was much more than the golf. It was a great opportunity to relax and share some recognition with my boss. GCSAA had the video crews from "Par for the Course" around throughout the three days of activities to record tips and helpful hints that make our employers worthy of this recognition. If your boss helps you achieve your goals at work, I encourage you to enter this contest next year when it will be held at the new TPC at Deere Run. You may see some of this on the Golf Channel's "Par for the Course" in the next few weeks.

By the way, I'm not sure where Jack and Arnie were that day, but I'm sure Jack nodded at someone and Arnie smiled about something. The shot did happen, as did several other good ones. In fact, most of them were inside the ropes. Too bad Arnie and Jack weren't there to see them.





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