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GOLF SHOULD BE FUN, DAMMIT!

It's time for New Year's resolutions, and here is mine: Golf should be fun, dammit!

The genesis of this is playing with my six-year-old grandson, and him reminding me of the pure joy of hitting a good golf shot. Or being outdoors on a perfect fall day rather than playing video games or watching TV. Yes, golf still has its magic appeal, even if many of us long-time players forget it, including me. However, not in 2012, no sir.

Of course, the devil is in the details, so here are specifics of how I'll make golf more fun in 2012. I resolve to:

- 1 Play more with the kids and grandkids.
- 2 Play with strangers whenever I have an opening in the group. You meet the nicest people that way.
- 3 Play with women. It's more fun than the stereotypes suggest. Women still debate whether to be flattered or insulted at being "one of the guys."
- 4 Retire my old jokes. My friends already know my wayward shots "couldn't be found by Lassie, even if wrapped in bacon," or that "When I swing, everything moves but my bowels." They know that sinking a long putt to save 8 is "akin to whip cream on a turd."
- 5 Get new golf jokes or tell none at all!
- 6 Go "old school" with golf etiquette, just because it's fun. Since I will be playing with my grandson, it will pass golf's (and formerly life's) grand tradition of civility to the next generation. Yes, teaching kids is fun for, or perhaps the definition of, "old farts" like me. That reminds me of a corollary to point No. 4: Stop the fart jokes. At age 57, it's time. Harder yet, stop the farts. Both work well with Point No. 3.
- 7 Stop swearing. In 2012, my strongest words will be "Oh, nubbins!"
- 8 Take golf lessons. Relates to point No. 7.
- 9 Insult a caddie. Turnabout is fair play...
- 10 Practice the short game rather than beating range balls. Low scores will result. Low scores are fun.
- 11 Make each round a work of art, as golfers like Ben Crenshaw and Tom Watson once told me they do. They start preparing the night before with good food and appropriate sleep, and on match day, stretch, practice well, follow etiquette, focus on every shot, and get the most out of every round, no matter what breaks come their way. Relating to point No. 4, when I three putt from 30 feet, I won't joke that "the first putt was like Watson in his prime, and the return was like Watson in later years!"
- 12 Complain less. Not fun for listeners, even if it meets some deep-seated need in me. In 2012, slow play is just an extended chance to enjoy the beautiful surroundings found only on a golf course.
- 13 Move up a tee. On some courses, I'll move up two tees, because it's fun to play short irons into greens. It's not a test of manhood, dammit.
- 14 Walk when they let me... but not with the grandkids. Kids love carts. I taught my son to play at age five by letting him drive the cart after three good shots in a row. He eventually got a golf scholarship and not paying tuition was fun.
- 15 Play more. What else could be more fun?
- 16 Play less, as in shortening rounds to 9 or 12 holes if my back hurts, or I am rushed.

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