

[REPORTER'S **NOTEBOOK**]

Great White North

Our intrepid globetrotting editor at large Bruce R. Williams recently attended the Canadian Golf Superintendents Association's Fall Field Day in Osoyoos, British Columbia. Members met in the Okanagan Valley for several days of education, networking and golf.

Here are tidbits from his reporter's notebook:

- For those that have never visited the Okanagan Valley it is a beautiful place. The drive south from Kelowna airport takes one through a valley rich in agriculture – apricots, cherries, peaches, pears, plums and apples – but surrounded by desert. A dozen or more golf courses can be found close to Highway 97 as it winds down from Kelowna to Osoyoos.
- Osoyoos is the only desert in all of Canada and is known for its warm climate and warm water in the local lake.
- Sonora Dunes Golf Course – which held a 9-hole tournament – is a desert-style course built in a very natural setting. It is nestled among the rolling desert hills and lush vineyards of Osoyoos.
- Sonora Dunes had holes at a variety of distances. Six of the holes were Par 4's that varied in length from 245 yds. to 365 yds. Add a couple of Par 3's at 108 and 139 yds. along with the only Par 5 at 482 yds. and you have a fun and enjoyable track to play. Fairways were wide enough to place your tee shot and large greens were very receptive to mid and short range iron shots.
- The desert was not forgiving should you hit an errant shot wide of the rough. The course was in excellent condition and hats off to the staff for providing such a great track. A great time was had by the full field of 72 participants. Winners of the two-ball event were Bert McFadden, the superintendent at Georgian Bay Golf Club, and Peter Bondy, superintendent at Furry Creek Golf and Country Club.
- The main event was held on Sept. 17th at the NK'MIP Canyon Desert Golf Course. NK'MIP is Okanagan for "bottomland" and refers to the north end of Lake Osoyoos where the river meets the lake. This course is a short 20-minute drive from Spirit Ridge and in the town of Oliver. The course offered a striking blend of natural contrasts divided into the desert-dominated Canyon Nine and the laid-back Grove Nine. The layout includes a vineyard, sage and stone vistas and the glorious mountains in the background. Host superintendent Ken Bruniski had the course in tournament condition for his peers.



TURF SHARK

Just when you thought it was safe to go back onto the course... there's a shark on the grass. At least, that's what happened at San Juan Hills Golf Club when a 2-foot leopard shark landed at the 12th tee, dropped from the clear blue sky.

A course marshal found the wounded shark – it had small puncture wounds in its body – and took it back to the clubhouse, according to Melissa McCormack, director of golf operations. Golfers were clear of the area when the small shark was carried from the water by a bird and was dropped over the course.

They kept the shark in a bucket to take it back to the ocean, where it swam off, probably eager to forget the afternoon it spent outside the water.