

## Off The Fringe

# Who Needs a Health Club?

### HOLM GETS HIS EXERCISE ON THE GOLF COURSE

By Larry Aylward, Editor in Chief

**I**n the early morning, before any golfers have arrived, many superintendents ride in utility vehicles around their courses to give the turf a visual inspection. Erick Holm, the certified superintendent of Hop Meadow Country Club in Simsbury, Conn., slips on his Sauconys and runs his course.

The 46-year-old Holm likes to get in a workout while he's working. The father of two young children doesn't have a lot of free time to hit the gym. And if Holm doesn't get in a workout... let's just say he needs his daily exercise to perk up like some guys need their two cups of coffee in the morning to do the same thing.

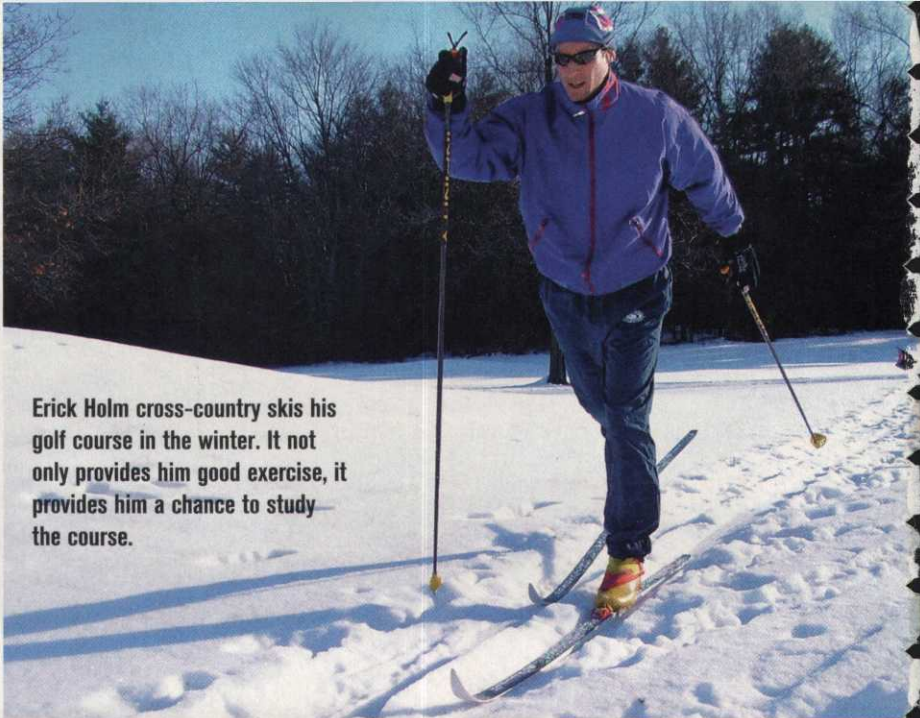
Holm used to have more time to exercise. But when he and his wife began having children about eight years ago, Holm no longer had that luxury. "I became restricted with my workout regimen," he says.

With a time-consuming job and a time-consuming home life, Holm wondered how he was going to keep in shape. "I'll just do more laborious and physical tasks at work that are healthy for me," he told himself.

So he began running the course when play is slow and during the off season. And when there's snow on the course, Holm dons his cross-country skis and glides across it.

Whether running or skiing the course, Holm takes a voice recorder and digital camera with him. If he sees something on the course that requires maintenance, he'll stop and dictate himself a message or snap a photo.

There are several physical tasks that



Erick Holm cross-country skis his golf course in the winter. It not only provides him good exercise, it provides him a chance to study the course.

Holm enjoys performing on the course to help him keep in shape. When the summer winds down and the seasonal staff departs, Holm enjoys getting behind a hand mower to cut greens. A few years ago Holm competed in the World Masters Cross Country Championship in Lake Placid, N.Y. To help him train for the event the previous fall, Holm would mow nine to 12 greens in a three- to four-hour period.

"I'd just take my water bottle with me and go for it," he says. "It was a good aerobic workout."

Holm also likes to change cups on greens. Not only does it afford him the chance to see the greens up close ("I get to see the soil and the roots"), the task is good exercise.

"It's like doing pushups," the 5-foot-10 and 160-pound Holm says, explaining that he lets his upper body do a lot of the work while cutting a new hole. Carrying around a 10-pound soil bucket also helps his cause.

Holm also enjoys the annual spring cleanup for the workout it affords. He likes getting out there to trim trees and drag brush into a wood chipper. As with any strength workout, he'll use the left side of his body and then switch to his right side.

Because he enjoys the work and his

body can endure it, Holm can chop down a tree and have the wood chipped in a time and fashion that would humble Paul Bunyan. His younger crew members are impressed with Holm's stamina, but Holm insists it's not about sending them a message.

"I have no intentions of working somebody into the ground to prove a point," he says.

In the winter, when he sees the course from his cross-country skis, Holm studies tree placement and how shadows fall on the ground as well as areas that might be suffering from desiccation.

"The majority of winter damage is from winter shade," Holm says. "You can tell what branches need to be pruned or whether a specific tree needs to be taken out. They just don't allow the sun to penetrate the area to melt snow and ice."

Last winter Holm removed a few trees in a foot of snow. He sawed the branches off the trees and dragged them through the deep snow to the chipper. Holm didn't mind working in a foot of snow. Heck, the difficult trudging meant he was getting a better workout.

One thing is for certain: Holm doesn't need a health club membership. "For now, the course is my gym," he says.