

# Tom Kientzle Enjoys Some Golf With Governor Jesse Ventura At Cragun's

By RALPH TURPINEN

Take it from Tom Kientzle, Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura is a lot of fun to play golf with...and he hits the ball pretty well.

Kientzle, superintendent and director of golf at the Legacy Courses at Cragun's Resort on Gull Lake north of Brainerd, had that opportunity on July 24 when Ventura was vacationing as well as celebrating his wedding anniversary at nearby Camp Ripley. Comfortable accommodations are available for the Governor here as well as for other governors when their military units train here.

Tom played nine holes with the Governor, his aide and his aide's wife, then with Dutch Cragun, owner of the resort, on the second nine.

"I really appreciate Dutch's giving me the opportunity to play with the Governor since it was a most enjoyable experience," Kientzle said

"Jesse hits the ball rather well and probably would score in the low 80s if he had the chance to play a lot."

The golf round came about rather suddenly when an assistant golf professional at Cragun's contacted Kientzle on his cell phone and said, "You won't believe this, but the Governor wants to play here today."

Naturally, Cragun's was more than accommodating and honored his request of not having people follow him around the course.

"The Governor wanted to keep his golf round low key," Kientzle said. "He didn't want a lot of hoopla. After all, he was on vacation and we wanted him to have a good time."

They teed off on the back nine, and it was interesting to note, Kientzle said, that the Governor had a good idea of what to expect, since the course had been designed by Robert Trent Jones, Jr., who also designed Edinburgh USA where Ventura had played a lot before becoming governor.

"When you play a Robert Trent Jones course for the first time, you have to be prepared for a lot of trickery. He's really a designer that designs for shotmaking, not necessarily for distance," Ventura said.

"Jesse's a lefthander, and he hits a natural draw," Kientzle said. "He hit it pretty well, but a couple times it went straight into the woods. One of his highlights came when he parred the fifth hole, the No. 1 handicap hole on Course No. 2 at Cragun's.

The Governor later admitted he had been struggling, said "you always go through the highs and lows in the game of golf."

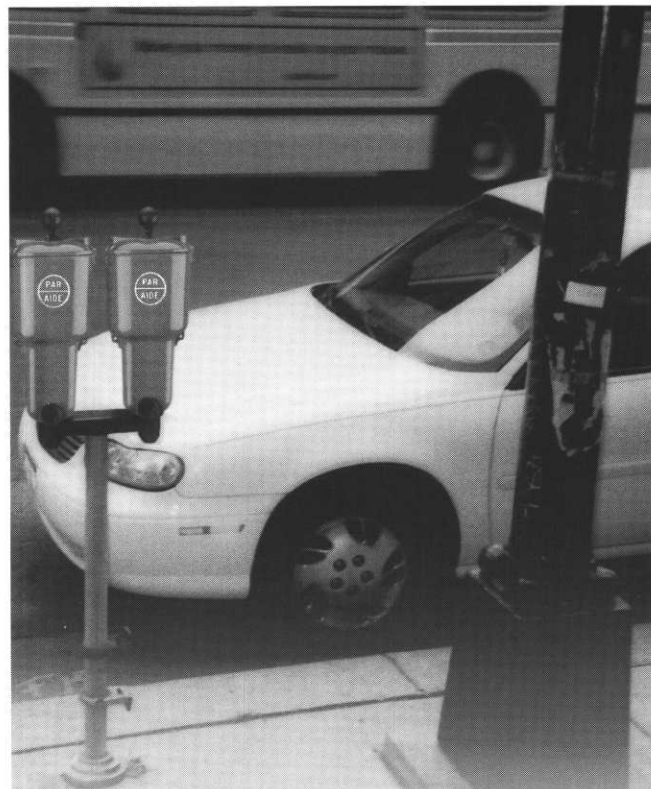
"We didn't keep score, and we didn't talk politics, but we did talk a lot about golf and I was impressed with his golf knowledge," Kientzle said

Did Kientzle outshoot the Governor?

"Let's put it this way," Tom said. "I might beat him at golf, but he sure would beat me at wrestling."

It was obvious, too, that the Governor was very familiar with the impact golf was making in the Brainerd Lakes area.

"He had played with Arnie Palmer at the opening of Deacon's Lodge, and he was going to play the following day at The Classic at Madden's," said Kientzle. "He spoke highly of all the facilities in the area. In addition, he was a great golfing partner. He knew course etiquette, he knew what the game was all about and he was a lot of fun to be with."



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