

CHARLIE POOCH

Balanced at the U

By RICK TRAVER, CGCS

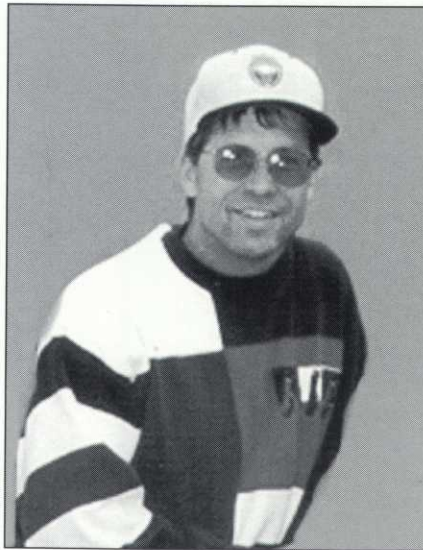
The University of Minnesota golf program has been in the news a lot lately. We have heard threats about cutting the program, the signing of the head coach, and of course their winning the NCAA tournament. However, we've heard very little about the golf course they call home and the superintendent who maintains it. That course is the Les Bolstad U of M Golf Course and the man that maintains it is Charlie Pooch.

Charlie starting working at the Les Bolstad U of M golf course in 1973 as a student. (If I'm not mistaken, Mr. Bolstad was still coaching the golf team back then.) Charlie was hired as the first assistant to a "Great Superintendent" in Russ Adams. He worked for Russ for 15 years as the assistant superintendent, then in 1991 upon the retirement of his mentor, was promoted to Golf Course Superintendent. Charlie has been a member of the MGCSA for 25 years and is a past member of the Board of Directors.

The U of M golf course was built in 1930, and has been host to many MGA and Big Ten golf tournaments. It boasts some great alumni, like John Harris, and Tom Lehman. After some 70 + years, 17 of the original greens are still in use, with no plans to alter the design in the future.

Talking to Charlie, he always seems upbeat and ready for the next challenge. You get the impression he has it figured out. Maybe because he has the balance figured out. By that I mean the balance between work, recreation and family. He has been married to for "19 wonderful years" to his lovely wife, Jeannie, whom he met playing

softball. He enjoys following the sporting activities of his 22 nieces and nephews. Charlie also has many pastimes, from fishing to hunting to working the chains on the sidelines at the Golden Gopher home football games. He has season tickets for Gopher basketball and hockey, and attends as many games as possible. His family has a cabin on Tulaby Lake in northern Minnesota, which doubles as a deer hunting cabin in the fall. When asked what he might be doing if not working on a golf course he said, "I would be in Alaska captaining a charter fishing boat".



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Perhaps the oddest thing Charlie has had to do occurred when he was working as a student. One of the fairways was under 2" of water for over 2 weeks. The weeds started to grow through the water and they were told to trim them off. So they had to raise their trim mowers to 3" and wade through the water trimming all the weeds off in a fairway under water.

Charlie's' goals include helping as much as possible to build the new U of M Turf Research Center, as well as initiating much needed minor changes at the U of M Golf Course. When he looks to the future he has some concerns about the water restrictions for public golf courses and the expanding reentry interval for pesticides.

I personally haven't known Charlie that long, however, he has always been quick to say hi, and ask how it's going. He is a great guy and another asset to our

association as well as a terrific representative for our profession.

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