



## In Bounds

By Jack MacKenzie, CGCS  
North Oaks Golf Club

Last weekend while cutting cups I found some interesting and very characteristically identifiable tracks upon my first green. A pattern I call, "knees 'n toes and knees n' toes n' palms." With a hearty laugh I couldn't help but consider all of the possibilities an amorous couple enjoyed upon my course. It also brought back memories from my teenage years and earlier.

**The White Bear Yacht Club** was my stomping ground from my fifth birthday until the middle of my 23rd year. Growing up on a course has many rewards and offers a wide variety of lessons to be learned. And educated I became through my trials and tribulations as a neighbor on the golf course. Discipline, patience, stealth and mischievous fun describe several events that have shaped my life.

**Perhaps my earliest golf course memory relates to winter activities, and more specifically, ice-skating.** My siblings and I used to enjoy many hours of skating upon the frozen pond to the west of the 6th hole. Tag was a favorite game, as was pick up hockey when our distant neighbors the Gearmans came over. Living to the north and east of the 6th green meant that the shortest route from back door to the pristine sheet of ice was directly across the green. Being kids, we quickly disregarded our father's words of wisdom to skirt the golf course on the path through the woods to our destination. He also suggested we carry our skates to the pond edge and put them on there.

**Well, to make a long story short,** we soon found that totting our skates all the way around the golf course was just too much. So unknown to him we put our skates on, sans guards of course, because they always got lost during the trudge through the snow, and proceeded upon the shortest route, right across the green.

**Winter soon changed to spring** and the lesson of discipline caught up with me. It seemed that we actually were ahead of our time when it came to linear aerification, for covering the sixth green were hundreds and hundreds of slices created from the many trips to and from the pond wearing our guard less skates. Although the WBYC membership suffered a temporary green well into June that year, my siblings and I had to endure my father's wrath and the ensuing lessons in discipline for the rest of the summer. I learned to listen to my father for sometimes he has good ideas. As I aged my interests expanded.

**Long before Prairie Dog hunting was popular** in the Dakota's,

My older brother Rob and I were honing our rifle skills by harvesting the Thirteen Stripe Ground Squirrels that inhabited the golf course. In the evening we would creep on our bellies over the berms and through the fescues with our trusty Sheridan Blue Streak pellet guns. Cautiously we would peek over the hills and sight in on our quarry. At first we often missed our shots and sent the creatures chirping and racing down their burrows, but soon our patience and practice paid off with a harvest of carnage.

**What to do with the bodies?** Well, of course we just had to bury them heads up in the bunkers, line the putting cups with their bodies and sometimes give them a final bath in the ball washers. Much to the surprise of the crew in the morning we were sure! I learned that patience and perseverance would enable me to do great things in life. Other evening events with brothers Rob and Curt involved the irrigation system.

**Back in the old days,** golf courses used to be watered using large impact irrigation heads capable of shooting a thick stream of water over one hundred feet through the air. The force behind the spray was called pressure. In an effort to cool down on warm nights we would trek out to the fairways and have all sorts of fun with the master blasters. Lesson learned included: 1) liquid propelled under high pressure hurts, especially if said liquid happens to inadvertently blasts a young lad's private part. 2) Wet grass upon a steep slope is very slippery and one should approach the irrigation head cautiously from the bottom of the hill so as not to fall into previously mentioned steam of water. 3) Never trust brother Rob when he is calling you over to "look at this cool thing" while he is in control of the direction of the irrigation head. Ah, youthful education!

**At the age of seven I had my first personal driving experience** in a sun recharged electric golf cart. Often times the old style electric carts would seemingly run out of juice during the warm afternoons, only to come back to life after setting a bit. Of course it was Curt and my mission to locate these abandoned vehicles and attempt to advance them toward the pro shop. Most of the time they were keyless, but once in a while luck was with us and we had our own autobahn opportunities. It was on one of these outings that I learned you should not trade drivers as the cart is moving down the fairway.

**The electric carts we drove** were equipped with automatic brakes that locked up the vehicle when the seat is vacated. Fortunately for me I was the driver in this instance and only bruised my chest when I moved off the driver's seat in an attempt to trade steering position with my brother. Unfortunately for Curt, he was the passenger and was sent literally flying multiple yards through the air and onto his head. Talk about a face plant! Lesson learned, stay seated when driving a vehicle.

**I could go on about that I discovered how to fly** a gas powered model airplane upon the sixth green (talk about spilt gas and crash landings, but what a great air strip!). Or expand upon the virtues of swimming for and selling golf balls back to the players who had lost them, my years of caddying and burning out ground hornet nests with gasoline, but those stories are fodder for other pressing editorials.

**As I grow older I will continue to enjoy my time on the course.** There are so many new experiences to witness. And through this education I will try my best to laugh at the fun stuff, learn from the challenges and when I really need a smile I will remember my own youthful attempts at "knees n' toes and knees n' toes n' palms" at the WBYC.

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Editor



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