

A GOLFER'S PHILOSOPHY: GOLF IS LIKE LIFE

By

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1961 Women's
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An address delivered to the entrants in the 1961 Girls' Junior Championship of the Pacific Northwest Golf Association.

I was pleased when Mrs. Johnson asked me to speak to you gals, but I was a bit apprehensive. Being so fond of golf, I was worried about the problems I might have expressing the things golf means to me. But I also was anxious to tell you what a tremendous organization we have in our area—the Pacific Northwest Golf Association, and to thank them for helping me to play my favorite of all hobbies—golf. I also hoped that by telling you what golf is to me, you might appreciate it a little more.

I owe my chance at competitive golf to the PNGA. This organization has always been interested in junior golf and it has given opportunities not only to me but to JoAnne Gunderson, Karen Ford and other boys and girls. The Pacific Northwest Golf Association provides the support and backing that girls beginning their amateur career need. They make possible the circumstances that can bring great gain and pleasure. But because golf is an individual sport, the learning, the success, the failure and the ultimate satisfaction that come from playing the game must be achieved by oneself. I am thankful to the PNGA for providing this opportunity.

A Good Walk Spoiled

When I began to think of what golf meant to me, I ran across some statements of what golf has meant to other people. For example, golf is a good walk—spoiled; or it's a game where the ball usually lies poorly and the player well; or golf is a game in which a ball one and one half inches in diameter is placed on a ball eight thousand miles in diameter, the object being to hit the small but not the large. And I'm sure you have heard the definition—The object of golf is to put a little round pill in a little round



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hole with instruments ill-adapted for the purpose. One of my favorite explanations is that golf is a science—the study of a lifetime, in which you may exhaust yourself but never your subject. Although these are witty explanations of golf, I think it interesting to examine the curious fascination that golf holds for you and me. Why is it that I play this game rather than tennis, competitive swimming or a team sport?

My answer to this question is not different from the answer of many golfers. I like golf because it combines the merits of all sports—exercise, challenge, a real need for concentrated effort, and the excitement of competition; but even more, it provides the possibility of meeting and getting to know many wonderful people.

The gals with whom I have had the pleasure of playing, and the many folks connected with the tournaments with whom I have become acquainted are the biggest joy of this game. Long after I forget the outcome of the matches I play, I will remember the people associated with each tournament.

A Wonderful Chance

I hope that some of you will have the experience of representing your University at the Collegiate Championship because I think you will find the most wonderful of all chances to get to know your fellow competitors. All the girls are housed in the same dorms, and you have the opportunity of getting into meaty conversations, singing, or playing bridge together. When you live right across the hall from your opponent, as I did in Michigan, you experience the kind of good-hearted comradeship that comes from close association. I remember two years ago when Judy Eller played Julie Hull in the finals, and the close friendship that developed between them. It was hard for them to play in the finals, but they went at it with light hearts. In fact, to confuse the gallery, they both wore the same outfits, and because of their similarity in build no one could tell one from the other. Judy won, and yet those two have been friends ever since. Julie will be one of Judy's bridesmaids next November.

Golf is such a competitive game, played closely between two people, that attitudes and personality enter into golf matches more than in any other sport. Your opponent and the other players see the way you behave on the course and your reputation is built faster in a golf situation than in any other. For this reason, I want to tell my beliefs about what attitude should be held toward winning and losing.

Rudyard Kipling has said that one must treat those two imposters, victory and defeat, as equals. Obviously, Mr. Kipling never played golf or he couldn't have passed such a difficult assignment by so matter-of-factly. The hardest lesson golf has to teach is that somebody can be better than you are on any given day, regardless of handicap difference, years of experience or anything else. In golf one girl can defeat another girl anytime, and

it is difficult to accept this defeat. But if one can learn to accept it gracefully and with quiet determination to do better next time, then a great lesson has been learned. By the same token, one can win anytime and this victory must be taken with humility and modesty. The ideal is to lose gracefully and to win graciously. Golf has so many ups and downs that a swelled head or a cocky golfer is out of place.

I think you will find that the greatest joys and sorrows you have from victory and defeat you must experience alone. This is true in life also; no one can really know how sweet a win is or how discouraging a loss is than just you. I know in myself, no one will ever know the satisfaction it gave me to go back to Michigan and come from nowhere, the darkest of the dark horses, the unknown of the tournament, and finish on top. The memories I have of this will last a life time. Then, too, no one will ever know how discouraged I was when I lost in the finals of the State Championship two years ago, and so lost my first chance to prove myself. To be happy, it is imperative that we overcome the frustrations that golf produces.

I don't think it is fair to me to philosophize if I cannot offer a way to achieve a good attitude. It is very simple—I tell myself I am going to do the very best I can. The results may not be my best, but at least I can be satisfied within myself for I tried my hardest. Life demands no more than a person's most sincere efforts—how can we expect more from ourselves as golfers. And keep smiling—you can't imagine what this can do for your spirits and how it can demoralize your struggling opponent.

The Right Perspective

One warning I have for you—keep golf, in fact everything you do in life, in the right perspective. Golf is a game, one that takes up a good deal of our time and is demanding of our undivided attention, yet it is not a substitute for education, a rewarding career, or a happy family.

I play golf for fun—and the best I can wish you is that you have one half the fun I have had and twice the success.