

"St. Joseph Hospital Foundation
Golf tournament"

7/9/12

This is Jon Sapper.

Have you ever tried to play golf? You know, hitting that little white ball about the size of a silver dollar. You hit it with a stick (golfers call it a club, but it looks more like a stick). You try to hit this little ball into a hole about as big around as a Progresso soup can. Sometimes this little hole is 400 or 500 yards away.

Each time you finish a hole you go to the next one. Do that 18 times and you have played a round of golf. If you walk after your ball instead of riding in a cart, you will walk about 4 miles. That's if you hit it straight. Hit it like me, you walk 8 to 10 miles. It's great exercise, but as Mark Twain said, "Golf is a good walk spoiled."

I played a lot of golf when I was younger. You wouldn't know it by watching me. The difference is that when I hit it in the water now, I don't care. I used to care. Maybe it's maturity or acceptance of fate. I'm not sure.

I did play in the St. Joseph Hospital Foundation tournament last week. A wonderful cause. There were good golfers who played well. There were golfers who thought they were good, but they really weren't. There were some really bad golfers who proved it. And one gentleman who after hitting miserable shot after miserable shot said, "I hate this game." Then he hit one good shot and said, "I love this game." That's golf.

Our local high schools have golf teams. Not as many youngsters play golf as play football, basketball or soccer. More youngsters should play. It's a special kind of game. Important life lessons can be learned on the course:

- To succeed you have to work hard,
- Be persistent,
- Keep your cool,

- Have patience,
- Be humble, (There will be lot's of opportunities to do that),
- Play fair and by the rules,
- Be resilient,
- Be respectful of others, and
- Make sure you have fun.

Summer and Fall is a great time to play golf on the North Coast. If you haven't tried it, give it a try. There are public courses in Garberville, Eureka, Mckinleyville, Willow Creek, Crescent City and Brookings.

Bobby Jones, one of the greatest golfers of all time said, "Life, I suppose, is to learn to accept what cannot be altered and to keep on doing one's own reasoned and resolute best whether the prospect be bleak or rosy." That's good advice on or off the course.

Although my skill at golf is currently at the bleak level, my ultimate goal is to play golf at a level beyond personal embarrassment. I really don't have to shoot better scores, I just don't want to walk as far.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.