

Golf Often Topic At Dinner Table Here

BY WILL COCKRELL
Beacon Golf Editor

Golf is an invigorating topic of conversation. My wife Reita and I have a habit of dining out at least twice a week at local restaurants and there always seems to be a several tables actively engaged in post-round discussions about that day's golfing exploits.

These groups range from a pair of couples at a four-topper to long tables of assorted golfers who appear to be part of a golf package.

The small tables seem to be comparing notes on golf courses or how well someone had putted that day. The ladies are often chatting about where they are going to play the next day and which restaurants they want to revisit on their next trip. The men are often trying to decide when they can mix in a little fishing or reliving their play of a birdie they made.

The larger tables are usually more vocal and combative. They discuss the strategy of making up teams and bets for the next day. Negotiations are always in progress for who will get how many handicap strokes for their next round and why. These deliberations in mock seriousness can sound like they are planning General Swartzkopf's next campaign.

On such occasions, Reita and I play a game we learned in the Army. We try to guess where they live by their accents and expressions. My wife is a real pro at recognizing speech patterns. I try to discern from their remarks, which courses they have played.

If we cannot agree on our conclusions, I often drop by the table and ask where they are from and which courses they like best. This drives Reita up the wall, since she feels I am invading their privacy and admitting that we have been eavesdropping on their conversation. I have never found that to be the case, since I always use the word "golfers" when I address them.

There is something about the game of golf that you never feel like you are waving a white flag when striking up a conversation. Just the word "golf" grants acceptance and establishes a common bond. After establishing that I am a local, I usually get a question or two about golf courses, restaurants or the beaches. I find that most vacationing golfers have highly developed appetites which range far beyond a menu or a scorecard.

It is never a surprise to learn that such folks are happy to be in Brunswick County and enjoying their favorite recreations. After all, we have in the South Brunswick Islands a convergence of the delights of the ocean and the challenges of lush fairways and manicured greens. Golf and the beaches are the lure; the agreeable weather and the warm hospitality of our people are the hooks for both vacationers and retirees.

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Those who are new to the area may want to try several of the courses. Residents and frequent visitors may be interested to learn that several new courses are due to open later this spring and summer. The Lions Paw Golf Course between Highway 17 and Ocean Isle Beach is due to open soon and St. James Plantation on Highway 211 near Southport plans for a late summer opening. Both promise to add new diversions and exciting golf to the current list of the best courses you can find anywhere.

Brierwood Golf Club

Located on the southern edge of Shallotte on NC 179, this oldest of the local courses has maintained its appeal with area golf associations, tourists and senior golfers. Charlie Webster, the club pro, keeps the Brierwood course in excellent condition and has improved the rough to complement the fast growth of homesites on the course.

Brierwood has weekly tournaments for the Renegades, the Ninettes, and the Men's Association. Brierwood also features local tournaments including the Jack Frost event, and one of the most popular Member-Guest tournaments in the area.

Lockwood Golf Links

Lockwood is one of the fastest growing developments in the area. Ernie Hewett and Aubrey Apple preside over the pro shop and the new clubhouse occupies a scenic spot overlooking the mouth of the Lockwood Folly River.

Located just east of Holden Beach, Lockwood Golf Links provides a stern test for good golfers from the blue tees and the 6200 yards from the white tees are also a great challenge. Lockwood places demands on approach shots and has bent grass greens. Hazards are framed by white oyster shells to give fair warning to the golfer.

Sea Trail Golf Resort

Dan Maples built the original Sea Trail course which *Golf Digest* recognized as one of the most outstanding new resort courses in 1986. Rees Jones and Willard Byrd have followed with two more world-class courses.

The Rees Jones Course at Sea Trail presents 6800 yards of dramatic golf. Jones blends his magic with the best in natural terrain to suit both contemporary and traditional

tastes. His use of elevated tees, mounds, bunkers, and water to frame the holes and focus on the natural beauty of land is outstanding. The thoughtful location of the white and gold tees at 6400 yards and 5700 yards respectively has provided the same glittering challenge for golfers of all levels.

The Willard Byrd Course opened last year giving Sea Trail Plantation the first triple dip in our area. The Byrd Course is located on the plantation property nearest to Old Georgetown Road. Randy Fuqua is the the head professional.

Marsh Harbor

This Dan Maples creation has been highly regarded since it opened. The Carolinas PGA

ranked it 8th in the Carolinas. Marsh Harbor straddles the state line just outside of Calabash and commands a number of breathtaking vistas over marsh flats. Marsh Harbor is one of the most popular courses for visitors and golf packages in the area.

Ocean Harbour

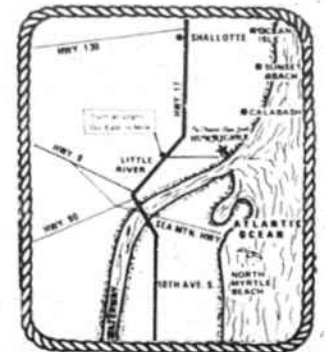
Ocean Harbour Golf Links sits on the southern most tip of Brunswick County nestled around the inlets and coves along the Calabash River. It is on a peninsula bordered by the river and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. Ocean Harbor has 18 immaculate championship holes sculptured from 500

(See GOLF, Page 36)

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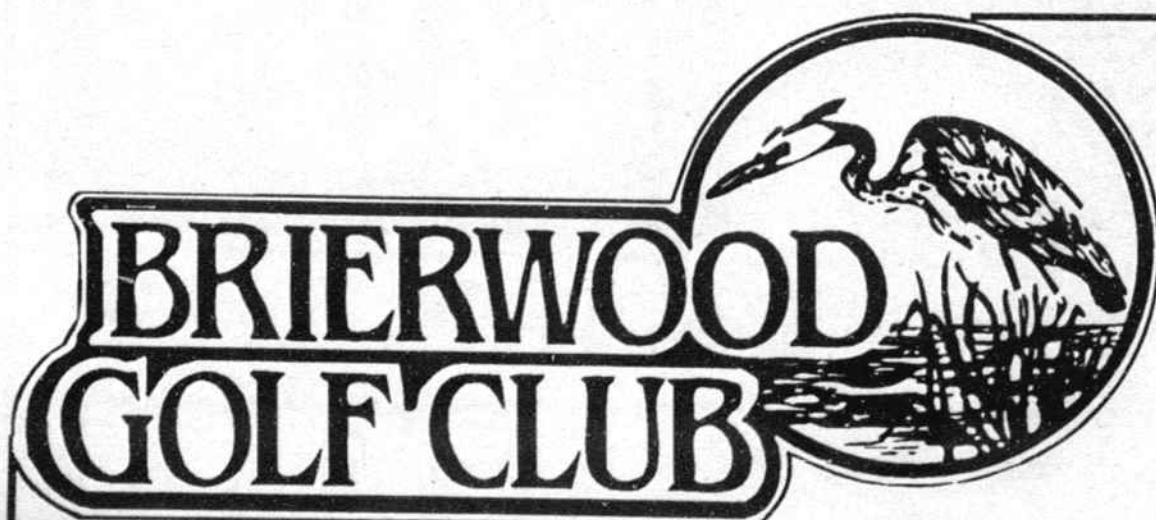
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