

## Edmonton Journal Article - June 13, 2011

# Broadmoor's legacy of great golfers

Sherwood Park's Broadmoor has been producing top-notch golfers for 50 years

- Edmonton Journal
- 13 Jun 2011
- Curtis stock



### **Golfers react to a putt on the fifth green at Broadmoor Public Golf Course in Sherwood Park on Wednesday.**

Broadmoor isn't a golf course. It's a factory: a Pez dispenser tossing out one golf professional after another.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary, the Sherwood Park golf course has produced dozens upon dozens of either head professionals or golfers who went to work in the golf business in one way or another.

"It's amazing really," said Ken Matson, who was Broadmoor's head pro for 22 years from the late 1960s through the '70s and '80s.

Almost all of them came out of Broadmoor's junior golf program where they were known simply as "The Boys" — kids who would play golf from sun up to past sun down — making everyone else dizzy watching them circle the course.

"We had 200 junior players every year and it just happened that we usually always had a lot of very good athletes," said Matson. "They played hockey in the winter and golf in the summer."

Gary Ward, who played junior at Broadmoor before playing the Canadian Tour and who is now the general manager of the Edmonton Country Club is just one of the "The Boys."

"We'd just go around and around," said Ward. "The first hole was what the 10th hole is now and we'd have a deal that if anybody in the group wasn't happy with their score for the first four holes we'd walk back through the houses until everyone was happy."

"Before you knew it, it could be two hours before we reached the fifth tee."

"It wasn't unusual to play 72 holes a day," said Garry Meyer, who started working at Broadmoor when he was eight years old picking up range balls, playing when he was 13 and eventually going to Belvedere where, at the age of 18, he became the youngest head pro in Canadian history.

"I remember one time my mom phoned the golf course. She said 'I haven't seen you in over a month and I forget what you look like. Could you come home for supper?'" said Meyer.

"We'd be there until it was dark, go home to bed and get up and go to the course in the morning."

"We were there all the time." Sometimes it was well after dark and they'd still be playing.

“That’s because there was a light outside the pro shop and it would shine on the putting green. So we’d sometimes be there all hours of the night putting and chipping in the dark,” said Ward. Mostly they played for quarters but sometimes the stakes got a lot higher.

“Sometimes our parents would ask where our 10-speed was and we’d have to explain that we lost it putting at Broadmoor,” said Ward. “A guy named John Wysocki lost his bike, but I think he wound up winning it back a few weeks later.”

It wasn’t long before just putting wasn’t good enough, so they invented their own games.

“Like you’d have to hit it through the hedge and onto the putting green first. Or off the cart path. Whatever,” said Ward.

Jeff Sveen, another top junior, said “It was like Caddyshack out there a lot of the time. Or a circus with the kids doing it not the adults.”

Several of the circus events centred around Meyer.

Once, after a car that had been adapted to push the ball picker got stuck in a mud bog, Meyer went and got a tractor with a front-end loader and hooked the two together with a chain. Except the tractor’s tires went through the bog too, and buried it up to the axle.

Then he got a fairway mower, a big F10.

“And that got stuck,” said Meyer. “Eventually we had to call a tow truck to pull out the car, the tractor and the mower.

“I was real popular.”

“There couldn’t have been a better place to grow up,” said Sveen, who also got into the golf business. Sveen went from the Derrick, to Bonnyville, to Athabasca and then the Edmonton Petroleum Club. He now runs the Play Golf Alberta online tee booking service.

As a junior, Sveen and Bruce Vermee won the Pepsi Nassau TwoMan Best Ball a few years in a row.

Like Sveen, Vermee also got into the business running Sunset Ranch in Kelowna.

“There was always something going on for juniors,” said Meyer.

“First Ken Matson, and then Ron Belbin, really promoted junior golf in a big way. If it wasn’t tournaments, it was swing programs and swing camps or tournaments. I think that’s why the statistics are stunning with the number of juniors who went on to stay in the golf business.”

Ward, Meyer, Sveen and Vermee are just four of “The Boys” who made golf their livelihood.

Chad and Tyler Rumpel were two other juniors that became professionals.

“They both worked in the back shop cleaning clubs,” said Matson. “Tyler was also my No. 1 cart washer. He had the best job because he got paid by the month, whether the carts were dirty or clean or whether it rained or shined.”

Chad is now the head pro at Eagle Rock while Tyler is the head pro at Jagare Ridge.

Tyler was one of the Big Four Broadmoor juniors in the city, playing with Mike Belbin, Jamie Windjack and Greg Schubert.

Mike is now an assistant at Royal Mayfair; Windjack became director of golf at Moon Lake in Saskatoon, while Schubert is now head pro at Cottonwood golf course in Calgary. That’s still only the beginning. Byron Hicks, Cyril Zupan, Michael O’Reilly, Darren Evans, Bob Halverson, Jeff Cooper and Steve Beiler became industry representatives.

Others like Jeff Richardson, Dave Adam, Kent Adams, Stephen Keeley, Pat Little, Peter Cushner, Roddie McLeod, Graham Goertz, Mike Read, Paul Barker, Ross Kenney, Henry Hemmes, Kyle Crawford, Jay Lilge, Rob Toshack, Jimmy Smith, Jeanette Kerr all became golf professionals.

Danny Sahl is playing the Canadian Tour; Bob Sharp became the assistant superintendent at Leduc.

Grant Cammidge, who played some of his junior golf at Broadmoor, is now the general manager at the Petroleum Club.

“It used to cost \$20 for the year for juniors,” said Mike Belbin.

“When the passes went on sale people would line up all night. “At first they limited it to 150 so there would be 20 to 40 kids lined up by 6 in the morning. Some would bring sleeping bags. It was like trying to get tickets for what you knew was going to be a sold-out rock concert.”

“It was a great place for the kids and it was a great place for the parents because you never worried about where your kids were,” said Meyer.

In Broadmoor’s 50 years there have only been five head pros.

Tryg Wenn was the first, followed by Matson, then Ron Belbin for 16 years, then Darren Ross and now Trent Wright.

Ron, who died last year, always had high expectations for his juniors and he made sure they knew it.

“He took great pride in having a good junior program,” said his son Mike.

“He made it great to go to the golf course every day. But at the same time, he wouldn’t take too many reasons if we played poorly.

“I remember one time after our high school grad we all played pretty bad in a tournament. That’s when the phones started to ring and he had Greg, Tyler, Fred and I out at the course standing in a circle and he was giving it to us.

“The next day we all played a lot better.”

Designed by Norman Woods, who also was the architect for Glendale, which also celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, Broadmoor started out, like Glendale, as a housing project before it was turned into a golf course and four-sheet curling rink. The County of Strathcona eventually took over the course from Genstar Development in 1979.

“But we’re not supported by tax dollars,” said Wright. “We’ve always been a stand-alone facility: revenue neutral. What the course makes is reinvested in the course. And no dollars leave the course.”

This year, to celebrate its 50th anniversary, Broadmoor has a new clubhouse and ice rink.

That’s not the only thing that has changed. The nines have been reversed. A Par 5 is now a Par 4. A Par 3 became a Par 4. Water hazards were put in.

When Broadmoor started it was at the northwest end of Sherwood Park. All around it was nothing but farms.

“When it opened in 1961 it was in the middle of nowhere,” said Meyer. “Kids would ride their bikes down the gravel road and they would play in anything. Wind. Rain. Monsoons. It didn’t matter.”

“Twenty or thirty dollars for the year and they could go around and around like they were on a merry go-round,” said Matson.

“We all had a lot of fun.”