

## Sketch of a West Pointer – Ross Cassie



*Ross Cassie has been elected to serve our membership as President for the next two years, following a 2-year term as Secretary and one year as Director at Large. He brings a wealth of golf knowledge and years of administrative background to the position. Ross is a people person and a good listener – and always eager to learn about new ideas.*

*My ties with Ross go back a long ways. I was a teacher at Lord Tennyson Elementary and my teams (soccer, volleyball, basketball and floor hockey) played against Bayview and Henry Hudson, where Ross was a student and emerging athlete. One of my students was from a 'favourite family' of five and is a best friend of Ross' to this day!*

*Ross played high school basketball at Kitsilano Secondary for former long-time West Point member and Captain, Stan Lawson.*

*I remember refereeing several of their games. During the summers before his retirement, Ross was recruited by Stan and Life Member Hugh Marshall to be part of the Monday golf group at Fraserview, comprised mostly of retired school teachers and administrators.*

Ross was born in Vancouver on June 13, 1957 and attended local elementary schools as noted above. After Kits high school graduation in 1975 he embarked on his post secondary education at University of BC for a Bachelor of Education degree and then to Simon Fraser University for his MEd degree. Ross was an educator with the Vancouver School Board for 31 years, including the last 19 years as an Elementary School Principal. He was a popular teacher and administrator and made many valuable contributions to students, staff and communities in the VSB school system. Ross continues his involvement in education as a Faculty Advisor at UBC, supervising high school PE student teachers.

Ross enjoyed playing basketball, baseball and soccer as a youth and fastball as an adult. After high school he played basketball in the Dogwood League, which was of high calibre, and also with a group of VSB employees once a week in a more laid-back environment. His fast pitch teams were the Vancouver Regents and the Meralomas. Ross played his first round of golf when he was 13 years old, at the old UBC golf course. He remembers getting off the bus at 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Blanca, by the old pro shop, and putting his ball in the slot in hopes of getting a game. This was long before the days of booking tee times! He fondly recalls that the clubhouse (currently the BC Golf Museum) had the best milkshakes in town! He reports that he shot 129 in that first round of golf.

He played golf periodically until he was 35 and since then, has played a minimum of 30 rounds a year; this includes over 100 rounds this past year. Watching Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus on TV with his Dad is what got Ross interested in golf. He was obviously a good student of the game!

I always ask members what their lowest handicap index has been. This past season Ross has reduced his handicap index to 6.1, which equates to a 2 handicap from the number 3 tees at Fraserview. *Now you know how many strokes he has to give you!* Ross hasn't shot his age yet but I wouldn't bet against it happening soon. With his vast experience and skill level, it is interesting to note that he has only had one hole-in-one thus far. This milestone event occurred on the 7<sup>th</sup> hole at Fraserview in 2020. Ross

remembers playing the rest of the round in kind of a fog as he couldn't believe he had finally got a hole-in-one! It felt great until he had to pay the bar bill at Romer's pub after the game.

We all know that Ross can hit the ball a mile but also recognize that he has the short game to score well, too. Since joining West Point Golf Club in 2016, Ross has won a number of events. In his first year he combined with Chris Murray, Tom Becher and Dennis Houle to win the Palcutta Competition. He was the flight A gross winner of the Bud Brown Eclectic event in 2018 and also scored well in the Sweet 16 competition. In 2019 and 2021 (better back 9 vs Bill Titmuss), Ross was West Point's Stroke Play Champion, and in 2022 he captured the UBC Men's Mid Week Club Championship.

When asked about memorable golf experiences, he recounts that shooting 71 at University Golf Club was a highlight, as it's the only time he has broken par over 18 holes. Another memorable experience was playing Torrey Pines South with his son, Andrew, and watching him shoot 74.

Ross says that his favourite golf story is really a collection of the many golf trips he has taken with his friends, including his high school buddies to Kelowna and Victoria, with work colleagues to Washington state and with his son to California. The fun and good times he had on those trips and playing great courses are very special memories for him.

Ross and his wife, Laurie, have raised four children – Sarah, Megan, Andrew and Rachel – and have 3 grandchildren – Jackson, Emma and Eliose. His favourite vacations have revolved around their family. He has fond memories of the family trip to Quebec and the Maritime provinces. They especially enjoyed the community lobster dinners and going to Ceili's (Irish dancing) in the small towns. Ross and Laurie travelled to France in 2018 and particularly enjoyed their time in the Provence region. This summer they are going on a 3-week vacation in Newfoundland Labrador. Ross is also anticipating going to Southern Ireland for a golf trip and to Bandon Dunes in the near future.

When asked about golfers he admires, Ross identifies two. The first is Brooke Henderson because not only is she Canadian but she presents as being very humble, which is not the case with many professional athletes today. Ross admires how intense a competitor she is but always in control of her emotions on the course. He says she is a tremendous role model for golfers young and old. *As we wrote this article, Brooke had just won her 13th tournament!*

The other golfer Ross respects a great deal is Lee Trevino. Not only was Lee a great golfer but he overcame a lot of challenges in his life to attain that stature. He proved that a "muni player" could compete with and be better than the "country club boys". Ross names Torrey Pines North and South, along with Harding Park in San Francisco, as his 3 favourite golf courses - because they have great scenery and are extremely challenging to play.

Ross lists his hobbies as: gardening in the spring and summer, going to the gym (he tries to get there three times a week), spending time with his family and reading Scandinavian crime mysteries.

Since joining West Point in 2016, Ross really looks forward to Thursday games with WPGC. As much as he enjoys the golf and competitions that are provided, it is the social aspect of the Club that makes it so rewarding to him.

*Prepared from material submitted by Ross to Lorne - November 2022  
Published April 4, 2023*