

Sketch of a West Pointer – Dean MacKinnon



Dean's father was an accountant for the federal government in Ottawa, where Dean was born in 1942. Two years later the family moved to Vancouver and lived with Dean's grandparents until 1946 while a house was being built in the Little Mountain area. Dean attended Van Horne Elementary School and relates that he quit school in grade 2 - but went back when his teacher offered him a job cleaning the blackboards! He became a student at John Oliver Secondary the same year that Hugh Marshall began his career as a teacher. Dean was very involved in athletics at school and in the community, playing Little League baseball and soccer. His family didn't have much money so Dean worked, first delivering drugs for a pharmacy and then toiled as a paper boy for the News Herald. He took the morning route so that he could play sports after school. The family lived at 37th and Mackie and he picked up his papers at 49th and Main. With these well-paying jobs, he was able to save enough money to purchase his first car, a Hillman Minks for \$150.

In 1960 Dean got a summer job as a Red Cap for the CPR and returned to this job for seven summers. Wages weren't great but he made enough in tips to help pay for his Physical Education degree at UBC. Following graduation and teacher training, he commenced his teaching career at David Thompson Secondary, remaining there for 4 years. Nels Spruston, a former teacher, heard that Dean wanted to change schools and enticed him to Gladstone where Dean spent 20 wonderful years. During his time at Gladstone, he spent 3 summers and winters completing his Master's degree in Physical Education. In 1991, he made the final move to Winston Churchill, where he retired in 2002. In his first 10 years of teaching, he supplemented his income with summer work in plywood mills, window manufacturing and teaching summer school math.

Dean's golf life began at Langara. As a teenager and living within walking distance of Langara, he and some buddies would throw their golf balls into the middle of the first fairway and hit away! Although there was a starter's shack at the 1st tee (about where the current #6 tee is) and he could probably see the young guys, neither the starter nor the marshal – if they had one – ever bothered them. If a foursome caught up to them, the boys just let them play through. The name of their "club" was SAC, which stood for Snuck-on Athletic Club! Dean didn't have his own set of clubs; he would just carry some of his dad's. They weren't in the best of shape as they were a beat-up wooden driver and a mashie, with the leather grips peeling off; he didn't buy his first set until he was married. He began playing more often with a friend from CPR, mostly at McCleery. Later on he made a 'mistake' and got his sons involved in golf; this meant that he got to spend most of his summers driving them to different tournaments sponsored by BC Junior Golf. The boys got pretty good; they had junior memberships at Vancouver Golf Club, maintained their memberships and are the only brothers to win the men's club championship. Dean managed to play in the Penticton Open for several years with family and friends, getting his handicap down as low as 10. He has come close to scoring a hole-in-one but so far, no luck. When asked about shooting his age, Dean said that the closest he's come was in 2018, when at the age of 76 he scored 78 at Fraserview.

When Dean got to John Oliver he decided to try another sport, rugby, eventually giving up soccer to continue playing rugby through high school. He tried out for the UBC Thunderbirds and got into a couple of games but played mostly for the Frosh Team. In his remaining years at UBC he did play for the Birds and got to travel the west coast, playing games against University of Cal-Berkley, UCLA, Oregon and

Oregon State. He remembers playing against football players and the Birds usually won, just on experience and the fact that the footballers hadn't figured out the advantage of moving the ball and not dying with it when tackled. Following university, Dean continued playing rugby with the Rowing Club and Trojans. Soccer had given him a good background in that he was able to use both feet which resulted in him playing mainly in the backs, as he had also been blessed with speed! One of Dean's claims to fame is that he once ran against Harry Jerome in the eliminations during the old Vancouver and District high school track meet. Dean neglected to say who won!

Dean had another sporting life – basketball officiating, and that's where I first met him. As part of the role of playing basketball for Coach Hugh Marshall, the boys had to referee the girls' games, as there weren't paid officials for games played after school in those days. That experience launched Dean into an extensive career officiating all levels of basketball. He has refereed finals and semi-finals for the boys and girls provincial championships, Canada vs China in the Pacific Coliseum when China was entering the Olympics. His refereeing partner for that game was the manager of the RBC bank at Main and Hastings; Dean thinks that half of Chinatown was in attendance. He's been involved in BC Wheelchair Sports as a director and basketball official for over 30 years and has had the pleasure of officiating what would be the eventual gold medal games with both the Men's and Women's national teams in tournaments held in Canada and the U.S. He earned his international certification late in his career but still had many great moments. In 2013, Dean was recognized for his dedication, service and illustrious career when he was inducted into the BC Basketball Hall of Fame. Up until 2018, he was also involved in Quad Rugby, formerly called Murder Ball, as an official at World and European championships.

He has enjoyed playing golf at Kapalua Plantation (just before the Mercedes PGA event), Olympic Club in San Francisco and in Portugal. It was here that they would only let you play certain tees based on your handicap; Dean found that he was always short to the greens until he realized the distances were metric! Among his favourite golfers are: Fred Couples, Bernhard Langer, Rory McIlroy, Arnold Palmer and Tiger Woods.

Dean and his wife, Judy, were married in 1966 and have 3 children, Kelly, Patrick and Christopher, and 7 grandchildren. Kelly was a pharmacist tech and has 3 children: her eldest daughter teaches at the school she graduated from, the middle daughter is completing university and her son is in his 2nd year at Douglas. Pat is manager of section at Costco distribution centre and has 2 children: one at Douglas, the other in grade 12. Chris, CEO of a large kitchen manufacturing business, has a son at U of Vic and a daughter entering grade 12 and ready to sign a university soccer scholarship. The MacKinnon family spent many summers at their cabin in Birch Bay. Dean and Judy also enjoy cruising to spots like the Caribbean, New England and the British Isles.

Dean is one of many members who have played Monday golf at Fraserview for many years with a group of retired teachers. From there, he joined West Point in 2013. Due to medical reasons, he's currently an Associate Member, but plans to be back soon.

*Prepared by Lorne Lindsay from Dean's material
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