

#68 - Sketch of a West Pointer – Jeremy Marr



Jeremy was born May 12, 1940 in Sunderland, England. He lived in England for 25 years acquiring an Engineering degree at Cambridge. There, doing the minimum amount of work possible, he was heavily involved in sport – rugby and athletics, throwing the discus for the University. He then worked as a graduate apprentice with a large UK company – C.A. Parsons & Co. Ltd.

At the age of 25, he emigrated to the US, obtaining a green card. He didn't know in advance but that entitled him to be eligible for the draft! Since he was living in Watertown, a small town in upstate New York full of retired people, and the Vietnam war was escalating, fate was inevitable. Having registered for the draft within 6 months as required, he left the US after 6½ months, just days before the drafting process would have started, driving 30 miles north to Canada. He still has his draft card – Registered Alien, who has left the country – and having surrendered his green card - so he is not a draft dodger!

Emigrating to Canada in those days was easy. Knowing nothing about Canada, he was told he could turn left for Toronto where they spoke English or right for Montreal where they spoke French. Toronto was good to him and he had a job within two weeks with Chrysler Canada, first as an engineer, then moving into production management.

Although he had played golf in England, he never played it in Toronto. But sport is a great way to meet people and he was soon involved with the rugby fraternity. It was through rugby that he met his wife, Gill. He was on the field, she watched on the sidelines. They have been married for 53 years and have raised two sons, both married and living in North Vancouver making it easy for Gill and Jeremy to enjoy time with their 3 grandchildren, a boy and 2 girls; his 2 sisters still reside in England.

But he was not on the rugby field as a player, but as a referee – for 25 years. When he was at school, at the age of 17, Jeremy got TB, not badly, but he spent 5 months in a sanatorium and missed a year of school. When he returned, he was not allowed to play contact sports and, as everyone was required to play rugby, the rugby teacher enlisted him as a referee. He refereed at school, at Cambridge, in the UK and in Canada ending up on the Canadian panel and refereeing Canada three times, including Canada against the British Lions.

It was attending national referees training camps that introduced him to BC and contributed to the Marr family fleeing 'cold, snowy Toronto' for 'golfing Vancouver' in early January 1977. "The right decision!" he recalls. They came directly to West Vancouver as they had Toronto friends there. Jeremy took a position at Pacific Press (Vancouver) as Production Manager and then Director of Operations and rounded out his career being self-employed in Quality Management Consulting.

Jeremy took up golf as a teenager and figures his lowest handicap was about 16. In England in those days at his level, it was mostly an honour system and he didn't have an official handicap. When asked about shooting his age, Jeremy quipped, "No, but I am getting closer, for my age is going up faster than my handicap at the moment!" Jeremy has experienced two holes-in-one. The first was at Guildford GC on the 17th hole and the second on Langara's 8th hole while playing with West Point. He remembers that the base of the hole was blind and he eventually found his ball in the cup. "A feeling of smugness rather than euphoria," he says. "Thank goodness both holes-in-one were decent shots!"

There's a story behind his unusual putting style. He had heavy astigmatism until he had his cataracts fixed. It meant that while vertical lines were sharply focused, horizontal lines were not, which meant lining up putts the traditional way was a bit of a blur. He tried putting right-handed and left-handed but there was no difference. About 15 years ago he plucked up the courage to putt the way he does. Now he can see the line very well. But he says, "All I have to do now is learn to putt in the intended direction!"

Upon being invited to comment on any memorable occasions in his golfing history, his response: "I won a cup in England at Brancepeth GC in Durham in 1961." *[He was 21 at the time.]* "Two rounds each of 90 (nominally net 72) on the same day – playing off the men's tees; there was no choice! And in the same time frame, I had an 84 on the Old Course at St. Andrews and, at Alnmouth GC in Northumberland, my best round ever – 79. There I started 2 over, 2 over and 3 over before 14 pars (I knew them as bogeys) in a row!"

Twenty years ago when Jeremy started to play golf regularly again after a break of 35 years, he was haunted by a recollection that in England a bogey was a par – but nobody seemed to recall that. He recently googled the history of golf and found that par was an American creation and that up until he left England to come to Canada in 1965, a bogey in his circle of friends was the same as a par in North America.

On first thought about favourite courses, he picked Alnmouth GC in Northumberland because that's where he had his best-ever round. But when he returned to play there two years ago, he remembered remarkably little of it! Maybe those other two in Scotland – St. Andrews and Blairgowrie - would rate higher as they bring back so many happy memories. "I remember playing Blairgowrie in my teens with my father; the greens were so good that you felt you should take your shoes off to walk on them."

As far as hobbies go, Jeremy plays a fair amount of bridge and sings in a good and large mixed-voice community choir, the Pacific Spirit Choir. The group toured Europe every 3 years or so before Covid interfered. When vacationing, he and his wife love to absorb history, architecture and culture. A highlight journey was three fascinating weeks in India.

He said he would be remiss if he did not mention joining West Point Golf Club in 2012. He reveals that he has become more thoughtful about how he could improve his game but, he says, maybe that is just old age – and more frustrated about lack of focus – undoubtedly old age! However, he has won Flight C in our Match Play Championship in 2018, the Roli Parker Eclectic in 2020 and 2022 as well as a TNT victory (2021) and Bud Brown Eclectic (2017).

Jeremy is a giving member. He was a reliable and conscientious member of the Captain's Table for 7 years and then took on the important position of Vice-Captain Scoring in 2022 and enjoyed a very successful first year in that role. He is a gentleman and a treat to play golf with.

*Prepared from material submitted by Jeremy to Lorne, October '22 - February '23
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