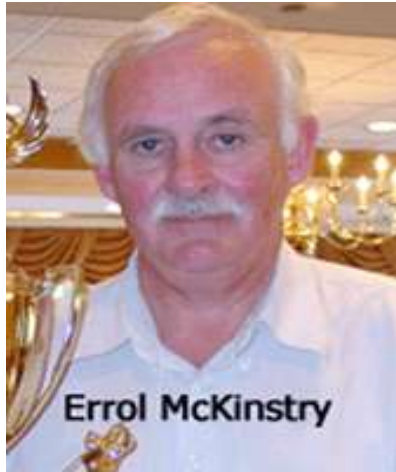


## #69 - Sketch of a West Pointer – Errol McKinstry



Errol McKinstry was born in Ontario on Canada Day 1941, the first of 3 children in an athletic family. He was raised in Saskatoon and participated in football (fullback and punter), basketball, track, swimming, ping pong, hockey, marbles, tennis and curling. He played hockey until midget age level, once scoring 5 goals in a game. He was the basketball scoring champ in grade 12, gold medal javelin thrower achieving city, provincial (Sask.) records and a gold medal at a Canadian meet in Hamilton. He began playing golf at age 15 and also enjoyed skiing – both downhill and cross country – on a variety of mountains over a 25-year period.

His brother had a PhD in German and his sister was a naturopath; she is now 75 and lives in Ontario. Errol's first wife died and he is divorced from his second wife, Candace. *[As it happens, I worked with Candace at Carnarvon Community School.]* His daughter, Meghan, is a hematologist, and has recently moved to Victoria with Errol's 3-year-old grandson.

Errol's post-secondary education started with a BA degree in 1962 at the University of Saskatchewan, followed by an MD there in '66, CCFP (Family Practice) at U of Calgary in 1976, and FRCP (Psychiatry) in '81 at the University of Toronto. Positions he's held include Consultant with Drug and Alcohol 1975, Family Practice for 9 years with privileges at Grace and St. Vincent's hospitals, Chair Richmond General Dept of Psychiatry, Director of Delta Hospital Psych Day Care and consultant for Surrey and Delta hospitals. He practiced psychotherapy for individuals and groups from 1988 until retirement in 2016. He has been on his own for 12 years, sold his condo in late '21 and now rents in Steveston, enjoying life on the river.

Errol's favourite golfer is Fred Couples because he is a friendly, relaxed gentleman, never gets ruffled, seldom practices and has a big easy swing. "He's from Seattle, so grew up on my west coast. He is a hall of famer and has won Majors. Others I admire are Lee Trevino for his humour and unique approach to golf and life, and Xander Schauffele."

His favourite local course is Northview Ridge where he scored his low round of 78 with 3 birdies and beat his younger brother, Brian, who was a pro on the Canadian Tour through the 1970's. He likes the hills, water, great views and the fact the Ridge course is playable, unlike Furry Creek or Northlands, in his opinion. Many times Errol enjoyed watching the Air Canada Championship played at Northview Ridge, especially during Mike Weir's historic victory in 1999, his first PGA tour win, *and the first victory by a Canadian golfer on Canadian soil since 1954.* Errol also likes the old Whistler course (Arnold Palmer) for its views, variety and challenges. Pebble Beach is also a favourite, where he once shot 92. He's played St. Andrews twice, once in a nasty fog in July.

His first hole-in-one occurred in 2007 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole at University Golf Club and the second was in 2016, using a set of rental clubs in Saskatoon. He remembers that the distance was 145 yards, a 7 iron that skipped past the hole and backed up and in!

Errol reveals that his lowest handicap was 7, some time around 1990. He was victorious in our TNT event at Fraserview in 2018 and has also won 12 events at University Men's Club over a span of 25 years; his lowest score at UGC was a 73 in 1998 with 4 birdies. Errol has been a student of golf, collecting books and videotapes and viewing teaching shows so he could analyze the game.

Sharing a bit of his golf philosophy, Errol says: "Remain optimistic and positive, never be self-critical or down on yourself for a bad shot or poor round. Stay curious, analyze, diagnose and improve through practice. Stay aware as golf is the toughest game invented! Keeping a realistic perspective is crucial to enjoying the game. Stay present, let memory of bad shots go, plan ahead and execute. Hit a poor shot? Laugh and move on. Enjoy the walk in nature. Enjoy the camaraderie between shots." He loves the 19<sup>th</sup> hole to laugh about the shared round, the good, the bad and the ugly. Errol has a long-time brand loyalty to Titleist balls, preferring yellow for visibility (as they are especially good for golfers with cataracts).

Errol's hobbies include birding, Celtic fiddle (he played in a pub band for 10 years), singing tenor in a choir for 30 years, meditation with the Zen Society, 20 years of aikido (harmony of mind and body). He coached track and field, bantam hockey at UBC and was a Unitarian Church member for 30 years. He has travelled widely, some trips as the family genealogist with four trips to Ireland as a fifth generation Irish Canadian, from counties Antrim and Wicklow. Highlights include studying Zazen (sitting meditation) and aikido in Japan 1976 and five months back-packing Europe in 1968. He recalls being in Paris during the student revolution in May 1968.

A few golf stories from Errol. He recalls the days when he and his brother painted golf balls black to play in the snow. They also suffered while playing in high prairie winds so on such days they played a 9-holer on 8th Street, with small dome-like creosote greens that kept dust down but was smelly. Golf season on the prairies was very short – May 24 weekend to the end of September.

Errol once caddied for Gordie Howe, remembering him as a powerhouse, only using his driver four times per round. He's also watched Moe Norman hit balls at a range in Toronto, always attracting a crowd, and spent some time watching Ernie Els and John Daly hit balls on the range at the 2005 Canadian Open at Shaughnessy. While sucking on a cigarette, Daly hit 5 balls/min. to Els' one. Daly complained that the range was too short! Els told him to go down to the far end and hit diagonally. That got rid of him. Errol heard Nicklaus at a skins game in Whistler say, "We don't play mountain courses - too tough for us - our fans want us to shoot below par."

Errol joined West Point Golf Club in 2016. Some of the highlights he identifies: our ability to play on all three Vancouver public courses which provides good variety, the fact that WPGC is well-organized and is friendly toward welcoming new members.

*Prepared from material submitted by Errol to Lorne, Jan - Feb '23  
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