

Sketch of a West Pointer – Peter Morse



Peter's father was a good golfer, winning four Provincial Amateur Championships in Saskatchewan and Alberta from 1928-31. His athletic talent combined with excellent marks at university led to a Rhodes Scholarship for two years at Oxford University, where he was a member of the golf team. He returned to Canada to marry Peter's mother in 1934 and then completed medical training in London, where they spent 5 years before moving to Midhurst, Sussex. His father worked at a major hospital in Midhurst, 15 miles from the English Channel, and where wartime wounded were treated and hospitalized.

Peter was born in Midhurst, England in 1942, followed by brother John 3 years later. The family moved to Vancouver in 1946 as they had planned to do 8 years earlier but were convinced by friends to stay, because the war was imminent. Peter's father established his medical practice and significant positions at VGH and Shaughnessy Hospital. He did not touch a golf club from 1935 to 1953, when his friends convinced him to join Marine Drive. The fact that Peter was nearing the age of eligibility for junior membership may have contributed to his dad's decision. Peter started playing golf on his 12th birthday when he was a junior at MDGC. He had a few early lessons from Ben Colk, a legendary Vancouver golf instructor who worked out of Langara. Thereafter, Peter's father was his teacher and guiding light for a few years. While helping Peter form a golf swing, he added other lessons along the way. When Peter threw a club after a particularly bad shot on the 13th hole, his father said, "If that club comes down, you're walking home." It did, and Peter was - a distance of nearly 3 miles but he had learned one of life's lessons.

Peter enjoyed a fairly good junior career, including a tie for 3rd or 4th in the BC Junior one year and losing in a playoff another year for a position on the BC team going to the Canadian Junior Championships. Before he left Vancouver, his handicap got as low as 4, and he had a remarkable eclectic score of 45 at Marine Drive, 8 eagles (four on par 4s) and 10 birdies. Peter was the captain of the Magee High School golf team, which won the Vancouver and District golf league and playoffs in both '59 and '60. He later qualified for the UBC golf team for their annual trip to California but was unable to go because of summer job commitments which ultimately led to his career as an actuary. The last 22 years of his actuarial career were spent with Towers Perrin, now called Willis Towers Watson, working on the design and funding of pension plans for such BC employers as Cominco, Fletcher Challenge Canada and the very large IWA-Forest Industry Pension Plan, which covered all the unionized employees in the woods side of the forest industry in B.C.

Anita and Peter were married in 1964 and lived in Montreal suburbs for 13 years. He did play some golf but it was mostly on holidays and a few summer games. It was, however, enough to maintain his game at an acceptable level, handicap of 10-12, but a young family and lots of work meant less golf than he would have liked. After moving back to the West in 1977, he got involved in coaching Little League Baseball in North Vancouver, which he did for 25 seasons. Volunteering and his paying job reduced his time for important things like golf and travel. He played a lot of duplicate bridge and became good friends with Ozzie Isfeld who introduced him to West Point Golf Club in 2008. Peter was president of the Vancouver Unit of the American Contract Bridge League for 11 years; the group puts on 35 days of bridge tournament events throughout the year.

The Morse family consists of children Philip, Ingrid and Erica. Philip has lived in Mississauga for almost 30 years; he followed in dad's footsteps to be an actuary and played golf for a while and coached a lot of soccer. Erica was a keen golfer and cyclist until a serious mountain bike accident led to an ambulance ride to Toronto and two subsequent knee replacements, which effectively ended her golfing career. Ingrid is a chartered accountant in North Vancouver and thus far has avoided golf! Three granddaughters complete the family, and they all currently attend universities in Ontario.

At the time of publication, Peter has played on 436 different golf courses including 183 in Canada, 191 in the US, 37 in Ireland (his favourite place to play), 12 in New Zealand, 7 in Scotland and 6 in other countries. He has scored 3 holes-in-one; two of them on the same shortest hole at Furry Creek. On one, a greens-keeper stood aside so he could hit and then started jumping up and down when the ball went in the hole. The third ace occurred on a course in Washington State.

When identifying golfers he admires, Peter covers three different eras on the PGA Tour, selecting Lee Trevino, Phil Mickelson and Rory McIlroy. His Canadian favourites are Stan Leonard and Mike Weir. Stan is from a long time ago, but it was during the time when Peter was beginning his golf at Marine Drive, where Stan was the pro – and the young aspiring golfer got to watch the master strike many balls.

As far as vacations, Peter likes to go anywhere with a golf course; he's played a number of enjoyable courses at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, on family holidays when the kids were young. He also recalls a great trip around New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, the highlight of which was a game at the Cape Breton Highlands Course. In recent years, Peter's golf has been limited due to medical issues (one caused by a bad fall off his bike), but he still really enjoys the game and playing with West Point members.

*Prepared by Lorne Lindsay from Peter's material
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