

Community Comment July 7th, 2014

By Jon Sapper

Life's Lessons

This is Jon Sapper for Community Comment.

I played golf the other day. Not well, but, when you only play twice a year, what do you expect? I played a lot of golf when I was a kid. I was told that many of life's lessons can be learned on the golf course.

To be GOOD at golf, you have to think. You don't have to think to play golf. One member of our group proved that. He swatted at the ball. It didn't go far or straight, but he had fun. He didn't take himself seriously. I told him, "No matter how bad you're playing, you can always do worse". I don't think he appreciated my humor. A good golfer is a problem solver, effectively dealing with adversity.....rain, wind, sand traps and trees. You have to believe in yourself. If you don't have confidence, you will be hesitant and always second guessing. You need to take calculated risks. You have a good chance to hit it over the water if you're only 60 yards away, but if you're 200 yards, you might want to think about laying it up short. You can always improve. No one has ever perfected the game. Everyone makes mistakes on the course. Even Tiger Woods. Some people make mistakes off the course. Even Tiger Woods. Some things are beyond our control. Find a way to make good things happen for you. Be honest with yourself and others. Golf doesn't have a referee or umpire. I actually remember the name of someone who won a tournament I played in over 50 years ago. I remember his name because he cheated. I don't remember the names of those who won playing by the rules. Practice, be persistent and listen to mentors. Remember that somewhere, someone is practicing and when you meet them, they will win. As Jack Nicklaus said, "Don't be too proud to take a lesson". Stay focused. Golf is a tough sport. Silence your inner critic after a bad shot. You will get bad breaks from good shots and you will get good breaks from bad shots. That's life. And no matter how well you did yesterday, today you have to go back to the first tee and start over again. Show humility and respect. End every round with a handshake. Be a gentleman. Yes, some of life's lessons are learned on the golf course.

I also learned a life lesson the other morning looking out my kitchen window. There was a rooster quail on my fence post, watching over other quail on the

ground eating seeds. I noticed a cat about 50 feet away sneaking on the quail. The quail didn't see the cat. My dog was on the porch, not moving a muscle, watching the cat. The cat didn't see the dog. All of a sudden, the dog bolted, the cat did a backflip and the quail scattered. Certainly, symbolic for survival in today's world with lots of people watching. I preferred the quail on the ground eating, so I poured myself a bowl of cereal and ate breakfast.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.