

The Mystique of Golf

Wouldn't you agree that golf has the greatest aura of all sports? One reason for this is that golf is played on natural terrain (or land shaped to resemble natural terrain). Courses are carved out of natural landscapes like an artist's brushstroke on a canvas. No two courses are alike.

An Exacting Game

Golf challenges even the keenest and most avid players. Since it's played on huge, undulating grassy fields, golfers must learn a variety of shots. Through mistakes of judgement or execution, a golfer can regularly mess up a good round—even on a dearly admired course. During the same round, even the weather can change; the wind can come from different directions at different velocities. Other threats (uncommon to other sports) can include blood-sucking horseflies or mosquitoes hovering around your head. It's every man for himself. Alas!

Unparalleled Lure

Not only is the golf swing extremely difficult, it's also unique. A golfer must combine strength, flexibility and dexterity with the steadiest of nerves and the everlasting struggles to maintain one's composure. There is no coach to obey, no relative position of players, no snap count to remember, no defence and no reactionary reflex motion. In golf, every shot must be played by a calculating mind: slowly, deliberately, quietly. There is no other game in which failure is so humbling—or so infuriating. Ultimately, golfers learn to not 'get their speech ready' before the round ends.

A Character Builder

Golf is also complex. There is no other place than on the links where a player can truly pride themselves, through private instruction, properly fitted equipment and regular practice. However, attitude and confidence count more than muscle and might. Hope and luck are not a game plan here. Golf demands the most concentrated mental attention. Oddly, excellence in other sports is not necessarily a standard for proficiency in golf. This game is unique and (at times) unfair. A bad bounce in golf is called rub of the green. Suck it up and move on!

Brian McDonald has been a golf professional and PGA of Canada member since 1982.

■ By Brian McDonald, PGA of Canada

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