

British Columbia Golf Member Newsletter

May 2009

Golf Man-cation to Vancouver Island

by Andrew Penner

If you've ever seen the gang movie "The Warriors" – it's a B cult classic! - then there's a pretty good chance the line "Waaaariorrrrs, come out to play-ay!" still reverberates within you from time to time. I love that movie. And it was perfect post-round cinematic fare for the boys. You see, after four inspiring rounds of golf in two days on Vancouver Island, there wasn't a whole lot of fight left in us. It was after midnight, the card game was over, and the only thing left to do was throw on a movie, suck back one last pop, and get horizontal. Yes indeed, just like "The Warriors," we definitely came out...and we definitely played.

This, after all, was mid-March, the prairies were still frozen hockey-puck solid, and the courses on Vancouver Island were lush, green, and gorgeous. For flatlanders with snow blindness and cabin fever, gazing upon green grass and flagsticks blowing in the pacific breeze made for a highly religious experience. In fact, just getting off the airplane in Victoria and seeing real, actual plant life was enough to make us feel like we were crossing into Gloryland.

So, understandably, given our golf addictions and severe withdrawal symptoms (prior to departure we practiced putting down the moving walkway), our "script" looked something like this: Day 1: Golf brains out. Day 2: Golf brains out. Day 3: Golf brains out then make mad dash to airport. Oh sure, drinking (beer), eating (chicken wings), and a smattering of other (mostly) juvenile activities were also worked into the festivities.

Now, don't get me wrong, the trip didn't entirely play out like a scene from Animal House but, rest assured, it was far from Driving Miss Daisy. The Westin Bear Mountain Resort, for example, is not really a place where "Bluto," aka John Belushi – or any of the bat-wielding chumps from The Warriors – would really be at home. This is, unquestionably, one of the finest, most luxurious golf resorts in Canada. And we respectfully enjoyed it to the fullest.

With two Jack and Steve Nicklaus-designed courses – the Mountain and the Valley – Bear Mountain is definitely golf heaven for round-bellied prairie boys with serious cravings. However, there's much more than golf here. World-class restaurants, the luxurious Santé Spa, plenty of meeting space: indeed, all makes and models can thoroughly enjoy this haven.

The drive into the property is a major "wow" experience. And, no surprise, the original Mountain Course, too, is laced with stunning golf holes. The par-5 starter, for example, which careens down the hill and concludes with a wild green protected by a creek, is an early engagement with the spectacular. And from there, it just gets better.

The roller-coaster back nine reaches its climax at the one-of-a-kind gambling hole, surely one of the most amazing golf holes Jack's ever envisioned. An "interlude" between the 14th and 15th, the gambling hole, surprise surprise, provided our motley crew with a few theatrics. After all of us missed the tiny cliffside green in dramatic fashion, our balls ending up on the far side of Never-Never Land, one of the boys (mesmerized with the incredible view of Victoria?), took his eyes off the road and nearly pulled a "Thelma and Louise" off the carpath. Thankfully, no damage was done and "Thelma," as he was called for the rest of the trip, was not allowed behind the wheel anymore.

After a brief tour of the nearly completed Valley Course (it will fully open in April), we moseyed over to nearby Olympic View for a second round. Complete with waterfalls and wicked views of the Olympic Mountains, Olympic View is a pastoral treat that winds through some of the most enticing terrain in the Greater Victoria area. The up and down layout is full of unique golf holes that tease and please.

Not surprisingly, given the amount of testosterone in the group, we all decided to try and attempt the massive tee shot Tiger Woods hit on the 18th hole when he played Olympic View as an amateur in 1994. Word has it he cleared the rock outcropping, some 300 yards away. Thelma was up first and hit a hard-hooking missile that pin-balled in the pine trees just 50 yards off the box. Mike, whose favourite character is Ricky Bobby of Talladega Nights (and, yes, he bellows "shake and bake!" before every tee shot), reeled back like he was possessed and cold topped it two feet. Both me and my buddy Mark, a dead-ringer for Steve Buscemi (God help him), busted our tee shots and were still a half-wedge shy of Tiger's mark.

The next day our crusade took us over the Malahat into the Cowichan Valley where a couple of fine courses awaited our assault. First up: Arbutus Ridge. For whatever reason, (there's no way in the world it was the all-night poker game or the single malts) we all played like rank beginners at Arbutus Ridge. But, interestingly, we probably enjoyed it the most, laughing throughout at our complete ineptness.

Arbutus Ridge, while not overly long, is peppered with fun, option-laced golf holes, including an island green at the par-3 17th. And, with plenty of side bets on the go and some spirited banter, the day played out like a scene from Goodfellas, minus the gunplay and needless torture. In the end Ricky Bobby took the cash and stole the show with some "shake and bake" for the ages. With nerves of steel he holed out for birdie from well off the green on the excellent par-4 closer.

The second round at nearby Duncan Meadows was also reminiscent of a famous Hollywood movie: Dawn of the Dead. Indeed, the collective lack of sleep took a bit of a toll on the boys as nobody sniffed a par until the lovely fourth, a classic par-4 that swoops down the hill and requires a deft approach to a green guarded by towering trees and a ball-hungry creek. Actually, after this crowd pleaser (sadly, it featured more shake and bake) the gang found their second wind and thoroughly enjoyed the super-scenic and much underrated track.

In a blatant act of sleepless stupidity, we handed Ricky Bobby the keys to the car and gave him directions to the fabulous Crown Isle Resort in Courtney/Comox. But lo and behold, the shake and bake was applied just right and we made it safely. And that was good, because Crown Isle is one of the best on the island.

After the inspiring movie night (sorry to spoil the suspense, but the Warriors beat the hell out of everyone) and a world-class sleep in a luxurious course-side room, the game at Crown Isle was the pinnacle achievement for us all. Besides a memorable, sun-soaked round on the outstanding 7,024-yard Graham Cooke design, birdies were poured in like they were going out of style. At one point, Ricky Bobby was so excited he seriously considered taking off his clothes and running around in his underwear.

Our final round, at the idyllic Storey Creek Golf Club near Campbell River, was also one for the ages. Here tranquil, tree-lined holes curl through the forest and provide golfers with a sublime "natural" golf experience. We loved every second.

Given the fact we soon had to fly back to our frozen home, Storey Creek was difficult to leave. It's such a pretty place. We all agreed, the perfect "script" would involve missing our Comox-to-Calgary flight so we could do it all again. And, with Mr. Talladega Nights behind the wheel, we knew it was a distinct possibility.

To book your Golf Man-cation to Vancouver Island, contact the specialists at Golf Vancouver Island at 1-888-465-3239. Guys golf packages are now available online at www.golfvancouverisland.ca They are your one-stop shop for golf tee times, accommodation, meeting space, transportation and even après golf activities!

Andrew Penner is a freelance writer based in Calgary, Alberta.

BC Boasts One of the Most Scenic Courses in the World

By Scott Masse

As most British Columbians know, Vancouver is a unique, vibrant city set in a stunning natural environment. No matter what time of year you visit, there are numerous outdoor activities for travelers to enjoy – and when it comes to golf, Vancouver offers a unique combination of some of the best mountain and parkland courses imaginable with the energy and excitement only one of the world's best cities can offer.

In fact, Vancouver was voted the "Best City in the Americas" for 2004, 2005 and 2006 by Condé Nast Traveler magazine, based on the categories of ambience, friendliness, culture and sites, restaurants, lodging, and shopping. This is just one of the cities many awards and accolades that clearly demonstrate the many reasons to visit Vancouver.

As Vancouver's most scenic golf course, Furry Creek captures perfectly the most spectacular geographical features of this part of Metro Vancouver. Built in 1993 by Robert Muir Graves, the layout offers panoramic ocean views from mountain top vistas and can almost guarantee an encounter with one or more of the numerous forms of wildlife inherent to this region. In short, Furry Creek offers an unforgettable golf experience with its breathtaking scenery, friendly hospitality and savory West Coast cuisine.

So make sure you make a stop at Furry Creek during your golf getaway to Vancouver and discover what a beautiful and rewarding experience it can be. Visit www.golfbritishcolumbia.org to find packages or book tee times on line at Vancouver's most scenic course!

British Columbia's Signature Golf Holes

by Andrew Penner

A cool, pine-scented breeze - born on the snow-smearred peaks five thousand feet above - gently bends the flagstick and puts some doubt in my mind as to which club is right. The six-iron might be a little strong and going over can be a real round-wrecker. However, the seven, if it's not enough, spells disaster, too. The emerald green, perched on the other side of the sheer cliff, looks incredibly inviting; if only I can make a good swing and hit it.

Understandably, the postcard-perfect vista and the intense challenge of hitting this do-or-die shot are making my knees shake. And, to be honest, I love it. This hole, the unforgettable "Cliffhanger" at Greywolf Golf Course, is one of the greatest in the world, after all.

Take a swing through British Columbia and you'll encounter a host of stunning, photo-friendly golf holes. In fact, BC's "Signature" holes are some of the best in golfdom: from dramatic, cliff-top beauties to riverside gems that curl along glacier-fed waters, the province has it covered when "wow" holes are your game. Here's a sampling of BC's best.

Par-5 8th at Tobiano. Situated high on an exposed bench overlooking Kamloops Lake in the Thompson Okanagan, Tobiano, *Golf Digest's* Best New Canadian Course for 2008, is awe-inspiring from start to finish. Here, unrestricted lake and mountain views are yours every second of the round.

And terrific holes just come one after another. In fact, there could be a number of candidates for "signature hole" on this Thomas McBroom-designed gem. The par-4 5th, for example, is a creation that careens through a steep, cliff-lined ravine that's the perfect size for a golf hole. However, the 8th, a par-5 that starts with a bang (you've got to smash a tee shot over a huge chasm) then darts and dives high above the shoreline, takes the cake. The tee shot is certainly a doozy, but surveying the scene from the landing area is simply sublime. Golf holes just don't come any better than this.

"The 8th at Tobiano is a hole I'm very proud of," says McBroom. "Visually, it's quite a feast. But I'm really happy with how it plays, too. Once you get a feel for it, you realize there are certain angles of attack and strategies that work best on every shot." Regardless of how you decide to play it - or how it plays you - this hole will stick out as one of the most impressive par-5s you've ever seen. tobianogolf.com

Par-3 8th at Fairmont Chateau Whistler. When it first opened in 1993, the Fairmont Chateau Whistler Golf Club turned plenty of heads. Wild elevation changes, spirited mountain streams that flow throughout, the alpine atmosphere, the engaging route; it all made for an edge-of-your-seat mountain golf adventure. Now, over 15 years later, little has changed. People still leave wowed by the experience. And one of the most memorable moments happens on the par-3 8th.

The slender green on the 184-yard hole sits snug between a rugged wall of rock on the right and a pond and bunker on the left. The perfect shot is squeezed between these dominant features, but given the nature of the hazards, a lot can happen. In spring, when flowers adorn the slopes beside the tee and the mountains high above are draped with fresh snow, it doesn't really matter what you score here - you're just gonna love being in mountain golf heaven. fairmontgolf.com/whistler

Par-3 6th at Greywolf Golf Course. When scouting the terrain for Greywolf at Panorama Mountain Village in the Kootenay Rockies, architect Doug Carrick's jaw dropped when he first saw the potential green site that would become the infamous "Cliffhanger" hole. "I knew instantly I would route the entire golf course around that specific hole. It was one of those once-in-a-lifetime opportunities to build a golf hole in a setting like that."

The hole, which plays anywhere from 142 to 200 yards long, is made more difficult by the swirling winds that can whip through Toby Creek Valley. Also, while the green is fairly generous, there's no bailout area. Unless you're fortunate enough to catch one of the two bunkers to the right, a poorly struck shot will meet its doom at the bottom of the cliff. And if you want to retrieve it, here's some advice: bring rope, rations, and a good guide. greywolfgolf.com

Par-3 19th at Bear Mountain Resort. OK, granted, the popular gambling hole at Vancouver Island's Bear Mountain isn't part of the official route. But all those who partake will tell you this: it's a fun way to tack on a few side bets and absorb one of the finest views in the province; the harbour city of Victoria, the Olympic Mountains, and acres of lush forest. Of course, the hole is pretty darn cool in its own right. Here, the tiny green clings to the mountainside and only accepts a laser-straight, soft-landing short-iron shot. Right is bye-bye and left needs a miracle. Long or short is instant carnage. Flip the toonies on the deck, say a prayer, and give it a smooth move; closest to the pin takes the loot. Interestingly, this hole was not originally seen by Nicklaus and, consequently, was built as an encore after the fact. Jack, we applaud. bearmountain.ca

Par-5 17th at Westwood Plateau. This is one memorable downhill cruiser; a par-5 hole that epitomizes what golf in British Columbia is all about. For starters, the 501-yard straight-away hole aims you smack dab at the snow-domed peak of Mt. Baker. (From the tee it's immediately clear that you've encountered a special hole.) The lush fairway, situated near Vancouver, is lined with towering Douglas Firs and contains numerous natural humps and bumps to negotiate, adding to the enjoyment of the ride. If you can hit a decent tee shot, you can definitely entertain the idea of going for the green in two.

"You've just got to avoid the deep greenside bunker," says Dr. Michael Hurzdan, one of the most respected golf course architects working today and the man who created the golf hole. "We wanted to create a lasting memory for golfers coming down the final stretch," he recalls. "Starting with the glorious view of Mt. Baker from the tee, I believe we did that." Yup, he did.

In fact, when you play the hole – or any other of BC's signature holes, for that matter – you're guaranteed a lasting memory. And, providing you're the shutterbug type, a few spectacular photos of what golf in BC is all about. westwoodplateaugolf.com

Want to add to the list of signature holes? Let us know your favourites those holes that best represent BC. Let us know with an email to jim@bcga.org and we'll publish your list.

Predator Ridge Expanding

By Scott Masse

With luxurious accommodations and world-class amenities, it's not surprising that The Globe and Mail recently declared Predator Ridge as one of the finest resorts in Western Canada. What might surprise you, though, is that accommodations start at just \$99 a night.

At Predator Ridge, luxurious suites and a state-of-the-art swim and fitness centre are just the beginning. Indulge in the Aveda™ concept salon and spa, reconnect over a gourmet dinner at the upscale but unpretentious restaurant named 'range', and play a round or two on the famed Predator Ridge golf course.

Golf at Predator Ridge Resort is comprised of 18 spectacular holes of golf and an additional 18 holes of golf designed by Doug Carrick which is soon to be released. Predator Ridge owner Wesbild Holdings Ltd. announced plans last year for Carrick Design to develop a new 18 hole course over some of the most dramatic terrain at the resort with some of the holes over-looking Lake Okanagan. By 2010, Predator Ridge will offer 36-holes further strengthening its reputation as Western Canada's premier golf course and golf resort destination.

Over the years they have developed a world-class golf experience at Predator Ridge, which has already earned the reputation as one of the finest golf courses in Canada. Having hosted the 2008 TELUS World Skins Game, Fred Couples, Camillo Villegas, Greg Norman, Colin Montgomery and Mike Weir would attest to that!

Then at the end of your round, return to your deluxe suite complete with a fully equipped kitchen, cozy fireplace and spectacular views from your patio. Also included are lots of luxurious touches like down duvets, terry-cloth robes and Aveda™ amenities.

Whether it's just the two of you or the whole family, Predator Ridge is the ideal Okanagan getaway. And it starts at just \$99 a night. Simply put, there is a place for you at Predator Ridge. Call 1.866.578.2233 to find out more.

The Wind on Your Ball

By Susan White

Occasionally wind will wreak havoc on the golf course, sometimes even costing the player a stroke. On the final day of play in last month's Masters Champion, Padraig Harrington incurred a one stroke penalty for moving his ball at rest under Rule 18-2 (Ball at Rest Moved by Player, Partner, Caddie or Equipment).

In windy conditions, Padraig addressed his ball on the 15th green. His ball began to tremble; he stepped back. Unfortunately his ball moved (came to rest in a different position). As Padraig had addressed the ball, he is deemed to have caused the ball to move under this Rule. Rule 18-2 provides if a player, his partner, caddie or equipment purposely touches the ball in play (other than as the result of a stroke, or when proceeding under a rule), or causes his ball to move, he will incur a one stroke penalty and the ball must be replaced.

You cry "Foul! Padraig didn't move his ball – the wind did!" Unfortunately the rule goes further to say "If a player's ball in play moves after he has addressed it (other than as a result of a stroke), the player is deemed to have moved the ball and incurs a penalty of one stroke."

A player has addressed the ball when he has taken his stance and grounded his club, except that in a hazard (bunker or water hazard) he has addressed the ball when he has taken his stance (placing his feet in position and preparatory to making a stroke). For this reason, many players are careful not to ground their club behind the ball, particularly during windy conditions or if it on a precarious lie. Once the player has addressed the ball, the act of stepping away does not un-address it.

Padraig could have marked, lifted and then replaced his ball. If his ball subsequently moved, he would not have caused his ball to move. He would have, effectively, "un-addressed" the ball. If the player's ball moves in this circumstance, and it is determined he has done nothing else that could have caused the ball to move, nor has his opponent, fellow-competitor or an outside agency, he will not be subject to penalty and must play the ball from its new location.

You may be wondering why are so many words in italics? All of these words are "Definitions" in the Rules of Golf (Section II of your Rule book). If you want to understand and apply the rules of golf, learn the definitions first. This will go a long way in helping you determine which rule may apply.

Susan White
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The Longest Drive of your Life

Big Sky Golf and Country Club, located just north of Whistler in Pemberton BC and Blackcomb Aviation have teamed up to offer golfers one of those truly memorable experiences.

Blackcomb Aviation will pick you up in Whistler, and transport you and your foresome by helicopter to the 8,000 foot top of Mount Currie, which is about a 20 minute flight over the spectacular Coast Mountains. Mount Currie rises in an almost vertical wall over Big Sky Golf Course and the Pemberton area. At the top, you'll be able to hit biodegradable golf balls into the valley below, aiming for the course. You won't hit it quite that far, but it will still drop nearly 1,500 yards, which qualifies it as a drive, even though most of the distance is vertical.

After your shots, and lots of photographs, you'll be flown down to the course to play Big Sky, one of the top courses in BC. Following your round, you'll be flown back to Whistler.

All in all, one of those golf experiences that will remain with you for a long time.

For further information contact Courtney Foxgord at cfoxgord@bigskygolf.com

New Rules Changes Benefit Golfers

Susan White, Director of Rules, Competition and Education, BC Golf Association

Recently I was invited to conduct a rules workshop for a mixed group of players, with varied knowledge of the rules of golf. During introductions, it was apparent the majority of these golfers did own a rule book, but most did not hold the current edition and several of the books on hand were several editions old! The Rules of Golf is updated every four years; each update provides some changes either in wording, the application and occasionally the applicable penalty. The Rules of Golf effective January 1, 2008 to December 31, 2011 produced some of the most significant changes in many years. This included penalty reductions in many situations. Following are a few of the changes which have a significant impact on the game, and probably your day to day play too.

Identifying the Ball (12-2) – This rule provides the player is responsible for ensuring the ball he plays is his. Each player should put an identifying mark on his ball. If a player has reason to believe a ball may be his, but he is not able to confirm, he may lift the ball for identification. The ball may lie anywhere on the course – including a hazard (bunkers and water hazards). If the player plays a stroke at a ball which is not his, he will incur a two stroke penalty in stroke play (loss of hole in match play) – Rule 15-3. “What?” you say. “I can lift my ball in a hazard?” The rule provides you may lift a ball if it is necessary to do so in order to identify it. If you lift it when it is not necessary to do so; i.e. it is obviously yours as you see your markings, or you saw it come to rest at that spot, you will be penalized under Rule 12-2 – 1 stroke penalty. And be careful! There is a procedure you must follow when wishing to identify a ball as yours. Look at Rule 12-2 to find out how you must proceed.

The flag stick also enjoyed a significant change in the 2008 change, with its addition to Rule 24-1, Movable Obstructions. This rule talks about the ability to move movable obstructions on the course except when a ball is in motion, and the movement may influence the moving ball. You must not move a rake or a pop can if a ball is in motion, but, if you look at this rule, it provides “When a ball is in motion, a movable obstruction that might influence the movement of the ball, other than the equipment of any player or the flagstick, whether attended, removed, or held up, must not be moved.” So, if the flag stick has been placed on the ground, any one may lift it if they think another’s ball in motion may strike the flag stick – no penalty! The flag stick takes on the same status as equipment in this rule. Much better than the 2 stroke penalty or loss of hole applied previously.

Up to December 31, 2007, if you accidentally deflected or stopped your own ball in motion, you would have received a two stroke penalty (loss of hole in match play). The Rules Makers recognized the unfairness, as this was an accident, and adjusted the penalty to one stroke in either forms of play. However, if the player deflects or stops his ball on purpose, he will be penalized under Rule 1-2 (Exerting Influence) and the penalty could be serious – possible disqualification.

These are only three of the many changes which came into effect January 1, 2008. For further details of the other significant changes to the Rules of Golf, purchase a new rules book (Effective until December 31, 2011) or visit the RCGA’s website www.rcga.org. You’ll find the complete Rules of Golf in the Competitive Section.

The BCGA is available to help you find the answers to situations which may occur. We also provide a comprehensive Rules Education Program. Visit our website at www.bcgga.org to find out more.

Time to Tune Up Your Game in the Okanagan

The Golf Performance Centre at Predator Ridge offers a variety of individual and group instructional packages that will meet all your game improvement needs. Lead by Director of Instruction, Sean Richardson, the Predator Ridge Canadian PGA team offers the highest standard of golf instruction. From introducing first time golfers to the game to working with the top junior, amateur and professional golfers in Canada, our experienced team delivers comprehensive programs that are tailored to meet the goals of each student. Each participant in our performance programs will receive a thorough understanding of their own tendencies and corrections along with a long-term improvement plan. The learning experience is always friendly and fun.

The Harvest Golf Academy under the Direction of Jacques Heroux who joined The Harvest Golf Club in the spring of 2008, provides on course instruction through performance coaching. His teaching philosophy is quite simple "To provide personalized and customized instruction for all levels, first and foremost taking individual needs before specific swing philosophy."

Our goal at the academy will continue to provide a multitude of programs that caters to a wide range of ability level and experience at an affordable price, while making learning an enjoyable and valuable experience through customized instruction for each individual. The Harvest Academy's goal is to provide learning opportunities, social interaction and complement the existing fixture of The Harvest Golf Club.

The GBC Golf Academy located at Gallagher's Canyon under the direction of Josh Fleming and The Okanagan Golf Club under the direction of Dan Martin combine world-class practice facilities with beautiful surroundings and expert instruction to offer an unparalleled learning experience. Our Academies offer a variety of lesson programs designed to help golfers of all ages and skill levels. The program is based upon two key concepts; the club needs to do certain things to create a good golf shot and each golfer needs to learn a swing that he or she can repeat. We help our students learn their best swing based on physical abilities, body type and personal goals. Our goal is to help you to have more fun playing golf. Your instructor will design a program for you that will be based upon your individual wants and needs. In addition, The GBC Golf Academy uses the latest in video technology. Our computer analysis systems combine the best digital video cameras, computers and state of the art software to provide you with the best visual teaching aid on the market today.

For more information on Okanagan Golf Academy's and Clinics, visit: [www. Spectaculargolf.com](http://www.Spectaculargolf.com) under "Our Courses". For Central Reservations contact: 1-800-930-4622.