

Golf, a perfect summer sport after the hockey season

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If you are a hockey fan, the unsuccessful season of our Canadian NHL teams has been a difficult pill to swallow given that none of them qualified for the playoff tournament in search of Lord Stanley's cup. Well as they say: "Guess they'll be playing a lot of golf this summer". All players who do not participate in the playoffs quickly make their way to the golf courses. Why is that?

Most of our NHL players play golf and are a natural fit for the sport. There are so many great players that put their names and celebrity status to charity golf tournaments. A wonderful thing as we love our hockey players!

The seemingly natural transition from the sport of hockey to golf evokes many characteristics which professional hockey players find useful in their off seasons. For instance, the weight transfer used to shoot a puck is rather similar to the weight transfer used in hitting a golf ball.

The setup is also similar with the swing's force being directed at either a puck or a golf ball located at their feet. The swing plane is nearly identical as well.

Hockey players have spent years upon years in training on the ice to learn how subtle changes in their swing plane can alter the flight of the puck following impact. Then there is the repetition, how many times has a player hit a hockey puck? I can only imagine. The same practice is an automatic transition from a puck to a golf ball and from a hockey stick to a golf club. Hand, eye coordination is similar as is the art of practice.

After playing eighty two games per season and for some an entire playoff series, for many of our hockey players, the relief of going from arenas to golf courses can only be a pleasure. The summer sun versus those colder conditions must make the downtime that much more pleasurable during the off-season.

The season may be over for players but a competitor is always a competitor although on friendlier more relaxed turf. I don't think you can switch off the competitive nature of any athlete. That is what makes them 'true professionals', the drive to always want to win. It isn't quite the Stanley cup; however, it does make for a nice setting for summer training.

You may have guessed some of our best and most famous hockey players are also great golfers and lend their names to some of the best charity golf tournaments. This includes the great Bobby Orr whom I had the privilege of meeting at his annual tournament right here in Moncton. Others include the 'Great One', Wayne Gretzky. Now Wayne is not nearly as great on the course as he was on the ice, but with a handicap that sits around 10, he is among the 150 Top Athlete Golfers. Mario Lemieux or 'Super Mario' carries an impressive 0.4 handicap, placing him once again among the NHL's elite.

Brett Hull, a regular at the American Century Championship is a notable golfer. Brett reportedly carries a scratch handicap and uses his bruising NHL frame to hit the ball a mile.

Another one of our famous hockey star golfers is Sidney Crosby. A natural I am sure. One of Montréal Canadiens' alumni hockey player and golfer is Yvan Cournoyer. I have had the honor of meeting him at a charity golf event. He is a wonderful gentleman and an avid golfer.

There are many present and past NHL players who love the game of golf as we do. Many of our celebrity players are involved with charity golf tournaments. According to a 2015 Forbes magazine article, charity golf tournaments have generated close to four billion dollars each year for a variety of different causes, through one hundred and forty three thousand events and twelve million participants.

If you have the opportunity to play at any celebrity or charity tournaments, make a point of it. You will have a great time meeting our beloved hockey stars while supporting a good cause.

A SMILE MOMENT: Two golfers were sitting at the 19th hole discussing their golf games, when one says to the other, "My game is so bad this year, I had to have my ball retriever re-gripped!"

Remember: 'Golf today, tomorrow, fore a lifetime'.

To book your next golf lesson, contact Lisa today via e-mail at lisalgolpro@gmail.com or by telephone at 506-232-0728 or visit her website at www.PrivateGolfPro.ca .

Lisa Elle is the PrivateGolfPro who teaches in the greater Moncton area and southeast NB. Her unique golf service assists all levels of players with their golf swing. Her golf articles have been published in print and on websites across Canada. She is also the face of the charitable trust 'Lisa's Fund - a breath for Cystic Fibrosis'.