



“The pen is mightier than the sword.”

Ben Emata Jr.
ben_emata@yahoo.com

A GOLFER'S DIARY

By: Ben Emata, Jr.

Today Saturday, July 7, 2007 was my first day as a golfer. It was the first time in my life that I was exposed to a sprawling golf course. All the things around were strange to me. I was greatly impressed at a new environment. There were shrubs, trees, lagoon, clean green grasses and small flags that indicate holes, buildings. The ground is extremely green and very clean.

As I was cruising in my car towards the driving range of the San Jose Golf Club, I was entertained at reading some notices or road directions. “It is 15 MPH ”, a short note stands in the side of the road. I saw some golfers making strikes at their ball with their clubs. Others were riding on tiny two-passenger golf cars that that run quite fast in cascading narrow roads.

Inside the golf course, I saw a lot of golfers doing things unknown to me. It was already 8:30 am when I settled in a parking lot, I meet some players arriving and were carrying their golf clubs bag on their shoulder. I was also carrying my 14-piece golf clubs in a very attractive new bag.

The size of the golf area is like an international airport except that this one is much larger and I should say cleaner and to find someone is quite difficult. So I pulled my cell phone and called my long time friend-instructor, Roy Lumbre, for his location. He plays golf everyday and in just two years, he already collected some awards. It did not take me long to locate him and right away I joined him in the place where he was playing. Roy is from Cagayan de Oro City. A medical technologist, he used to work at the Mindanao Regional Hospital before migrating to the USA with his wife, Diding, a nurse.



“The pen is mightier than the sword.”

Ben Emata Jr.

ben_emata@yahoo.com

Being a beginner in the world of golf, Roy, introduced to me the 14 clubs inside my bag. He pulled each club and told me its uses or when I should use them. I was amazed to know that each metallic stick known as golf club has a specific use or function. This is the reason that players normally carry the whole bag with all the clubs in it.

The next thing I got from Roy was a lecture on how to hold the golf club when using it. Then actual practice! I did not use the balls because to hit each of them is not easy. I learned how to position myself, where my legs, my head and eyes and my two hands should be. I kept on swinging the clubs hitting an imaginary object to determine whether I could hit it correctly if they were balls. We jumped from one area to another until we played at the green tee. I thought this is only for professionals and I have to undergo first the pre-requisite. It is not so because in golf, anyone can practice anywhere he wishes. What is important is he hits it correctly in such a way the ball would reach a desired distance.

There were a lot of steps my instructor imparted to me. Before I forget, the first man who encouraged me to play golf was my nephew, Billy A. Casino, President of the Kagay-anons of Northern California. He heads the team of the association's golf team, which saw actions in many competitions in the USA and in the Philippines. Billy is the President and CEO of the Advanced Cargo Logistics, a big trucking firm that he owns. Several years had elapsed since the first time he asked me to come with him in his weekend golf games but I never had the chance. He got me as his public relation consultant.

I am a sports enthusiast having played basketball, softball, soccer and track and field, tennis, little boxing and martial arts during my student days. All these games are very strenuous and exhaustive. My tennis partners were my kids and I only ceased to play when they got married.

Billy kindly spared me from buying a new golf clubs that normally cost between \$1,000 and \$2,000 when he gave me his spare clubs that he rarely used. It was when I had the clubs that I was encouraged more to



“The pen is mightier than the sword.”

Ben Emata Jr.

ben_emata@yahoo.com

play plus the invitations of Roy Lumbre who also was a retiree from Kaiser Permanente. These two people Billy and Roy are credited to be the gentlemen who brought me to the kingdom of golf games.

We were in the driving range more than three hours spent mostly on lecture and actual movement. We ended in a coffee shop where we continued on our lecture and brainwashing. I was a captive student of Roy and I had to believe everything he said or else forget golf. One of the enemies of instructors is people who are hardheaded and stubborn. And being long time friends back in our city of Cagayan de Oro, we covered other subjects like the incredible skyrocketing growth of our city.

To keep me awake and encouraged all the way, Roy said I would have the best kind of enjoyment in any game on the planet as soon as I learned enough to engage in full games. He said golf is a very enjoyable form of sport especially for the retirees. It is full of suspense and thrills. Golf gives a man pride and honor and indeed it is a game of all games. Right now I can see it as the mother of all games.

My first few hours experience in the game of golf was full of surprises. The game is amazing! It is marvelous! You walk, strike, swing with precision, laugh, think and are ambitious. Golf is the only game that meets your enjoyment and satisfaction especially for retired people while unwittingly exercise your aging structure.

Today is quite memorable! It is three 7s in the calendar. 7-7-07. If eventually after years of practice I will meet in a game the gentleman and icon in golf like Tiger Wood, I should say Lucky Seven is indeed lucky. But before meeting the tiger of the driving range, I know I would engage myself in many obstacles and one of them is myself who is a late beginner.



“The pen is mightier than the sword.”

Ben Emata Jr.

ben_emata@yahoo.com

Days went on and everyday I visit the golf club. I counted the days! Two weeks have elapsed and still I have that incredible spirit to play which only meant that I like the game and think the sport must stay. I bought right-handed gloves and went to the sports store to buy items needed in the sport game.

Billy Casino asked me to participate in the Cagay-anons Golf tournament this month. At first I refused because I know how far I have gone to, in my practice and knowledge. I figure out that I had to pay \$100 as registration for a game that I can not even touch first base. People who learned about it encouraged me to join in the competition. I was like a dog that hide its tail behind him to show his cowardice and surrender. Of course, journalists do not have the word surrender in their vocabulary. I participated.

On the day of the tournament, I saw a lot of people from Cagayan de Oro who have been known to be golfers for many years. My God, I said to myself, how can I play in equal footings with these guys. Things followed and I ended staying most of the time in the coffee shop watching at the pros lording it out in the golf arena.

After making strikes upon strikes in the open area somewhere, I escalated myself to a higher stage by getting into the category of the professionals. I made it sure to be alone and that nobody watches while I swing into the blues in the driving range. Here I learned my balls travel up to 150 to 200 yard already. My problem is I still have a hard time disciplining the balls. I can not tell them to make just a straight lines towards a target. Some of them swerve toward to the right or left while others dive into the lagoon and considered it lost. A ball cost \$1.00 each. Sometimes I lost 4 balls in one day. At times I also find two to five balls lost by others. (BEN EMATA-BennexNewsService)