

Nostalgia Corner

30 Years Ago ... by Paul Davison

Anyone for a Round of Golf?



One of the reasons I enjoyed archery in the early 70's was the variety of outdoor games offered all year around. The archers in Ohio were particularly blessed. During the winter months, one could always find a game of some sort. Frozen excelsior butts caused problems in Field Archery, and since 3-D shooting hadn't been perfected yet, the most popular outdoor winter game at the time was Archery Golf.

Although Archery Golf was played in other states, it was so popular in Ohio that the NFAA state association treated it on the same level as field, indoor and target archery. It had its own activity director, stand-alone rules, and state championship tournament. There was no national standard for the rules — each state had its own.

In Ohio we usually played on the smaller golf courses normally closed during the winter. A local archery club would set up a course for archery golf, and sponsor a tournament every other Sunday ... regardless of weather.

Regular tee boxes would be used for our "drives," but the "hole" was located to the side of the green to avoid wear and tear. The "hole" was a solid sponge rubber, standard-sized, softball mounted about 4½ inches off the ground on a wire pedestal. The whole idea was to penetrate or knock the ball off the pedestal in the fewest number of strokes (shots). If your arrow came to rest within 30 inches of the ball, you didn't have to hole-out, but a stroke was added. To help locate the ball from afar, an 8-foot flag was placed ten yards behind the ball. Unlike regular golf, pacing off distance to the hole was not permitted. The tee-to-hole distance, however, was always posted.

There were a few equipment restrictions, e.g., no overdraws, mechanical releases, or barreled shafts; but any bow (except crossbow) could be used. The real secret to low scores was in the arrows. To avoid skipping off the turf (especially when frozen), our "putter" points were blunted spikes (left in photo). Our "drivers" were 32-inch 1614 shafts withnock tapers on both ends (right in photo). With no point mass, and with very small, low drag, fletching, these flight arrows were essentially unstable. Hence, the release was very critical.

By drawing the flight arrow a full 32 inches, canting the bow arm to near 45°, and hoping that the strap release worked well, drives of over 300 yards were fairly easy with a standard recurve bow. With the right equipment, a good score on a 6000 yard, 18-hole, regular golf course was about 50 "strokes."

In Ohio, our state Archery Golf championship was usually held in early March. It wasn't uncommon that we played during a blizzard. In fact, my sole state championship was the result of the three favorites quitting because of hypothermia.

