

Golf: A timeless sport of patience, focus, and elegance



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PHOTOS BY ABBY PALMONES

GOLF as a sport is considered one of the most traditional. But it is unique in the sense that it is relaxing yet challenging. The sport's technicalities exact the player's patience, as making the least stroke on every hole takes a long, tedious process of fine-tuning one's game. Nonetheless, many are lured to this sport, considered by players as a timeless sport of patience, focus, and elegance.

Commonly played by people who want to take a break from their suffocating, rigid, mind-boggling jobs—and often, by those who love nature, too—golf is often considered an outlet to let one's steam off, a stress-buster.

Playing golf is entirely a challenge, necessitating unique techniques. But what does it really take to win or finish an entire game, given that the venue itself has its own characteristics, with the terrain making it hard for a non-pro to even make a score-at-par. Perhaps, that's the magic of this sport, which has, for so long, gained following in the Philippines.

The landscape matters

In an interview, Chess Shalom Abugan, South Forbes Golf Club superintendent, told *The Manila Times* that many golf players are attracted to playing golf not only for the love of playing, but more because of the design of a golf course.

"In my 20 years of being a custodian in a golf course, I can say that it's the land architecture that clients also consider. How large the entire golf course is, the scenery, and most especially, the landscape design of where they will be playing," Abugan said.

The golf course plays a big part in the sport, as it is the main



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attraction. As Abugan explained, the architectural or landscaping design of South Forbes won them the 2007 CNBC International Property Awards as the Best Golf Community Development, for preserving and maintaining the local flora and fauna within the area.

Abugan said it's like hitting a bird with two stones.

"Unlike many other golf courses, which have flat terrains, we, in South Forbes, offer a more challenging and very

eco-friendly landscape. Not only have we maintained the original terrain of the golf course, but at the same time, we offer a unique and exceptional terrain," he said. "All the uphill and downhill topography, the challenge there is golfers will think of more strategies to control their power when playing. We call it 'course management,' where you manage your game."

Above all, the main reason why players enjoy golf is that they can relax while playing.

Abugan said older people comprise a big portion of those who love the sport, which is not so exhausting as other sports.

"We want to make sure that when they play golf here, they will really enjoy their stay, plus, they exercise and feel healthy," he said. "It's even environment-friendly because as much as possible we try to maintain its vegetation."

Kids' play

Another thing that makes golf especially

appealing is that even kids and teens can play it. One need not always be professional to play golf. Anyone can start as an amateur.

Some would say winning a sport game entails enormous physical exertion and training, but not all games are played that way. Some require precise thinking and balancing of power and focus.

"Anyone who succeeded in any sport started as an amateur—perhaps, others started when they were still kids," Abugan said. "And this one goes with golf as well. We have the so called 'driving range,' where starters practice with the basics."

Amenities count a lot, too

As much as people want a

serene place to play golf, amenities and services that a golf club offers are also prime considerations for players.

"Of course, clients would also be looking for facilities inside the golf club like shower rooms, where they usually take a shower before or after the play, lockers, and function areas," Abugan said. "We also have the Golf Clubhouse, restaurant and two tea houses, 50 units of electric golf carts, a driving range, a 'pro shop' to buy gears and apparels from, and 120 well-trained caddies."

But Abugan stressed that just like in any other businesses, what makes people come back to them is the warm reception clients get from all the golf club employees.

"How we deal with our clients is one of the best things that we can offer," he said. "Human factor is very important and we treasure that a lot."

Not just for the rich

Golf is reputed to be an elite sport apparently due to being high-maintenance. Often, people cannot play golf without spending a hundred pesos an hour. But unknown to many,

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