

CATCHING UP WITH...

Ray Stewart

Ray Stewart's flashes of brilliance have instilled hope and inspiration in the lives of young Canadian golfers for a generation – the 1994 Dunhill Cup victory; two Canadian Tour championships; and eight years on the PGA Tour.

Last year, Stewart's skill flashed again on the Champions Tour, with a 36-hole lead at the Boeing Classic. He finished one shot out of what turned into a seven-man playoff – ending T-8 after entering the tournament as a qualifier.

"I love the game. I still love the flight of the golf ball," Stewart said, emphasizing his enduring enthusiasm for competition. "I'm only playing five or six events a year now. When I do get to play, I still have lots of game."

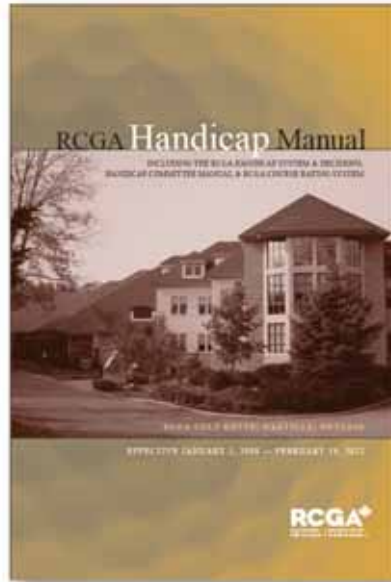
Stewart was focusing on the 2008 U.S. and British Senior Opens, and Champions Tour Q-school. But those hopes have been sidelined by a frustrating shoulder injury.

While he works on recovery daily, Stewart's focus is on his son's game. Brett, who caddied for his father at the Boeing Classic, is a 19-year-old player on the University College of the Fraser Valley. Ray Stewart is happy to see his son competing, and learning, in Canada – his strong nationalism has long been a point of record. "The more we send our kids down to the States, the more they will get lost."

Under his father's tutelage, Brett Stewart isn't likely to get lost. And, as for his father, you can bet there will be more flashes of brilliance in his career.

PEER REVIEW

Somebody's Watching You



One of the more unique aspects of golf is the absence of referees. Sure, there are rules officials at most competitions; they are largely there to advise players on the proper application of the Rules of Golf rather than stalking every group in hopes of calling an infraction. Most recreational golfers will never encounter a rules official on the course, yet adherence to the rules is a key element of the game. Is there any other sport where players routinely call penalties on themselves?

Much like the Rules of Golf, handicapping relies on a healthy dose of self-policing and peer review. Your club's handicap committee is responsible for all aspects of the RCGA handicap system, including verifying that all acceptable scores are reported for handicap purposes. However it's you, the individual golfer, who assumes responsibility for peer review. Peer review is the most important element of handicapping.

Access to scoring records and Handicap Factors for inspection by others is a core element of peer review. The RCGA Network, Canada's nationally networked handicap program for RCGA member clubs, makes peer review easy. You, your fellow

members and your club's handicap committee can access scoring records anytime, anywhere, with just a click of the mouse.

I'm glad my club uses the RCGA Network; I often use it to check an upcoming opponent's Handicap Factor and review their scoring record. More than a few times I've discovered that the upcoming opponent failed to post a previous score or posted an incorrect score, causing his Handicap Factor to be inaccurate. Of course, before teeing up the match I diplomatically ensure the scoring record is up-to-date and accurate. Then we can all relax, knowing our match will unfold in an equitable manner.

Reviewing a Handicap Factor and scoring record on the RCGA Network is easy.

1. Go to www.rcganetwork.org and click on the Handicap Verification link.
2. Enter the name of the person you are looking for and click Search. The program will display the person's name, golf club, location and Handicap Factor.
3. To view the full scoring record, click on the player's name and then click Scoring Record.

This information is available to the 775 RCGA clubs and 240,000 members across Canada currently using the RCGA Network as their handicapping service. Is your club one of them? If not, have a club representative contact the RCGA at 1-800-263-0009 x 209 to get connected for 2008.

New RCGA Handicap Manual for 2008

The 2008 – 2011 RCGA Handicap Manual is now available. The manual is the ultimate resource for anything handicap related and is a must-have for all club handicap committees. Among the changes to the manual is the addition of regression method for allocation of handicap strokes (Section 17). A complimentary copy of the manual has been mailed to all RCGA clubs; additional copies can be obtained by calling the RCGA sales centre at 1-800-263-0009 x 283.

–Matt MacKay,
RCGA Manager, Member Relations