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Retaining tour card

By C.J. RISAK

It looks so easy.

The life of a touring golf pro: Every week, a four-day tournament, 18 holes of golf a day. Maybe a warm-up round early in the week just to get used to the course. After finishing, collect the winnings and it's off to another town for another tournament.

What's so hard about that?

Sure, it's a competitive sport, but there's nothing strenuous about it. You don't have to be in top physical shape to walk through 18 holes of golf, taking about 70 or so swings at a white ball enroute.

And what's even crazier, you can win a lot of money without winning a single tournament. Place in the top 20 every week, collect \$1,000 or so, and by the end of the year a guy will have made some big bucks.

And if the life starts to bore you, you can take a week off any time you want to "rest up" for the next big tourney.

As good as it sounds, it isn't that easy. There are very few golfers that have a lifestyle like that. The few that do put in an awful lot of work to get to that level.

But for every golfer who's made it, there are a thousand that are struggling just to get a shot at being a touring pro.

THE TOUR PLAYERS' card is what every golfer is after. Getting the card is an involved process. And there is no guarantee that, once you have it, you'll be able to keep it.

Ed Muir, the assistant golf pro at Farmington Country Club, has been there — almost. He's tried to get his card, which would allow him to tour with the pros, but he hasn't been able to.

"Four or five years ago, you had to fill out an application and get letters of recommendation from some well-known golfers and turn in your scores from tournaments you've played in," Muir said.

"But it's not like that anymore. I tried last year, and all I had to do was fill out a small entry blank for a 36-hole regional tournament, and send in a \$200 entry fee."

Somewhere between 300 and 400 golfers will enter the regional tournament. Their goal is to land one of the few spots open on the tour. The number of openings depends on how many tour golfers from the previous year are able to keep their cards.

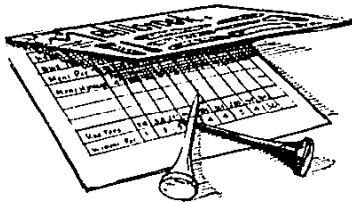
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— Ed Muir



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