

Orlick is a master of golf rules

BY MICHAEL P. SHIELDS
SPECIAL WRITER

Birmingham resident Warren Orlick, 87, once again served as a Rules Official for the 2000 Masters Tournament held last month in Georgia. Orlick has been an invitee to the Masters Tournament for 46 years now, and was the first Golf Professional ever to be included on the Masters Rules Committee when he went to the Augusta National Golf Club in 1954.

"The Masters is the best organized tournament in the world," says Orlick, who says that the attention to detail paid by organizers or the Masters has been emulated by the other Major Championships.

"Even the sandwich wrappers at the Masters are green. If you should happen to drop it on the ground, someone appears behind you to pick it up immediately," Orlick smiles. Orlick donates his time as a rules official at the exclusive event, but is careful to note that he is not a volunteer.

"There are no 'volunteers' because there is no one to volunteer to," he explains. "You are either invited or you are not. Each year I begin looking forward to going to Augusta when I get my invitation at Christmas time! I make no plans until I find out whether I am invited or not."

Though he will not speak specifically of rulings he has made (Augusta National officials are sensitive about

that) Orlick speaks glowingly about the golf course.

"The Augusta National Golf Club is the most beautiful place I have ever seen. The timing of the Masters Tournament is perfect because the flowers and trees in that part of Georgia are in full bloom," says Orlick, who says he developed a relationship with Clifford Roberts, the man who invented the Masters and sternly managed the club for Bobby Jones.

"As a member of the rules committee, one year I tried to convince Mr. Roberts that the golf course winter hazards should be properly marked with colored stakes and red lines. Roberts was hesitant to allow it though because he was concerned that red and yellow stakes would disturb the beauty of the golf course for patrons and television viewers," Orlick reveals. "He finally saw the importance of having the hazards marked and allowed me to do so, but he insisted the stakes only rise two or three inches above the ground!"

On any other golf course, hazard stakes are knee-high, but Roberts fiercely guarded the pristine appearance of the Augusta National Golf Club. Roberts is said to have run the Augusta National Golf Club "with an iron fist in an iron glove," and nothing escaped his purveyance.

"I was in the Bahamas on vacation when a waiter brought a telephone to my table," Orlick recounts. "It was

Roberts on the other end of the line, commanding that I have lunch with him."

"Mr. Roberts, how did you know I was here?" Orlick asked him.

"It's my business to know where everybody is," Roberts replied in his deliberate and slow drawl.

It turned out that Roberts owned a condominium in the islands and happened to be on the property.

Roberts' resistance to colored hazard stakes was indicative of his resistance to change, but change did occur at Augusta National.

It was fitting and proper that Orlick personally witness one of the tournament's most significant changes - 25 years ago when Lee Elder became the first black player to qualify to compete in a Masters Tournament. As a PGA Official, Orlick co-authored the removal of the word "Caucasian" from the Constitution as a requirement of membership in the PGA of America.

Orlick, former Head Golf Professional at Tam O'Shanter Golf Club in West Bloomfield, has been a Masters invitee since the days of Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Sam Snead and Byron Nelson. This year, his rulings were made upon the likes of Tiger Woods, David Duval, Jose Maria Olazabal, and Greg Norman, and he is as much a fixture at the Masters Tournament as pimento sandwiches and green jackets.



STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARMICHAEL

A master: Warren Orlick has been to 46 consecutive Masters tournaments.

GOLF MOVIE REVIEWS

Sports Editor C.J. Riank and Special Projects Editor Ralph R. Echtenaw, a.k.a. Riscall & Echbert, review three golf movies:

"Tin Cup" (1996)

Echbert: As a lightweight, romantic comedy, this Kevin Costner flick is inoffensive (if you don't mind profanity and premarital sex) but not particularly memorable. Cheech Marin in a supporting role is more interesting than Costner's protagonist. Renée Russo and Don Johnson give uninspired performances. But the movie is worth watching if you're familiar with the CBS Sports golf crew. They're all here, and Gary McCord steals every scene he's in.

Riscall: The most cerebral of the five movies reviewed here, this film has an element familiar to all golfers - frustration. It features a golfing loser (played by Kevin Costner) who gambles everything to become a winner, even if it

means losing to become one. That make sense?

Costner is at his best doing something he doesn't do much of - comedy. The movie is best described by one of Renée Russo's final lines: "Five years from now, no one will remember who won this thing, but everyone will remember what you did." It's kind of an awkward look at how sports heroes are built, and it's worth seeing.

"The Caddy" (1963)

Echbert: The humor of Jerry Lewis is not for everybody, and it's definitely not for me. But if you like Lewis' brand of slapstick you'll love this movie. It's easy to see why no one expected Dean Martin to amount to anything after he split with Lewis because he's not much of a factor here. As for the golf, don't expect to see a lot of it, but you might enjoy watching pro golfers Ben Hogan, Sam Snead, Byron Nelson, Julius Boros, Jimmy Thomson and "Lighthorse" Harry

Cooper play themselves. And keep your eyes open for Nancy Culp, better known as Miss Jane of "The Beverly Hillbillies," in an uncredited cameo role.

Riscall: Of the five golf movies reviewed here, this one has the least to do with the game. I mean, comedy and golf may be strange bedfellows, but a musical comedy about golf? Whus.

There are some special cameo appearances, like Hogan and Snead. And who was that doing the play-by-play for radio? That's right - Tom Harmon, the Heisman Trophy winner from Michigan.

To a minor extent, the movie examines tour pressures, this one Lewis' fear of playing in front of crowds. It also has that working-man/prodigy-turns-to-golf-to-help-save-the-farm theme.

If you're a Martin and Lewis fan, you'll like this movie. Otherwise, skip it.

"Caddyshack" (1980)

Echbert: I watched this movie again recently after seeing it for the first (and only other) time 20 years ago. It's funnier than I remember it being, maybe because I had the closed captions to help understand Bill Murray if Harold Ramis, who wrote the script, didn't have Chevy Chase, Rodney Dangerfield and Murray in mind for the roles they played, it would be a huge coincidence. There's not much in the way of plot here, or golf either for that matter, but the movie is irreverent and funny. However, if you like your humor subtle and refined, don't bother.

Riscall: Wow. Now this is a real golf movie. Not tour golf, like the others. Country club golf. It has heroes, played by Chevy Chase, Rodney Dangerfield and Bill Murray. And it has not one, but two villains: Ted Knight and the gopher. What plot development! The pressure of the game, the snobbery of country clubs, the common guy (Dangerfield) challenging the establishment (Knight) - this movie has it all. Low-brow humor on a golf course make this a true film classic, especially if you appreciate the Three Stooges.

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