

Lincoln Hills' 4th hole

Editor's note: This is one of a series of articles examining the toughest hole at local golf courses.

By JOHN BOZZO

When I telephoned Birmingham golf professional Barry Nettie about playing Lincoln Hills he laughed.

"You've seen your column," he said. "Sure, you can play Lincoln Hills. I've already got the hole picked out. Can you be here at 7:30 a.m. Thursday?"

He had probably read about my poor effort at Oakland Hills where I couldn't finish because I had lost all my golf balls in the water. He could have read about my 11 at Knollwood Country Club or my eight at Sylvan Glen. The papers telling about my near-par at Plum Hollow Country Club were being delivered as I stepped onto the Lincoln Hills course.

Fresh from my good show at Plum Hollow I was hoping for some momentum to carry me through to another good score. I also had one more advantage in that Lincoln Hills is the only course in the series that I have played before.

I didn't do very well when I played Lincoln Hills, a municipal course owned by the City of Birmingham. However, my partner was Birmingham-Bloomfield Community Editor Nick Sharkey. I figured I had to score badly. I wouldn't want to beat my boss.

"ARE YOU READY?" Nettie asked.

"As ready as I'll ever be," I replied.

We jumped in a cart and rode the number four hole from green to tee. It plays about 390 yards when the markers are placed to the back of the tee. It's a par four and the number one handicap on the course.

The green is elevated and the pin was in what Nettie explained is the most difficult spot to the right front. There are trees line both sides of the rolling fairway.

Ideally, Nettie explained, a drive should land on a relatively flat area just beyond the larger undulation in the fairway. That would take a 250-yard drive, which as Nettie said would be quite a poke.

From the tee a gully or faced with spot between the trees, which funnel out along the fairways. The large hill in the fairway blocks the view of the green.

If you go too far to the right, you're behind some trees, and if you're too far to the left, you're in the cabbage patch," Nettie said.

After these encouraging words I answered a question from Nettie by explaining that I have a tendency to hook my shot. Sure enough, I came off the tee with a big bender into the cabbage patch.

"THIS IS WHY we call it the cabbage patch," Nettie said, as we watched the plant life for my golf ball. Nettie found two, but neither ball was mine.

I gave up looking, took a drop and prepared to hit what would be my third shot with the penalty stroke for the drop. He headed the ball and on the extreme left of the fairway, my natural hook would work very well if I hit the ball well.

Again, my prowess with the three wood leaves much to be desired. I dubbed the third shot 30 yards into the middle of the fairway and then top another three wood attempts to a sad little lie in the right rough.

"Can you reach the top of the hill with a five iron?" Nettie asked.

At this point, I'm lucky to reach in my pocket for a pen.

However, Nettie explained that I was about 150 yards from the green so I took out the five iron. I took a nice easy swing perhaps too easy, as we found the ball below the elevated green and on the left of the fairway.

It was about 15 yards to the green with approximately 30 feet of green to play with before I reached the pin. Nettie explained. He also helped me get a line in the pin. All the information went for naught as I fumbled my approach shot sideways and watched as the ball rolled down the hill.

"YOU HAVE A STRAIGHT green from here," Nettie said, as we reached the right side of the fairway.

I grabbed my nine iron and fortunately Nettie saw the club selection. I had to keep the ball straight, and low beneath some trees in order to reach the green.

"Don't use a lofted club," Nettie said. "Take your five iron and choke up all the way to the bottom of the grip. Swing with your arms only, no wrist action."

I followed the advice well except I hit the ball too hard and wound up 15 feet past the green.

As I prepared to hit my seventh shot Nettie came through with more helpful advice.

"Now don't hit the ball too hard or you'll go down the hill and end up right back where you started from," Nettie said.

"You made me nervous," I said as I sat. "I'm going to blame it all on you."

"I knew I'd end up being the villain," Nettie laughed.

I chipped a five-iron within four feet of the pin but missed the putt and had to settle for a sepiuple bogey (11 on the par four hole). The score was comparable to the one I had on my first four of Lincoln Hills when I shot a 60 for nine holes.

Maybe I'll do better on an entirely new course for me, Rochester Golf & Country Club.

Southfield

Koufax '9' ends season

Southfield's Sandy Koufax baseball team had a short run in the National Amateur Baseball Federation Sophomore Division 11-and-under tournament last week in Birmingham, Ala.

The Dayton, Ohio entry stopped Southfield, 3-2, in 11 innings in the first game, and then Terrant, Ala., eliminated Southfield, 8-4, Southfield, managed by Eugene Ruzan, qualified for the tournament by finishing first in the local Sandy Koufax League.

In the first game, Dayton grabbed a 2-0 lead. Southfield tied it by scoring twice in the sixth inning. Mitch McGinn, infielder, took second on Lou Blawie's single. Both runners scored on Pat Flood's double. Dayton outlasted Southfield, 3-4.

Deverest, of Dayton, was the fifth pitcher. He worked the entire 11 innings, striking out eight and walking none.

Dayton scored the winner in the fifth. Jim Senger's sacrifice fly with the bases loaded won the game.

Against Terrant, Southfield took a 4-0 lead in the after two innings. Tom Langston led off with a single, took second on Andy Antonucci's single and scored on Ken Angrove's double. The next three batters — Jim Armbruster, Perry Blankman and John Schaller — exchanged and drove in a run.

Terrant, which had 10 hits, scored three in the fifth inning on a tie run by Al Caniney. Losing pitcher Jeff Setecarn worked five innings, giving up five hits, striking out six and walking three. Pat Flood pitched the final two innings, giving up six hits, fanning two and walking three. Southfield produced eight hits in the game.

Detroit West Seven was the eventual tournament, defeating Dayton, 6-4, in the final game. West Seven advanced to the finals by beating Maryland, 6-4. West Seven compiled a 6-1 tourney record. Dayton had a 3-2 mark.

Stroh tourney set

Stroh's has announced that its \$5,000 Masters Slowpitch Softball Tournament will be held Aug. 20-22 at Softball City in Detroit. There is an entry fee of \$100 for any team interested in competing.

The first and second place finalists will be eligible to play in the Eastern World Series. Cash prizes are \$2,500 for first place, \$1,250 for second place, \$750 for third, and \$500 for fourth.

Additional information may be obtained by calling Jerry Davis at 388-1850.

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