

BY JOHN HUMPHREY

The old joke about the difficulty of seeing a doctor, especially on a Wednesday, because they are out on the golf course somewhere clearly doesn't hold true anymore. Nor are the links places where it is easy to find a lousy hockey player whose team has missed the play-offs or has been bounced quickly from the post-season.

One Windsor chiropractor didn't even start golfing until the age of 31.

"I was a poor medical student up until then," offers Dr. Greg Cooper of Ad-

vanced Rehabilitation Centres (ARC) clinic. "Now it's a great way to get some exercise while networking with associates."

Dr. Cooper, along with three friends who are also doctors, tries to make it out to the golf course once a week and Wednesdays are not necessarily the prime time they pick up their clubs.

"There are different leagues at different courses in the city and county and often it's difficult to commit to a time and place to play a round of golf," Dr. Cooper says. "As a doctor, my work schedule can change very quickly."

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But playing golf can have a positive effect even for the over-worked physician. "Some doctors will play nine holes after work just to relax," Cooper says. "Golf is relaxing."

For Dr. Cooper, however, there's at least one good reason why he doesn't golf more than he does.

"I'm not a very good golfer and I'm not getting any better."

That sentiment is shared by a hockey player-turned-doctor.

"I was no good at controlling a puck with a stick," admits Dr. Simon Sherry, a former Sudbury Wolves player who is now a clinical psychologist in Halifax, N.S. "So it seemed unlikely I would be any better at controlling a ball with a club."

Sherry, who was a tough-guy during his playing days with the Wolves, had the thick skin required by a visiting player who was hearing comments thrown by fans at the Windsor Arena.

"I remember playing against Windsor. Spits fans are very dedicated," he recalls. "They insult everything from your golf game to your mother."

One former Windsor Spitfire and National Hockey League player who started playing golf during his playing days with the Ontario Hockey League club now plays the game for an entirely different reason than why he did before.

"We didn't have the workout routine back then that players have today," says Ron Friest, who was a truculent winger with the Spits and the Minnesota North Stars. "Back then we played golf to keep in shape during the off-season and to get us ready for training camp in the fall."

"I played golf then and now the same way I played hockey," says Friest, now a real estate agent with Royal LePage Binder in Windsor. "I'm not the best player out there but I always give it an honest effort."

Friest added that hearing insults hurled from the stands by fans of opposing teams, suggesting that he and his teammates would soon be golfing, were never taken to heart and often served as motivation.

"Fans are always going to say things like that to try and get you off your game," says Friest, who in his first game in the NHL got into a spirited fight with legendary Boston Bruin tough guy Stan Jonathan. "The best way to respond to those comments is to keep playing hard and making their team get out their golf clubs first."

Today it's not uncommon for Friest to hit the links at a local golf course once or twice a week to socialize, network and get in a good workout. He particularly likes to play in charity golf tournaments whenever possible.

"I'll always make time for a good cause."