

# THE SPECTATOR

*By Fred Hobbs*

When the topic is sports, I have to plead guilty to being a spectator, a spectator with a few fortunate flourishes.

Not to spring a well-worn sports-oriented phrase on the reader at the beginning of this piece, but I must invoke a little “inside baseball” here first. Each member of the Windsor Gardens Writer’s Group, in turn, is allowed to choose the topic on which to write the following week. When I announced that my topic would be “Sports and Entertainment”, the very mention of the word “sports” brought an audible groan from some of the ladies in our talented and creative assemblage. To calm any apprehension it should be noted that we are allowed to opt out of writing on the given topic by picking “potpourri”, i.e., making a choice from a medley of possibilities. And, that meant that the ladies wouldn’t have to write about obscure sports statistics, or glorify a “jock” or even a team of “jocks”.

By necessity, my take on sports is strictly as a “looky-loo”. For starters, I apparently was born with an affliction I’ll call ADS, Athletic Deficiency Syndrome or more pointedly, clumsiness. In elementary school, I flunked Playground 101; couldn’t catch a fly in right field, consistently fumbled the hand-off, never could duck or pivot effectively in dodge ball. In high school, I was content to join the boys pep club which required only strong lungs to cheer the team to victory.

Despite those handicaps, I have always maintained a healthy, if not overly zealous interest in sports. That knowledge was sufficient to allow me the opportunity to serve as “back up” sports reporter during some of my days as a radio and TV reporter and anchor. While working in smaller markets, in Wyoming and in Boulder, I even was tapped to broadcast play-by-play accounts of high school basketball games. Knowledge of the intricacies of the game is not so important in play-by-play of basketball, unlike baseball and football. The announcer just has to be able to talk fast and be sure to name the right player who makes a basket.

The one sport in which I have the most knowledge is also a favorite of mine for armchair viewing and in actually being a participant. That is golf. My three brothers were very good golfers; one probably could have been a professional, except for his somewhat fiery temperament when his game was not going well. (Think Tiger Woods.)

My performance on the links was mediocre at best, but years ago I did manage to win a couple of prizes, a case of Wheaties and a case of Canada Dry Ginger Ale. There is a twist to this part of the story. I was 15 years old. My older brothers, being at

the time very short of funds, suggested a little chicanery. I would caddy for them, carrying the one bag they all shared. When we were out of sight of the clubhouse, I could join them for a few holes and then become a spectator again before reaching the 9<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> holes.

On a par three-115 yarder, amazingly, I hit the ball straight toward the pin.

It appeared to have rolled over the green and out of sight. When we reached the green we discovered I had made a hole in one! My oldest brother graciously erased his name from the score card and wrote in mine. I remain a sports spectator and am now an old duffer. It's probably time to give up the game. After all, since the "ace" there is no way I can ever improve.