



## Ron Valerio

Ron Valerio is a relative newcomer to golf and the Redhawk Men's Club. He remembers starting to play the game at a par 3 course in Long Beach in the mid-1980s. The course wasn't far from where he worked as a marine electrician at the Naval Shipyards. Golf was new but his association with the Navy went back to his father, who was stationed at Subic Bay in the Philippines when he was born. Father like son, Ron later spent 4 years in the U.S. Navy on board the USS Guam, an amphibious assault ship.

While the Navy gave Ron the skills that would allow him to pursue a four-decade long career in civil service, it was his interest in a newfound game that was most rewarding for Ron.

And not just his own game, but his daughters as well.

"The proudest thing I carry from golf is my daughter," he said.

He first started teaching his daughter Veronica, aka Ronnie, how to play the game at age 7. A year later she was showing up her old man. "She beat me for the first time when she was 8 years old," Ron says with a proud daddy smile.

"I spent more time on her game than I did on mine."

Ron must have done something right because Ronnie played well enough to become a highly ranked amateur player.

Her junior career got off the ground with a victory in a Junior World age-group tournament while she was still in elementary school. In 2008, she won an American Junior Golf Association event in Southern California.

At Temecula Valley High School, she made it to the CIF state tournament, won a Southwestern League individual title and finished in the top 3 two years running at the CIF Southern Section Championship.

Needless to say, Ronnie's accomplishments on the course were a source of great parental happiness.

"She was my pride and joy when she was in Junior golf," he said.

She later won a full scholarship at University California, Irvine.

There she:

- Was selected as an All-Big West honorable mention choice.
- Had three top-10 finishes, including a fifth-place performance to lead UCI at the Big West Championships.
- Had a 76.82 scoring average.

So, I guess it's not surprising that Ron turned to golf and Redhawk after retiring in 2018 from the FAA's San Diego TRACON (Terminal Radar Control Center) near Miramar Marine Corps Air Station.

Ron said his timing was good, the 15 freeway was becoming a quagmire and he was having to deal with some health issues.

Despite the new found free time for practice, Ron admits to struggling at Redhawk. Although he birdied NO. 18 twice, he finds the course challenging.

How can he shoot 90 at Summerly, for example, and struggle at Redhawk? he wondered.

"I strive to break 100 – it's a challenge but I like challenges," he said.

Ron, who turns 67 in May, also plays pickleball. He and fellow club member Ken Parsons enjoy the game.

"It's a pretty easy sport," he said. "And it makes you run."