



John Dobbie

December 2020

John Dobbie was born to play golf. His family traces its roots to Glasgow, Scotland. His great grandfather worked at the legendary St. Andrews. He was president of the Saddleback Valley Men's Golf Club at Casta Del Sol Golf Course in Mission Viejo where he was club champion and played in the President's Cup. He's played Pebble Beach, Cournustie, Gleneagles and Bandon Dunes.

Despite the track record and pedigree, one thing has eluded John on the golf course for the better part of six decades -- a hole in one. He's come close on several occasions but no cigar. "I can't tell you how many pins I've hit," he recalls. Fellow golfers kept telling him to be patient. "You'll get one, it will come," his golfmates reassured him. Frustrated, John watched his drives shrink from 275 yards to 145 yards as age and injuries took their toll. His handicap ballooned from 9 to 25 as the prospects for his first ace dwindled. But John's luck changed dramatically on June 30, 2020 while playing with the Redhawk Men's Club during their weekly tournament. On hole 17, a downhill par 3, John watched his tee shot find its way into the hole. Gone was the frustration and the wait. "It was pretty terrific for me," he said. "Damn right!" Good to know 2020 hasn't been a total loss for all of us.

John started playing golf when he was very young. Sports would be a constant theme for him in high school and throughout his 35 year teaching and coaching career. Growing up in the San Fernando Valley, he attended Ulysses S. Grant HS in Van Nuys where he played basketball and football and rubbed shoulder pads with Tom Selleck the actor. "When I played outside linebacker I used to have speed," he said. "I've got no speed now."

After graduating from Cal State LA with majors in industrial art, math and art, John became a secondary school teacher in Orange County. He also successfully coached the girl's basketball team to 14 district championships - hence the nickname John "Wooden" Dobbie.

Along the way John sat next to Joe Dimaggio at an Angel's game and was paired up with former Ram great Eric Dickerson during a golf outing in Thousand Oaks. "He was a nice guy who could hit his drive a fucking mile," John remembers. "But he had no short game at all." His best golf score? John shot 2 under par at Mile Square Golf Course in Fountain Valley. "I still got the card," the 74-year-old Dobbie says proudly.