

For Rosie Cook, dedicating her life to golf is 'like a dream'

By Grant Lucas
WesCom News Service

Rosie Cook never liked golf before — though she had also never played it until some 20 years ago.

She laughs, even wells up with emotion, when thinking about her life pre-golf. She considers where she was, in her native Malaysia, before meeting Tom Cook, who was in the country for work and who would become her husband.

The couple moved to Tacoma, Washington, in 1997 before settling down in Bend a year later. Tom enjoyed a number of recreational activities: golf, softball, tennis, skiing and snowmobiling. Rosie never participated in such activities. But she was open to adopting at least one as her own.

"She was terrible in tennis," Tom recalls, "so-so with snowmobiling, pretty good with skiing, but she found her sport after struggling for about a year with golf. She developed a very good swing early on and stuck with it and really did it by herself and improved ever since."

Adds Rosie: "It's like, 'What have I been doing my whole life? I'm playing golf that I never dreamed about. ... I never thought I'd come this far.'"

It is quite remarkable, actually. Even early on, Tom sensed a naturally smooth swing in Rosie. She stuck with it, he says, and honed it on her own. More than 20 years later, Rosie is among the top golfers in Oregon, if not the entire Northwest.

"It's unbelievable to see her dedication and love for the sport," Tom says. "As mentioned, we tried several (other



Rosie Cook hits out of a sand trap while playing in the Bend Ladies Invitational last week at Bend Golf Club.

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activities), but that was the one that worked. Obviously when we started I was better but very soon she caught up. It is amazing to watch her from the beginning to now sometimes setting course records for women at various places."

Rosie considers Tom as more than her husband. He is her instructor, her supportive structure and, in a way, her inspiration. In fact, when she does finish well at tournaments, she feels obligated "to buy something for him, too," she says with a laugh.

If that is the case, Tom has been receiving gifts from his wife quite frequently in recent years.

Last week, for example, Rosie continued her dominance at the Bend Ladies Invitational at Bend Golf

Club. Until 2014, she had never won the prestigious regional tournament. She was second three times, third once and fifth once. Since 2014, however, she has won four Bend Ladies tournaments, including last week's impressive seven-stroke victory.

Rosie does not have a conventional day job. "I have a golf job," she says. The sport has become her life. Her spring, summer and early-fall schedules are loaded with tournaments. But even off the course, she cannot — and does not want to — get away from the course.

Consider where she and her husband of 19 years live: just off the 18th green at Awbrey Glen Golf Club. Why would she want to compartmentalize her life away from the sport? After all, it has

helped her become who she is today.

"I learned in golf to be who I am and a lot of people support me and believe in me and love me no matter where I'm going," Rosie says. Now, she continues, "everywhere I go, people know me. It's like, 'Oh, my God, they know me?' I can't believe it."

She does not like being asked her age. She says only that she is in her 40s, but that number should not define her. How she plays, how she lives, is what should.

"I want to enjoy my life," she says. "I don't want to get old too fast. I know I will accept what happens when it comes. But ... I just want to be healthy and happy and enjoy my game and the weather and the people I love."

That lighthearted mindset is typical Rosie Cook. Like anyone, she hates making mistakes. But she is not one to let miscues lead her mind and heart astray. She will not allow herself to take things too seriously, though her facial expressions during tournaments might say otherwise.

Even then, she concedes, she struggles with knowing when to be serious. She calls herself "a fun lady" and is frequently smiling and laughing.

"This is fun," she says. "I just have so much fun."

"When you try so hard, that means something bad might happen. But when you take it easy, you just let it go. And what happens, happens. ... You just play your normal game and be patient and just

relax."

Rosie appears fearless. Even on Monday, when she was at Columbia Edgewater Country Club for the Portland Classic Amateur Open. It's a one-day, amateur-only event that guarantees the winner a spot in the LPGA's Cambia Portland Classic later this month. The stakes are high. But Cook is not easily intimidated. (Beaverton High graduate and current University of Arizona golfer Gigi Stoll won the event; complete results were unavailable.)

"It doesn't matter how old you are," Rosie says. "As long as you're not scared and you're confident and know you can do it, it's like, 'Just jump in and swim.'"

Monday's event in Portland was Cook's fifth LPGA qualifying tournament. She has yet to crack into a professional tourney, but she does not hedge her confidence or waver from her love of the game.

She does not play for the accolades or the trophies. She golfs for her friends and family, for her husband, who introduced her to the sport.

Every win, every high finish, every record is secondary to Cook simply enjoying her life in golf. Everything that has transpired since her golfing life began more than 20 years ago — and anything that is in store for the future — is magical for her. She cannot explain her emotions and thoughts of life in the sport.

She does not need to explain, though. Because when it comes to golf, there is only one sentiment that sums up her relationship with the sport: "It's like a dream come true," she said.

BRIEFING

From staff reports

High Valley Post plans annual picnic

UNION — Veterans of Foreign Wars High Valley Post 4060 will be holding its annual picnic Aug. 25 at Catherine Creek State Park. The event begins at noon.

The Post will furnish hamburgers and hot dogs along with drinks. Those who attend are asked to bring a side dish. Call the Post at 541-562-6035 by Aug. 14 to tell organizers how many adults and children will attend.

Union Library hosts book/bake sale

UNION — The Friends of the Union Carnegie Library will again be participating in the Grassroots Festival, set for Saturday. There will be a huge book sale with titles for all ages and a bake sale offering homemade goodies. Balloon animals and glitter tattoos will be given out all day, and a free puppet show begins at 1 p.m. This year the Dragon Theater Puppets will perform "Rock-n-Roll Cave-man," a show for all ages.

LG registration, School Resource Fair is tomorrow

LA GRANDE — Registration for the 2018-19 school year for students who will be in kindergarten through eighth grade will be held at the La Grande Middle School on Fourth Street from 7:30 a.m. to 7

p.m. Aug. 9. Parents may register their students at any local school after Aug. 9.

There will also be a School Resource Fair for students in all grades. Many local agencies and resources will be available to share information and support students and parents as they prepare to return to school. Examples of agencies: Advantage Dental, Cook Memorial Library, Child Care Referral Services, Kids Club. Example of services: school district program representatives, clothing closet with gently used clothing for students, school supplies.

Community Connection will train tai chi instructors

UNION & WALLOWA COUNTIES — Community Connection is looking for volunteers to be trained as tai chi instructors. There will be an all-day leader training held in La Grande beginning at 9 a.m. Aug. 18. Volunteers must be willing to lead a tai chi class at an approved site twice a week for 12 weeks. Those who are interested in volunteering may call Rochelle at 541-963-3186.

LHS class of '61 meets for potluck picnic Saturday

LA GRANDE — The La Grande High School class of 1961 will meet at noon Aug. 11 at Riverside Park for its annual potluck picnic.

Table service and beverages will be provided. Those who attend are asked to bring a dish to share and a lawn chair if possible.

Heppner park celebrates upgrades

HEPPNER — A ribbon-cutting ceremony is planned for the new Fit Park in Heppner. Located next to the Willow Creek Water Park, the new facilities include a pickleball court, outdoor exercise equipment, a public restroom, a regulation-size basketball court with six hoops, new walking paths, additional paved parking and an acre and a half of grass.

The event is Saturday at 2 p.m. at the park, 433 Riverside Ave. The ceremony will include music by Corey Peterson. In addition, Blas Elguezabal of Elite Performance will demonstrate the use of the exercise equipment and give some brief pickleball lessons.

For more information, call the Morrow County Unified Recreation District at 541-676-5808.

Food excursions seek huckleberries

PENDELTON — Several First Foods Excursions are planned through the Yellowhawk Prevention Program and the CTUIR Department of Natural Resources. Huckleberry Day Trips are offered Thursday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. to Mount Emily. Transporta-

tion is limited to 20 people per trip and advanced registration is required. Community members are also welcome to caravan to the locations for family fun, exploration and huckleberry picking.

For more information or to register, contact Marissa Baumgartner at 541-240-8440 or marissabaumgartner@yellowhawk.org or Wenix Red Elk at 541-429-7219 or wenixredelk@ctuir.org.

Class of 1954 meets for lunch

LA GRANDE — Members of the La Grande High School class of 1954 will meet for lunch at 11:30 a.m. Aug. 9 at the Flying J truck stop.

Parking and traffic advisory commission meets Monday

LA GRANDE — The City of La Grande Parking, Traffic Safety and Street Maintenance Advisory Commission will meet Aug. 13. The meeting convenes at 5 p.m. in the break room at the Public Works Department, 800 X Ave. Call 541-962-1325 for more information.

WURA Board meets next week

ENTERPRISE — The Wallowa Union Railroad Authority Board will meet at 6 p.m. Aug. 14 at the senior center in Enterprise, 101 S. River St. For more information, call Susan Roberts at 541-426-7733.

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

LA GRANDE POLICE DEPARTMENT

Arrested: Mark Allen Hett, 36, unknown address, was arrested on a Union County warrant on a charge of a violation of a release agreement. The violation of a release agreement charge was connected to an original charge of first-degree theft.

Arrested: Attoaway Reeder Davis, 24, unknown address, was arrested on a Union County warrant for an alleged probation violation. The probation violation charge was connected to an original charge of first-degree theft.

Arrested: Alex Dean Scott Smith, 18, unknown address, was arrested on a Union County warrant charging initiating a false report.

Arrested: Justin Alan Lawrence, 23, La Grande, was arrested on charges of interfering with making a report and first-degree rape.

Arrested: Taylor Nichole Wilson, 28, unknown address, was arrested on two Crook County warrants. One warrant charged failure to appear in court on charges of interfering with a peace officer and disorderly conduct, two counts. A second warrant charged fraudulent use of a credit card, five counts, and identity theft, four counts.

UNION COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Arrested: Curtis Steven Ostlund, 38, unknown address, was arrested on a charge of harassment.

Arrested: Kyle Anthony Stertz, 30, unknown address, was arrested on a charge of driving under the influence of intoxicants.

LA GRANDE FIRE DEPARTMENT

The La Grande Fire Department responded to 12 calls for medical on Monday and seven calls for medical on Tuesday.

OREGON STATE POLICE

Cited: Hector Callas Hernan-

Public Safety Report

The Public Safety Report is compiled from police blotter information supplied by local law enforcement agencies and fire department reports. Individuals named as arrested and/or charged with crimes in this report are presumed innocent until proved guilty in a court of law.

dez, 26, unknown address, was cited and released on a charge of driving while suspended. Arrested: Anthony Wayne Enyeart, 46, Elgin, was arrested on charges of driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving and two counts of recklessly endangering.



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