

Golfer lengthens ace streak

by Bill Schaefer

As most golfers know, the chances of scoring a hole-in-one are one in umpteen thousands of shots. But when 67-year-old John Whitaker steps up to the tee box on a par 3 hole, the odds are substantially reduced.

Whitaker, a retired Bonneville Power Administration employee who lives in Milwaukie, knocked in his thirteenth career ace two weeks ago at Rivergreens in Gladstone. He has been playing golf for 39 years.

Whitaker began his unusual hole-in-one string in 1940 when he aced the fifth hole at the old Lloyd Center golf course, a site now occupied by a parking lot. "It was amazing," Whitaker recalled. "The ball hit a gravel path in front of the green and rolled into the cup."

Several years later he collected his second ace.

"The Junior Chamber of Commerce was sponsoring a hole-in-one contest at the Lloyd Center driving range but I didn't have any plans of entering it," Whitaker recalled. "I just walked over to the practice area to hit some balls."

But the driving range's professional, Joe Mozel, talked Whitaker into hitting three balls for a dollar.

"So I got up there on this rubber mat with an 8-iron and began hitting them," Whitaker said. "The first two never came close but the third one jumped in the hole. Then, while I'm standing there, the 8-iron snapped in two. There I am in the follow-through position with only the handle of the club still in my hands."

Whitaker recorded his third ace at Riverside in 1953, his fourth at Seaside in 1956 and No. 5 at a hole-in-one contest Royal Oaks in Vancouver. He has

lost track of the date. His last eight aces have all come at Rivergreens in 1968, 1970, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1976 (two within three weeks on the same hole) and 1978.

Whitaker claims there is no particular secret in scoring what for most golfers is the game's most elusive shot.

"A lot depends on the condition of the golf course but it's mostly all luck," he said. "All I really do is try to get the ball on the green somewhere. I line up the shot and just hit the ball. That's all you can do, anyway."

Despite his remarkable achievements, Whitaker is a long way from the all-time hole-in-one leader. That would be Art Wall, Jr., a former Professional Golfers Association tour player who has a career high of 41 aces, according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

Whitaker's two aces in three weeks on the same hole in 1976 also falls short of record acclaim. Douglas Porteous scored four aces during 76 consecutive holes in Scotland in 1974. That same year, a golfer named Robert Taylor aced the same hole -- a 188-yarder, on three successive days.

But Whitaker doesn't want publicity.

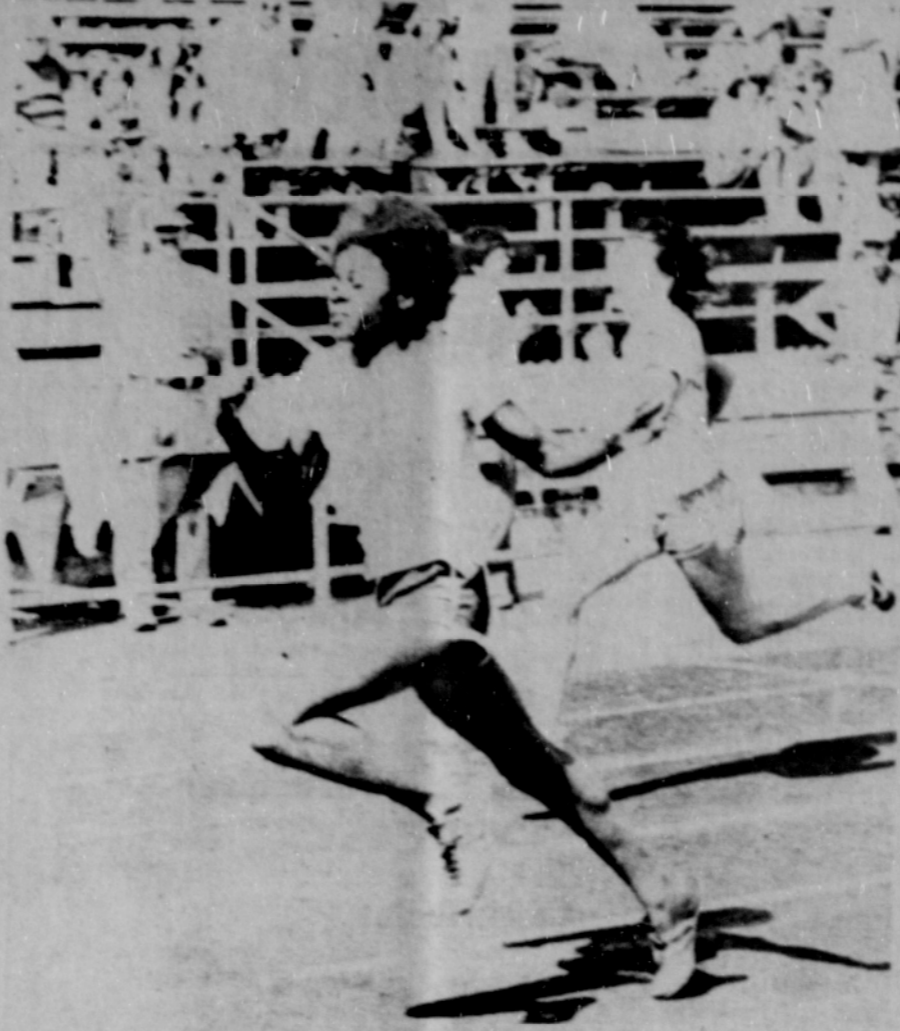
"Getting your name in the paper isn't important," he said. "Just making a hole-in-one is enough satisfaction."

Whitaker's only advice to would-be hole-in-ones is simply to "keep swinging."

He added, "That's what I told my wife, Irmalee, and she got one three or four years ago. I'm planning on getting another one tomorrow. After all, when you can get two in three weeks on the same hole anything can happen."



Tricia Lucas, fifteen, of Corbett High School, shows her form in the girls' long jump.



Rosham Harris leaps six feet in the long jump, coming in second in the AAU meet. The fourteen-year-old North Salem athlete also competed in the 100 yard dash, winning her heat.

Sports Talk

by Ron Sykes



The Portland Trailblazers, in order to strengthen their front line, traded John Davis to Indiana and, therefore, weakening a strong guard corp. Davis, we're told, is the only player Indiana would consider. The Blazers traded the super quick Davis in order to secure the number one pick in the college draft and immediately claimed Minnesota's, Mychal Thompson the 6'10" forward center from the Bahamas.

While the arrival of Thompson will surely help . . . the departure of Davis will hurt even more.

Johnny Davis was a classy ball player and a super human being. Davis was one of those players that every GM would love to draft.

He's affable, easy going, and a complete team player . . . Portland will miss young Johnny Davis.

It has often been said that history repeats itself. After trading Davis, coach Jack Ramsay had this to say, "Trading Davis was the hardest decision I've ever had to make." Interesting coach, because last year when the effervescent Herm Gilliam departed those same, very same words were spoken.

Next year it could be Maurice Lucas who leaves, but then that's the way it goes in the businesslike ways of the National Basketball Association.

Around the NBA it has been generally acknowledged that Portland improved more than any other team through this year's draft, grabbing off Thompson, and Ron Brewer, 6'4", guard from Arkansas in the first round and Keith Herron, 6'6", forward from Villanova in the second. Thompson is a player for sure and the same can be said of Brewer. The young man from Arkansas is good.

Brewer is very quick and against UCLA in this year's NCAA tournament just simply shot the eyes out of the basket. Brewer went head to head with the Bruin guard, Roy Hamilton, and more than held his own against the super quick UCLA junior guard.

I'll make my prediction for next year's roster providing, of course, that it remains at eleven. Bill Walton, Maurice Lucas, Lionel Hollins, Dave Twardzik, and Bobby Gross will again be the starters, Twardzik . . . only starting because Davis is gone.

Johnson and Brewer, the top rookies will stick for sure. Tom Owens will back up Bill Walton again, Lloyd Neal will again supply the reserve power at strong forward, if his knee responds to treatment, that is. Corky Calhoun, who proved last year, in this writer's view, that he could truly play, and Corky should remain.

The last spot on the roster will go to either Calhoun or Steele. There shouldn't be any doubt but there will. Corky is a better shooter, can play both strong and small forward, and is more than an adequate shooter. Last but not least he's an intelligent player, who won't make many mistakes. Calhoun is too valuable to release.

But, then so was Herm Gilliam . . . and we all know what happened to Herm.

If Portland's draft was the best then consider the Detroit Pistons as probably the worst. The Pistons having traded away their top pick for this year had no first round choice. In the second round Detroit chose Terry Tyler, 6'7", forward from Detroit University. Their next pick in the

second round was John Long, 6'5", forward from Detroit University. It should be mentioned that the new Piston coach is also from Detroit University. Now Tyler and Long aren't exactly household names so, perhaps, there's something there that we can't see. So much for the draft.

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Race Awards Ceremony commences at 1:00 p.m., June 25th, near the Burnside Bridge where the Mayor's Trophy Cup will be presented. Featured speaker will be sports activist/writer, Jack Scott.



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