



Ross Society Member Completes Remarkable Quest: Playing Every Donald Ross Course

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, October 30, 2017—Brad Becken, a Board member of the Donald Ross Society, completed his quest this month of playing every golf course designed by legendary golf course architect Donald Ross.

Becken's first encounter with Ross was at Pinehurst in the 1970s, but for much of his life he was a tennis player. A former Goldman Sachs investment banker, Brad retired in 2005 and soon after moved from Los Angeles to Chapel Hill. He began to play more golf and soon became enamored of Ross's work, joining Hope Valley Country Club. "It was very different from what I was used to.....and very enjoyable," Brad says. "I liked the variety and the fact that the design never felt forced. And like most Ross courses, you didn't feel overwhelmed if you weren't a great golfer."

Brad began seeking out other Ross courses near Chapel Hill. Soon he'd played all the Ross courses in North Carolina and many in South Carolina and Georgia as well, and began to think about playing all of them. He started taking 2-3 day trips, got close to 100 and then really stepped it up. Jim Caruso, a Ross Society director who accompanied Brad on his swing through Massachusetts says, "Brad is an animal. 54 holes is no problem and he can do it on a bag of peanuts and a PowerAde."

Though Ross designed over 400 courses, Brad found 358 still in existence. "Some lists of Ross's work have fewer courses," Brad says. "I decided to play any course that had any possible link to Ross." Seminole tops Brad's list of favorite courses. Close behind is Highlands Country Club in the North Carolina mountains. The rest of his favorites include everyday names like East Lake and Wannamoisett. But two others are perhaps more surprising: White Bear Yacht Club and Glens Falls. As to public access courses, Brad lists resort courses Linville, Pinehurst, Mid Pines, Pine Needles, Biltmore and French Lick as his favorites. For purely public courses, he cites Manakiki and Mark Twain.

Brad has also become an ambassador for the Ross Society. "The most common reaction I get from people I meet is that they have no idea Ross designed so many courses. The second most common reaction is that they've never heard of the Society. The Society now has over 500 members and I've signed up a number of people as members."

When asked about his golf plans now that his quest is complete, Brad's answer is simple: "More golf on Ross courses. I'm looking forward to going back to play the ones I enjoyed most."

About the Donald Ross Society:

Founded in 1989, the Donald Ross Society seeks to preserve and celebrate the work of Donald Ross. Its affiliate—the Donald Ross Society Foundation—is a 501(c)3 organization that makes grants in support of its mission. Among its fundraising methods are five golf events played on Ross courses around the country. The Society has over 500 members and membership is open to any aficionado of classic golf architecture.

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