

Hole in One

By: Brian Zongker, PGA

One of the ultimate achievements in a golfer's life is to score a hole in one. It doesn't really matter how good you are or how long you've been playing, whether you will admit it or not, deep down every golfer wants to make an ace. A hole-in-one, by definition, is when a ball is hit from a tee shot and ends up in the cup, thus awarding the player the score of 1 for the hole.

So how common is a hole-in-one? Well, certainly skill plays a factor. For the pro golfer, the odds are approximately 3000 to 1; a low handicap player is 5,000 to one and, for the average golfer, the odds are 12,000 to one. Basically, there is skill in the ability to hit the ball far enough and accurately enough to reach and to get on a green in one shot but it's pure luck that it goes in the hole. Some lucky players have had multiple aces while many, perhaps most, golfers will never have one at all. Holes-in-one do not discriminate by age. Jack Paine made a hole-in-one at 3 years old while Elise McLean scored an ace at 102. Tiger Woods' first hole-in-one came at 6 and Michelle Wie made hers at 12.

Each hole-in-one has a story. My first ace came when I was in my early teens and happened to be one of the ugliest shots of all time. I basically got up on the second hole at Los Alamos Golf Course, took a mighty swing, looked up and sculled the ball about 150 yards into the hole. The ball never got more than a couple of inches off the ground but somehow managed to find the green and roll into the cup. Fortunately, the score card does not have enough room to write all that information down and I just put a 1 with a circle around it on the score card. I have had a few others. I don't want to sound braggadocio so I won't say how many (5) but I remember each one. For some reason, you can always remember the shots that count. Which is impressive for me, seeing that I can rarely remember what I had for breakfast or whether I shampooed my hair while in the shower in the morning. Have you ever done that? Been about mid-shower and can't remember if you shampooed? Nope? Just me?... moving on.

So, if you are a golfer and that ace has not come your way just yet...relax...because you will never know that it is coming. The harder you try, the least likely it is going to happen. The more you think about it, the less likely you are to live among the hole-in-one elite. If you never make one, that's ok. No one will think less of you; they just may not let you into their club. My suggestion: if you really want to make an ace is to practice more, worry less and golf at Pinetop Lakes Golf & Country Club because 11 of their 18 holes are par 3's so your odds just have to go up!