

Pencil of the Week Chronicles 12

5/30/22 Porters Neck

#95 Is Porters Neck, also near Topsail Island. No pencil.

This was my favorite course nearby Wilmington. It was a fair test with no tricked up holes and very well maintained. I do not remember much at all other than it was a classy place and i really liked it. Must have had room on the right for my slicing.

The club was designed by Fazio in 1991 and is quite impressive on this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QImypdFZpZY&t=65s>

After watching i am a bit confused. I did not see the hole i remembered. An uphill par 4 or 5 along a large lake with a big drop to the water with a gator in it near the green. It had a huge tree in the fairway as well. Guess i will never know since the course is now a private country club. Our ragged bunch must have been in over our head at such a classy place.

Mel, do you recall playing there?

Speaking of us as a ragged bunch i remember Mel, Smitty, and i tooling around one afternoon stopping at potential places to play and giving the courses a look see. One place had its first hole right between a tight row of condos. We decided to rule that one out with those 2 being hackers and I being a hard core slicer. I could just imagine the sound of breaking windows as we looked down that fairway.

6/1/22 Marsh Harbor



#96 Is Marsh Harbor. No pencil.

This one sadly is also now closed and was located near Calabash. I thought it was a gem.

<https://www.golfcourseranking.com/courses/north-carolina/calabash/usa/marsh-harbour-golf-links,-closed-2005/10230/>

Long long ago, we took Carolyn to Myrtle Beach one summer. Somewhere in the late 70s before Wes was born. Over 40 years ago. We had a family motel with a lazy river she loved. It was right on the main drive. Every night a parade of young people in cars would cruise it and we could just sit out on the balcony and watch the festivities and listen to the thumping music.

I remember that i played it one time, and I was a walk on. I shocked the heck out of myself. The planets must have aligned. Reason i remember is i could not miss a putt and was chipping very close.

Remember their signature hole was a par 5, perhaps #18. You had to drive and then hit your second over water to a landing area that was surrounded by water except to the left. Then your approach was over water to the green. Quite a hole. I kind of remember finding the water on my approach but still shot 77. The ball is a Slazenger. Kept some memorabilia too! Did not find the scorecard though.



6/8/22 Longleaf

#98 is Longleaf. This was one of our early Pinehurst favorites but fell off our list when the course conditions went downhill. Great course though. No pencil.

The course was built on an old horse training track that was built in the 50s and converted to a golf course in the late 80s.

<https://www.golfcourseranking.com/courses/north-carolina/calabash/usa/marsh-harbour-golf-links,-closed-2005/10230/>

They kept some aspects of the race course in the design and left some of the rails here and there around the course.

It was a good starter course and not too difficult. That always added insult to injury. Being the first round, I always had high expectations. The first hole was a reachable par 4 but had a huge bunker guarding the green. After a good drive, finding that bunker could turn your 4 or 5 quickly into a 7 or 8 and one's high hopes for the week were stomped on. The next 3 were pretty simple with very little trouble but did present challenges for golf swings that had gathered rust over the Ohio winter. After those holes, my memory dims and I don't recall the rest of the course.

I do remember #9. Wow if you were long on your approach there was no telling where it might end up. The parking lot perhaps. Also recall a couple of long par 5s.

The course was over seeding when we first played there, but sometime along the way they stopped and we were playing off dormant grass and very thin fairways. Then one year grubs were emerging from the ground and it was a horribly disgusting mess. That was all we could take so we found other places to play.

6/15/22 Grandfather Mountain



First off i sent 2 pics of the hole i aced at tam o shanter when i flew it right into the cup. that is where my red car is parked in section D of the meijer parking lot according to my golf Ap. I say a pox on them.

#98 Is a course we played on the way down a couple of years on the way to Pinehurst. I am not sure of the name but we called it Grandfather Mountain.

I found this:

<https://www.grandfatherclubnc.com/>

This must be it because it is an Ellis Maples course and TK was always looking to play

any Maples course. It was always freezing when we stopped there in April up in the mountains. Don't remember many of the holes except 1 par 3 over water.

Oh my. I believe i dumped it into the water every time we played it. One unfortunate year, i had my old video camera and i got it out and taped good buddies Neil and Bill hitting to the green. Not sure who picked up the camera to tape my shot, but in it went and they kept the camera rolling as i walked back to get another ball, which i likely hit even worse, After that i don't rightly recall but i might have scraped one over somehow on my second shot or it could have been my 3d try. I would expect Bill to let me know how many it took. Needless to say, i was not a fan of the course thereafter.

Not the way one wants to start a golf trip.

6/22/22 Stevensville

#99 Is Niagara National Golf in Stevensville Canada. No pencil.

This is just over the Peace bridge a little north of Fort Erie. Dad would take Jim and I and later George there as young uns. We would hop in the car, drive over the bridge and be at the course in a half hour. Now days you have to have a passport, covid vac proof, and fill out a form withing 3 days of going over. For over a year you couldn't even get over the bridge.

Tough course. A monster at 6500 yards we were all in the mid 90s to mid 100s back in the day. Tons of water, brush, and swamps to avoid. Seems like the fairways were always wet.

<https://niagaranational.ca/#gallery>

Way too long ago to remember the holes. I do recall one par 3 (all 3 are 170+) with a monster green. May not have been as big as the ones on modern day courses but to us back then it was an eye opener. It was great to par that puppy. According to the card, they have 5 monster par 5s. Looks like they finally have multiple tee boxes now. I am sure there were only the 3 boxes back then.

We always had a great time there with the family playing. They had a real dump of a clubhouse. I am sure they have rectified that.

6/29/22 Pinehurst

#100 Is Pinehurst #2. No pencil.

This was the most famous course I ever played. Tory Pines and Firestone are the only

other PGA class courses I have played. This was one of the first few years of our yearly pilgrimage to golf country. I believe it was when we stayed at the course. It had rained and I don't think they wanted to let anybody out. Not sure if we had a tee time or not. TK stood tall that day begging and pleading those there to let us out and, after some time, we did get to go forward. I don't know if Tom had to slip them some cash but damn, we did get to play. TK was and is a heck of a salesman schmoozer. He should be in the Hall of Fame for that if there is one.

The course is hardly intimidating. I was standing out in the first fairway after my drive wondering what all the hoopla was about. I think i came close to hitting the green with my second seeing the ball roll off the apron. Made a nice chip that ran across the green and took a turn and ran off the other side. Holy crap. I thought that was a good shot. Wow. A few holes later when another of my putts rolled off the green, I got it.

It was indeed a long day. I hit the ball well and must have scored somewhere around 100. The greens are just amazing and just befuddling.

7/6/22 Grand Finale

Well, I got to 100 but sadly the last several were missing pencils.

Looking thru scores and thinking back, there are many more though of with little memory of those places.

I recall playing a very nice one in the Finger Lakes with Dad and Jim at a state park. Every hole was cut thru the trees and you never saw an adjacent fairway. That was when i spent 8 months in Rome NY out of college. Must have played another two or 3 there, so lets up the count to 104.

Thinking back to all the Pinehurst trips, i remember Anderson Creek, Foxfire, Pinehurst National, two other Pinehurst courses (4 and 6?), and a Gary Player course we all hated. Likely a few more, so lets add 8 more to put it at 112.

From my Myrtle Beach trips playing with Denny or as a single i have scores from Azelea Sands, Carolina Shores, Meadowlands, Diamond Head, River Hills, Possum Trot, Eagle Nest, River Run, Cypress Bay, Shaftsbury Glen, River Oaks, and Beachwood. That gets me up to 124

On trips to Phoenix with Mel and Smitty we had to play 3 or 4 with names i don't remember to put the total to 129.

Lastly, I played Tory Pines at #130. That was a hoot. I drew the short straw at Lockheed one day and had to be a courier to take a briefcase full of classified stuff to the San Diego. I flew to San Diego and was not allowed to let the briefcase out of my site. We landed and i went directly to the base and handed it over and was done.

I had heard you could play Tory Pines so i called there to get in. Was told no tee times were taken and if i wanted to play to show up in the bag line in the morning. Set the alarm for 4 am and got myself to the course by 4:30am. I was about #20. Nothing happened till it started to get light and they opened the clubhouse. Got set up with rental clubs (i brought my shoes) and waited till they called my name on a loud speaker.

Sliced the crap out of the woods so gave up on them after 4 holes and just hit the irons the rest of the way. Scored very poorly all round and was amazed how much the kikuya grass grabbed the club. I did have a chance to par the famous #18 with a pond in front but missed my par putt.

After seeing this list of remaining courses with no pencil, i decided to do a wrap up with this email. Especially since i had so little recall of these. So that's it. Started playing at 13 and at 74 I have enjoyed every minute of it on over 130 different courses. Lets hope i can add several more before i put the clubs away for good. I will compile a few more and post them on my website in the next couple of days.

rrrparker.com

Denny is keen to shoot his age this year and is getting close. I guess this has to be our senior goal as we get up in age. Let's just do it!