

A golf novel suitable for all members of the family.

The Dick & Eddie Stroke Play Series, Book I, Dick & Eddie at Eagle Glen

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Hole No. 1
Par 4/353 yards from the Blue Tees/330
yards from the White Tees/Handicap-11

“I saw our competition hitting balls at the range when I drove in,” Dick said as he opened the trunk of the car to get his golf bag and shoes.

“Really dedicated,” Eddie replied, while adjusting his golf cap, then hitching up his pants, and finally looking toward the morning’s beautiful, sea blue sky.

“I found out a few years ago, if the two of us hit balls before a round, we’d never get past the eighth hole. I would have needed a nurse and you would’ve died.”

“I’ve always thought we were dedicated though,” Dick insisted.

“This day reminds me of the time we whipped those two unsuspecting lads up at Hawk Island Golf and Country Club. They were stunned, never expected to be beaten by the likes of us,” Eddie replied.

Jabbering between Dick and Eddie went on, nonstop, throughout every round they’ve ever played. They’re adept at the skill of light-hearted fun poking. They have never spoken loudly enough for the other twosome to be disturbed of course; it would’ve been un-sportsmanlike. It was more of a subtle distraction; making the other guys wonder how the two men ever stayed focused while jabbering all the time. Colton and Slagle knew all about Dick and Eddie.

A creek crossed in front of the tee on the first hole, just before getting to the fairway. The fairway doglegged to the left at about the 150-yard marker, and the creek crossed the fairway again about twenty yards from, and directly in line with, the green. The pear shaped green sloped from back to front. The men had no traps to deal with, but from the back of the green to the property lines was only about fifteen yards. Austrian Pines, growing on the course, guarded the homes but also made shots in or around them difficult, at the very least. There are openings between the trees, but any shot from that area must be hit low and running. A mis-hit could leave you halfway to the green, and a ball hit too hard caused you to run through the green and into the light rough which guarded the front side of the green coming up from the creek.

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A few long hitters, right and left handed, have deliberately hit tee shots over the creek and into the light rough between the creek and the green, but most don't attempt the shot; mis-hit balls go into the creek or duck hook, or fade left into an area near a groundskeeper's equipment barn.

Dick asked, "Are you gentlemen ready to conduct some business?" Tom Colton and Lou Slagle just looked at Dick with half grins on their faces.

Tom stepped up to the tee with a six iron in his hand. His favorite shot off the first tee. He made a smooth take away with a nice shoulder turn, and his transition move at the top was well executed. His move down and through the ball, initiated by his snapping left hip toward the target, provided good acceleration at impact. The ball landed on the right side of the fairway, just inside the 150-yard marker.

"He uses those cord grips, Eddie. I have never liked the feel of them," Dick remarked quietly to Eddie, while shaking his head.

"I've tried them at those golf discount places. They sting my hands," Eddie remarked, while scratching his head with the bill of his cap.

Dick looked at Lou who had been at the back of the tee. Slagle walked over to his tee up his ball.

"Eddie, Slagle has been fooling around with his grip. He's unsure of how he wants to hit the shot," Dick said with a curious look. Slagle's stance at address was a bit awkward looking. He bent his knees only slightly, and he could not decide where to place the ball in his stance. Finally, he set up with the ball in the center of his stance. It looked good. He took a couple practice swings, and addressed the ball again.

"I hope he doesn't play every shot that way," Eddie remarked quietly to Dick, scratching his head with the bill of his cap, again, then wiping his brow.

"I love this guy," Dick snickered behind his glove hand. Eddie just looked at Dick and grinned.

"Are you O.K, Lou? You're acting a little jittery," Tom Colton asked with concern.

"I'm unable to get set," Lou replied disgustedly.

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Finally, Slagle bent his knees slightly and had a good take away. His back swing took him parallel to the target line at the top. His downswing accelerated from the inside, and contact with the ball was perfect. His five iron carried the ball to within five yards of the creek and dead center on the fairway.

“All the grip pressure and adjustment he went through. He should’ve just used his normal grip, as always, the results would’ve been the same,” Dick remarked looking at Eddie.

“I think he’s a little scared of you, Dick, your reputation and all,” Eddie suggested with a grin.

“I’ve always had pretty good luck with the five metal off this tee, Eddie?” Dick was smiling while he looked at Tom and Lou.

“Yes you have, big boy,” Eddie agreed while he finished wiping perspiration from his forehead with the back of his hand.

Dick’s address and take away were unique, to say the least. He always set up on the left side of a tee with an open stance. His belly stuck out a bit farther than the average, and he compensated for it with an upright take away, and then on the way down he’d cut across the ball hitting a left to right fade. It served him well for years. You could tell from the club selection he’d never been a long hitter. The five metal landed in the fairway and stopped just short of the 150-yard marker.

“Good shot, Dick,” Eddie praised, “right in the heart of the fairway.”

Dick grinned in triumph. “Me and you Eddie, get inside of that shot and we’re off to a good start.”

Eddie stepped up to the tee with a four iron in hand, hitched up his pants, and then stepped up to the ball.

“I’m quite comfortable over the ball today, Dick.” Eddie said with a little extra waggle.

Colton and Slagle turned and shook their heads at one another.

“These guys have already started,” Colton told Slagle with a queer grin.

Eddie had a nice take away, his left arm was straight and he made a good shoulder turn. His downswing transfer was excellent, and he drove through the ball with acceleration. The ball rose gradually with a nice

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draw and landed left center in the fairway about 140 yards from the green.

“Good shot Eddie,” Tom applauded.

Dick and Eddie had exchanged glances and had shaken their heads by then.

They walked side by side to Dick’s ball all the while discussing possibilities for Dick’s next shot. He was 160 yards from the center of the green and had to hit his five metal again or take a chance on the three iron. If he choked up on the five metal, his ball would hit below and release up to the hole; he’d hit the same shot many times before. He had to hit the ball solid. Dick decided upon the five metal.

“I’ve always been lucky from here,” right Eddie?”

“Yes you have, big boy, it’s always a joy watching you work from here.”

Dick wasted no time. He stepped up to the ball, took one practice swing and let the club do the work. The ball landed on the green, and stopped 12 feet below the cup.

Tom Colton stepped up to his ball. He was just inside the 150-yard markers, and after some self-deliberation decided to hit an eight iron. The wind was calm, so for him it was the correct club choice. A nice clean take away followed by a good, accelerating downswing, and solid contact, left his ball about five feet below the hole.

“Great shot Tom,” Dick told him happily.

“Thanks!”

Eddie stepped up to his ball. He thought about it for a moment and pulled the seven iron. He took the club away with no indication of trouble, but coming through the shot the clubface popped the ball up into the air and it landed between the creek and the green.

Lou Slagle was ready to hit. He had chosen a pitching wedge for the shot. He made a nice short back swing and punched the ball. It was mis-hit and landed two feet off the right side of the green. He wasn’t happy, but remained in control.

“I haven’t seen you hit a shot like that for a long, long time, Lou,” Tom declared with a surprised look on his face.

“The contact at impact didn’t feel right, Tom,” he answered.

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“Forget about it. It happened. It’s over,” Tom replied indifferently.

Eddie arrived at his ball and was prepared to chip and run a wedge up to the hole. He hitched up his pants, took a shortened back swing and hit the ball halfway to the hole.

“Tough luck, Eddie. You looked like me hitting the ball,” Dick told him.

“I don’t get it. Maybe I’m not concentrating.”

Lou was again at his ball and had pulled out his wedge. He chipped the ball to within two feet of the hole and elected to putt out for a four.

Dick was ready to putt. He’d already taken a couple practice putts. He took the putter back low and slow, rolled the ball down to within one foot of the cup, then stepped up and tapped it in.

“Good putt, bud,” Eddie told Dick while giving him thumbs up. Eddie had a putt of about 10 feet left. He took one practice putt, and rolled the ball straight into the cup.

Tom Colton was up. He took one practice putt and rolled the ball up to the cup. It lipped out and he settled for a four.

Scores on 1:

Tom Colton-4 Lou Slagle-4 Dick Patterson-4 Eddie Caldwell-4

Hole No. 2
Par 5/524 yards from the Blue Tees/524
yards from the White Tees/Handicap-3

“Well, Eddie, we did okay. I bet they never dreamt in a million years I’d come away with net birdie on the first hole.”

“Yes! I was surprised myself,” he suggested. “When you put that five metal 12 feet below the hole, Slagle’s eyes lit up like it was Christmas.”

“When you made a net birdie, Eddie, I thought they were going to need a tonic. It’s too bad we have to record fours on the score card.”

“May I say, with reverence, you were wonderful on the hole, Dick. And, I’m not ashamed to announce, letting you come away with a net birdie was the only proper thing for me to do, lest I be struck down.”

“Yeah, right. We’ll it’s a fool’s mouth you’re barkin from now, spoutin’ gibberish like you were high born or somethin,” Dick replied with a grin, while waving Eddie off.

Tom Colton and Lou Slagle couldn’t believe the banter going on between Dick and Eddie. They had not played with men or women so able to concentrate, yet seemingly adrift in their own little world.

“I don’t know, Tom. If these guys can play as well as we’ve heard, they sure seem to go about it in a peculiar way.”

“Right! What the heck do you think they were doing on the first hole, taking a walk in the park? Take a look at the scorecard,” Tom remarked seriously.

The second hole was a long par 5. The tee, elevated slightly, gave an unobstructed view of the green. There was the creek to contend with again, but it was only fifteen yards from the tee, so it seldom came into play. The rough, on the left, ran the entire length of the fairway. It was about 10 yards wide, and ran up to a fenced-in farmer’s field, which was out of bounds. On the right were a few small trees. They’ve been a bother in some games, but for the most part were not in the way of advancing the ball. You could take your ball down and outside the line of trees, or up the fairway toward the green. About 30 yards from, and directly in the path to the green, was a mid-sized bunker with a high back. The green sloped quickly from back to front. Over the back of the

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green was real trouble since you couldn't stop the ball coming back. The result was a few balls rolled right down to the front, or worse, off the green. Tom and Lou had the tee, and Tom stepped up determined.

Tom had taken the driver from his bag and had set up when a bird distracted him. He backed off and re-addressed the ball. The take away was a bit suspect, but he righted the ship and the downswing was brilliant, with tremendous acceleration. The ball landed about 275 yards off the tee, just right-center in the fairway. A great shot!

"Boy, you sure hit the ball with authority there, bud," Dick cheered and patted him on the back.

"Thanks," it really felt good.

Lou was visibly anxious about the shot and stepped away from his ball. Tom had hit the ball too well. Indecisive, Lou stepped back up to the tee. He used a big-headed driver with no more than 9.5 degrees of loft. He addressed the ball more comfortably this time. The take away was fine, but he rolled his right wrist at impact, the ball hooked and ended up 270 yards off the tee in the left rough. The lie in the rough was not good.

"Well, I can remember when I couldn't get it across the creek here, Eddie," Dick recalled, with a peaceful look on his face.

Dick's take away was quickly up and away, as usual, and transfer to the downswing was well executed. The ball was hit flush, and it landed in the center of the fairway about 180 yards from the tee. A good tee shot for Dick.

"Good shot Dick," Eddie was saying while shaking his head.

"Yeah, well struck shot Dick," Tom Colton agreed.

Lou Slagle just shook his head.

Eddie stepped up to the tee with driver in hand.

"Be careful you do not turn it over to much, bud," Dick advised.

"Right, Dick, I'll try and stay focused."

Eddie's take away was well executed. The downswing came from the inside out, and the ball flew down the right side of the fairway, drew toward the center, and landed about 230 yards off the tee. His drives generally flew a few yards farther.

Dick was away and took out his three metal and had to hit it with everything he had. He lined up slightly left of the target, as usual, and on

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the downswing really came across the shot, and it flew down the left side of the fairway and worked its way back to about two inches inside the right side of the fairway. It landed just in front of the 150-yard markers.

“Good shot, Eddie.” Dick said happily.

Eddie stepped up to his ball with a three metal and hitched up his pants. He took no practice swings and hit short of the bunker, about 79 yards from the center of the green.

Lou was up, and the rough was causing him a problem. He finally pulled out a three metal and mis-hit the shot, leaving it in the rough about 20 yards ahead. He set up to the ball again and wasted no time hitting it. It landed short of the bunker about 40 yards from the green. He was not happy.

Tom was 277 yards from the green, and 247 from the center of the bunker. There was an area of fairway about 10 yards wide between the bunker and the rough on the left, and he lined up to hit a fade. His three metal take away was fine, transferred to his downswing with a good shift, and his hips fired off toward the target as the three metal came into the ball with tremendous club head speed. The shot was really quite remarkable. It landed just where he had hoped, and he was now about 20 yards from the green, coming in from the front left.

Dick Patterson stepped up to hit, took one practice swing with his five metal, set up to the ball, and almost missed it completely. The ball rolled to a stop about five feet forward.

“Nuts! Nice shot genius,” he muttered.

He walked up to the ball, took two deep breaths, and hit a shot squarely on the face that landed five feet onto the green, 15 feet left of the pin, about mid-green.

“Good shot Dick,” Eddie assured him clapping his hands then scratching his head with the bill of his cap.

“I had to do something after goofing up the way I did,” he responded.

Eddie pulled a wedge from his bag, stepped up to the ball, and hitched up his pants. He had a nice, three-quarter back swing, and came through the ball a bit off balance. He bladed the shot, and it flew just over the back of the green, landed in the grass, stopping before the hillside.

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Lou was 40 yards from the flag and in the center of the fairway. He took out his sand wedge and the ball landed five feet below the hole and backed up to the front edge of the green. His face was red as fire.

Tom was only 20 yards from the flagstick. He took out a wedge and hit a low punch shot. The ball came up short of where he had expected, then checked up. It stopped quickly 10 feet below the hole.

Lou had to get down in two to save a six; and, if by chance he made the putt, so much the better. He read it for some time and then stepped up beside his ball. He rolled the ball to a stop one foot below the hole, stepped up, and putted out.

Dick had a side-hill putt of about 15 feet with a fairly slow moving left to right break. If hit firmly, it had a good chance to go in the cup. He took his normal two practice putts, relaxed, and putted the ball to within one foot of the cup. He could not believe it had rolled so well. Eddie gave him thumbs up. Dick quietly walked up, and putted out.

Tom's putt read straight up the hill, with no break. He made a good stroke, and the ball rolled true, but stopped on the edge of the hole. He tapped the ball in the hole.

"Good putt Tom, go ahead and putt out. Tough break, it could easily have fallen in the hole," Eddie remarked to him. He glanced at Dick who was shaking his head in agreement.

Eddie was chipping downhill to a pin that was cut in the center of the green. He had too much speed. It rolled all the way down to the front of the green. He looked directly at Dick, and then rolled the follow up putt to a spot eight inches below the hole. He walked up, and tapped the ball into the center of the cup.

Scores on 2:

Tom Colton-5 Lou Slagle-6 Dick Patterson-6 Eddie Caldwell-6

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