

Norwalk

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City man wins \$50K with hole-in-one at fund-raiser

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NORWALK — A room full of khaki-clad, sweaty golfers erupted in cheers Monday as Norwalker Kevin Remson walked into the air conditioning \$50,000 richer.

Remson was a happy man after hitting his first-ever hole-in-one at the 18th hole, a par-3, 141-yard hole, on the Silvermine Golf Club's 27-hole course, beating the odds and sweltering heat to win the \$50,000 with an 8-iron club.

This was the first time St. Philip Church on Father Conlon Place offered hole-in-one prizes, such as money, a cruise, golf equipment and electronics package, as part of its fifth-annual golf outing fund-raiser held for the fourth year at the 475-member private club on North Seir Hill Road.

Remson, a member of St. Thomas The Apostle Church, and the only one to ace at the outing, described himself as a golfer of average skill.

"It's a luck thing," he said. "I don't think there's any skill to hitting a hole-in-one. Otherwise there would be a lot more than there are."

The odds of acing a hole with any given swing are commonly estimated between the United States Golf Register's one in 33,000 to a 2000 Golf Digest study's 5,000 to one. Some place the odds even lower.

Silvermine Golf Club head pro Stuart Waack said a hole-in-one like Remson's is "very rare.

"I've been working outings for 20 years, and I've never seen a hole-in-one on an outing," he said, adding that he's seen more than 33,000 players try the course.

A 19-handicap golfer like Remson would usually average four shots to hit a par-3 hole, Waack said.

"I was pretty excited," Remson said, adding that the prize possibility didn't affect his effort. "Guess I should go out and get some lotto tickets."

He had "no comment" about how he planned to use the money.

Church members were all smiles after the nearly \$1,000 they spent on Hole In One International insurance paid off more than 50-fold, saying they plan to offer prizes again next year.

"I kept saying, 'you never know,'" said Ann Otto, a member who organizes the event each year, following in the footsteps of her husband, Ed Otto, who died two years ago.

Last year, the tournament netted \$6,500 toward church ministries, Otto said, adding that she hopes this year to do better.

Seventy-two people paid \$150 each for the chance to play Monday, she said, and church member Judy Miserendino sat in the heat and witnessed each golfer's try to validate any hole-in-one.

Bob Giolitto got within two and a half feet of the 18th hole on his first swing.

"I hit it well and I was happy," he said. "It was fun just to go for it."

Steve Bagnell, St. Philip's administrative director, was one of the foursome that golfed with Remson and witnessed his feat.

"It was exciting," he said. "Unbelievable. He's just the nicest guy. We all yelled and screamed."

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Hour photo / HANS HALLGREN
Kevin Remson won \$50,000 from a hole-in-one at the Silvermine Golf Course