

Making Golf Possible for Everyone

Getting active is the key to living a healthy lifestyle, and the opportunity to do so should be available for all. Since the eighties, adaptive sports have been on the rise. Basketball, skiing, curling and hockey are just a few amongst the growing list. They have provided people with disabilities the opportunity to get involved, get active and have fun, and golf is no exception.

Nick Perrin, now 30, is no stranger to the sport. “I was 17 when I started golfing,” said Perrin, “I learned about the adaptive golf program with the city through my orthopedic resource teacher, and I was surprised how much I really enjoyed it.” Perrin, like many people with disabilities, felt limited when it came to playing the game to its fullest extent. “Golf was just really restricted, but with the use of an accessible cart, I was able to go anywhere on the course without being limited by my wheelchair.” Since 2003, Perrin has been a part of the KW golf committee, helping others to connect to the sport. He helps to run clinics and groups, and shows people how to use the accessible cart. Perrin is dedicated to helping other people with disabilities get involved in parasports, and golf happens to be one of his favourites.

So what is an accessible cart? It is a golf cart designed with people’s varying disabilities in mind. The unit is equipped with a seat that pivots and tilts allowing users to putt from the cart, specialized wheels that are approved for course greens, a seat belt that helps provide

stability and balance, and easy to use hand controls. “It is amazing to see the transformation when our golfers come out to our clinics and have some hesitation but then get into the accessible golf cart and their confidence soars – it is a game changer for folks,” said Breanna Wilson, City of Kitchener’s inclusion coordinator, “they get to play where they haven’t been able to before – they get to work on their short game on the greens, play with their peers and not be limited by their physical disability. They get to play golf and enjoy what so many people love about the sport.”

Picture of KW Golf Committee member, Nick Perrin



The cart can provide support to individuals who have arthritis, diabetes, those who are recovering from a stroke or heart attack, and those with varying physical disabilities, the opportunity to get their game back or try the sport with confidence. “I really just want to help people get out there and give it a try”, said Perrin “it’s such a great tool to help play a great game and enjoy what the course has to offer.”

Perrin finds himself helping others, and promoting the adaptive golf program to others

every year. "I'm just out to have fun." He said. Perrin continues to encourage others to give the cart a try. Even when people are apprehensive at first, Perrin provides tips and supports them through the process. His passion for helping others is clear, and he continues to look for ways to get others out there and involved in the sport. "It will be even better once we have a new cart to offer patrons at the course, and better yet if we have one at each course...then we can really help to make a difference for people."

Every spring, the KW golf committee works with inclusion services and Kitchener Golf to provide an adaptive golf program to children, youth and adults. It is geared to people with disabilities that prevent them from getting out to play the game without assistance. The program runs several clinics at Kitchener Golf's Doon Valley course. Dave Roy, golf professional with Kitchener Golf, said "The accessible golf carts provide an opportunity for those with specific disabilities to enjoy a game they might not have thought was possible. They often have a look of surprise and joy when they realize they can play this great game with the help of the cart."

With the increasing interest in the accessible cart, the KW Golf Committee is focused on raising funds to purchase two new carts for spring, 2015. said Perrin.

The KW golf committee is looking to provide two carts that will provide support to more golfers with disabilities at both Rockway and Doon Valley golf courses. "Having these carts will make golf possible for so many more people who need the support," said Perrin. The one cart that is currently used between both Doon Valley and Rockway courses has seen better days, and as the popularity of its use is growing, the committee inspired to replace it. Perrin said

that if he could get out one message, it would be that golf is possible for everyone, and that the accessible cart is for all types of disabilities, both short and long term.

The KW Golf Committee is raising funds and awareness about accessible golf. Read more about the accessible cart fundraiser by visiting Kitchener.ca/golfaccess, or learn more about the [adaptive golf clinics](#) that are available each spring through the City of Kitchener.