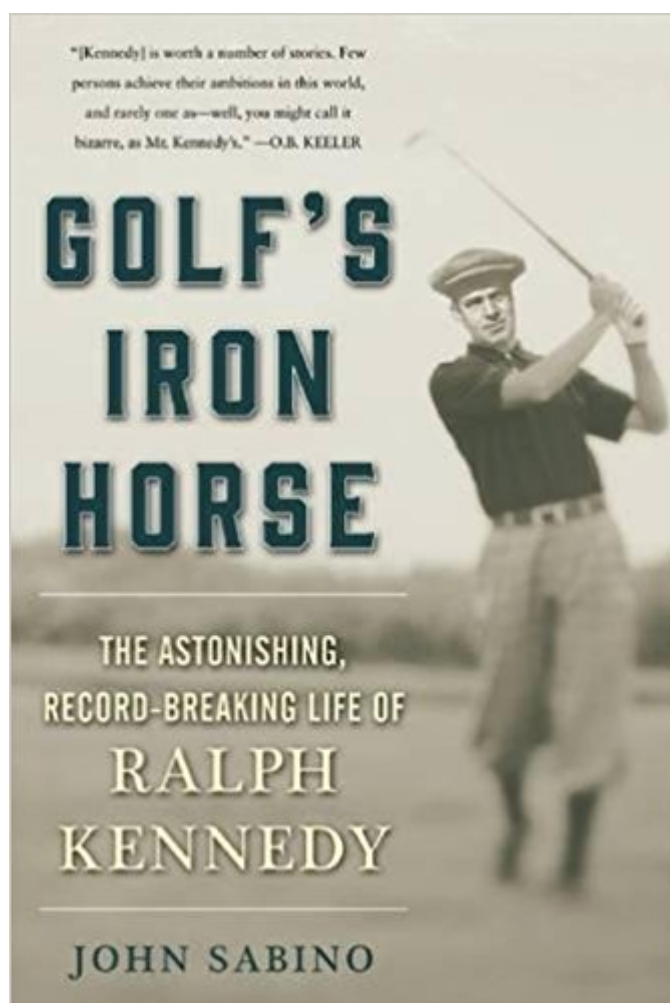




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Golf's Iron Horse: The Astonishing, Record-Breaking Life Of Ralph Kennedy



Synopsis

So many works of golfing history focus on the greats: the best players, the most prestigious championships, the hardest courses, and the like. But most avid golfers are average players, relishing in the joy of the sport itself. In *Golf's Iron Horse*, celebrated golf writer John Sabino chronicles the previously untold story of Ralph Kennedy, a golf amateur whose love of the game set him on par to play more courses than anyone before. A founding member of Mamaroneck, New York's prestigious Winged Foot Golf Club, Kennedy had long been an avid golfer when he met Charles Leonard Fletcher in 1919. When the Englishman told Kennedy that he had played more than 240 courses in his lifetime, Kennedy took it as a challenge and became determined to play more. In a feat that caused the *New York Sun* to declare him "the greatest golfer since Lou Gehrig" in 1935, Kennedy succeeded in beating Fletcher's record, and then some. He played golf on more than 3,165 different courses in all forty-eight states, nine Canadian provinces, and more than a dozen different countries during his forty-three year love affair with the game. In addition to the 3,165 unique courses he played, the unrelenting Ralph also played golf a total of 8,500 times over his lifetime, the equivalent of teeing it up every day for twenty-three straight years. Lou Gehrig's seventeen years in professional baseball pales in comparison. This intriguing story includes details of the special conditions under which he was able to play the Augusta National Golf Club and the unique circumstances of his visits to Pebble Beach and the Old Course at St. Andrews. Perfect for golf aficionados, *Golf's Iron Horse* will inspire every reader to tee off at a new course. Skyhorse Publishing, as well as our Sports Publishing imprint, is proud to publish a broad range of books for readers interested in sports; books about baseball, pro football, college football, pro and college basketball, hockey, or soccer, we have a book about your sport or your team. In addition to books on popular team sports, we also publish books for a wide variety of athletes and sports enthusiasts, including books on running, cycling, horseback riding, swimming, tennis, martial arts, golf, camping, hiking, aviation, boating, and so much more. While not every title we publish becomes a *New York Times* bestseller or a national bestseller, we are committed to publishing books on subjects that are sometimes overlooked by other publishers and to authors whose work might not otherwise find a home.

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Customer Reviews

“A profound, compelling tribute to one driven man with an undying love of a sport; it feels real and satisfies the golf devotee’s hunger for statistics.”—Publishers Weekly
“In Golf’s Iron Horse, John Sabino has uncovered more factoids on hidden golf legend Ralph Kennedy than I could ever dream of finding.”—Tripp Bowden, author of *Freddie & Me*
“This charming biography tells the little known story of a real golf fanatic.”—BookFilter
“‘Iron Horse’ is a splendid travelogue through one man’s golf obsession and the sport of golf’s evolution from the hickory era to the modern game.”—Cliff Schrock, *The Bookshelf*
“Kennedy [is] a textbook illustration of an avid golfer.”—Golf Association of Philadelphia
“Golf’s Iron Horse is a terrific snapshot of a bygone era of golf, and a fun beach read.”—Recommended.
“Sabino animates Kennedy’s inspiring odyssey... In discovering his motivation, it inspires our own.”—Colorado Avid Golfer

John Sabino is among a small group of golfers who have achieved the feat of playing the top one hundred ranked golf courses in the world. John chronicled his journey in his popular blog “Playing the Top 100 Golf Courses in The World” and in his book *How to Play the World’s Most Exclusive Golf Clubs*. In addition, he has been featured in *Links Magazine*, *Australian Golf Digest*, the *Star Ledger*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Golf Digest Index*. An avid golfer and student of golf history, John brings an unparalleled enthusiasm and an insider’s insight to the task. John lives in the golf-rich state of New Jersey.

How could it be that such a cool and intriguing story hasn’t been told before? An amateur golfer who was a viral media sensation of his day (albeit through newspapers) and a man

of extraordinary stamina. Sabino did his homework and the book is well researched and well written. Bravo for bringing the story of Ralph Kennedy back to life. I would love to play the Old Course at St. Andrews as the 3,000th course of my playing career. And Pebble Beach as the 2,500th isn't too bad either. I also enjoyed the non-golf historical references sprinkled in each chapter which really helped to set the context and almost had me want to ride the rails to find new golf courses.

I read Sabino's first book on traveling to play modern golf courses so I bought *Golf's Iron Horse*. I enjoyed his story telling in his first book and he makes the transition to a biographical book seamlessly. I was always under the impression that trying to travel and play a lot of golf courses was a modern phenomena aided by the internet and golf magazines ranking. Who knew this has been going on for generations. I was particularly impressed with the chapter on Ralph's epic journey to play in the Western US and Canada and, like in Sabino's first book, his engaging and breezy style is well suited here.

Most true golfers do a lot of reading about golf. This could be magazines, blogs, on-line sites and, of course, books. We've all read the pretty picture books, the top 10 rankings, club equipment reviews and the most notable names in the sport. While this is fine and normal, it's a bit played. How many more pictures of Pebble Beach can look at? How many more top 10 ranking categories are left? This book is a much needed and refreshing revelation in the written words of golf. Whoever heard of Ralph Kennedy before? Sounds like a bus driver. Or neighborhood bartender. But his story and journey around thousands of golf courses is a story us golfer rarely, if ever, read about before. We are fortunate that John Sabino brought this character to our attention. We are fortunate we were able to live through the travel challenges and life/times of another era. So well written and interesting with each passing page. A very highly recommended gift/present for the golfer who needs and wants something different ... and is a bit tired of paging through the usual golf centerfold pictorials.

What a great story. Do pencil salesman still exist; If so I want to be one. It was fun to live vicariously through the life of a traveling salesman in *Golf's Iron Horse*. I love golf history and enjoy reading about it. This book provides a new twist by recreating the record of an early twentieth century golf nut. This guy met a lot of people in his travels and among the most influential were O.B. Keeler and Bobby Jones. What better way to play Augusta National than to be invited be invited

before the first Masters tournament? Yikes. Ralph Kennedy is a man for the ages.

First of all, when you stop and really think about the time in history, mode of available transportation etc, after reading this book you absolutely come away with total reverence for the accomplishment. But for me, the true delight was the way in which the author wove in current events of the day while following Ralph's journey. A must read for the golfer who is also a history buff!

Golf's Iron Horse presents the journey of Ralph Kennedy, a long-time New York resident and pencil salesperson, as he played an almost unbelievable number of golf courses in the United States and throughout the world. In addition to providing amazing details about Mr. Kennedy's travels, the author traces the rise of golf from a time in which the country had very few golf courses and players utilized clubs called mashies and brassies, rather than irons and woods. Ralph Kennedy's odyssey lasted approximately fifty years and coincided with the founding of such legendary golf clubs as Augusta National, Pine Valley and Winged Foot, Ralph's home course. Golf's Iron Horse would be a worthy addition to any golfer's library.

I received this book as a gift and it was well written and is a must have for any golf fan. Being Valentine's Day this would make a great gift for any golf lovers out there!

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