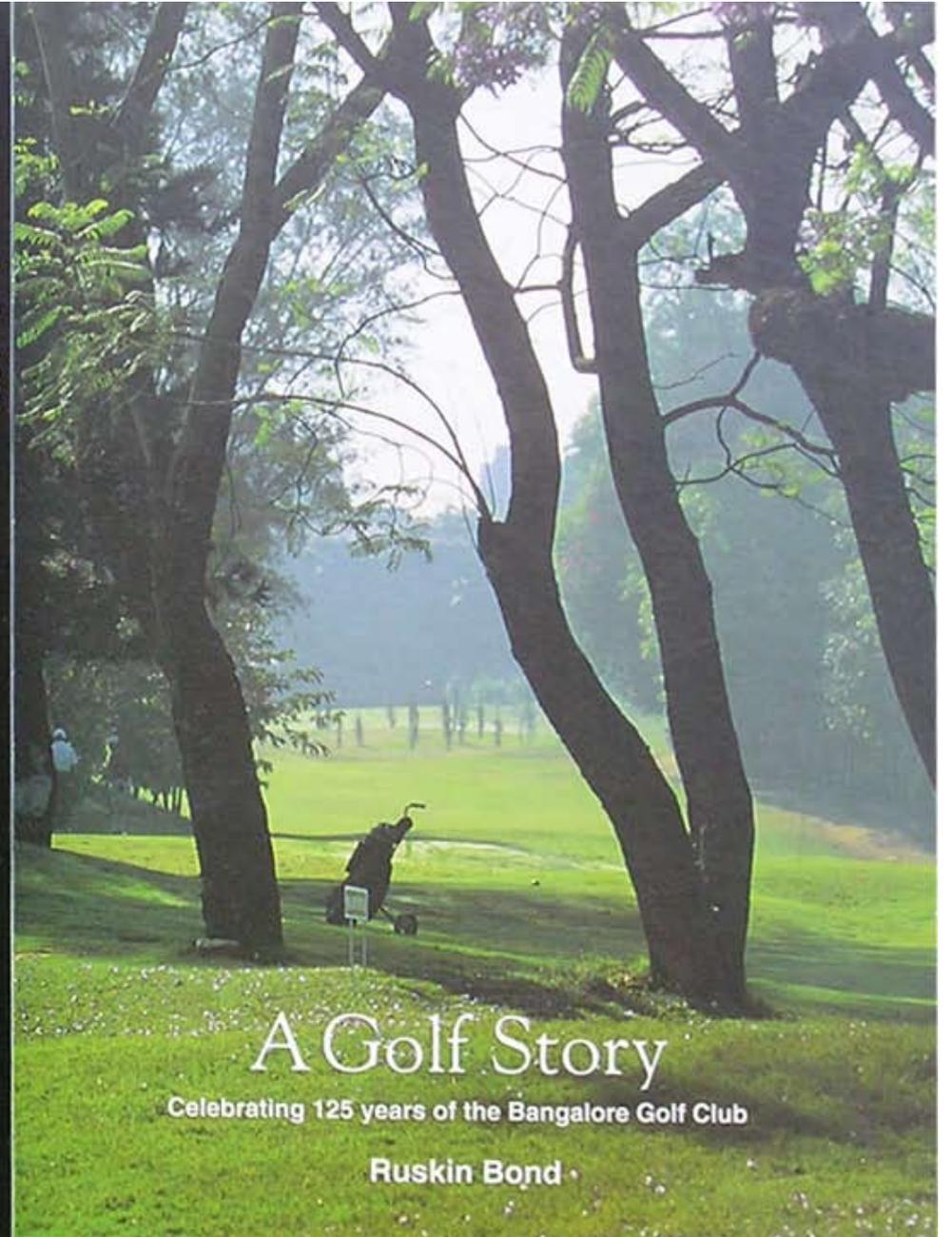




Published by the Bangalore Golf Club
2, Sankey Road, High Grounds, Bangalore 560 001

A Golf Story

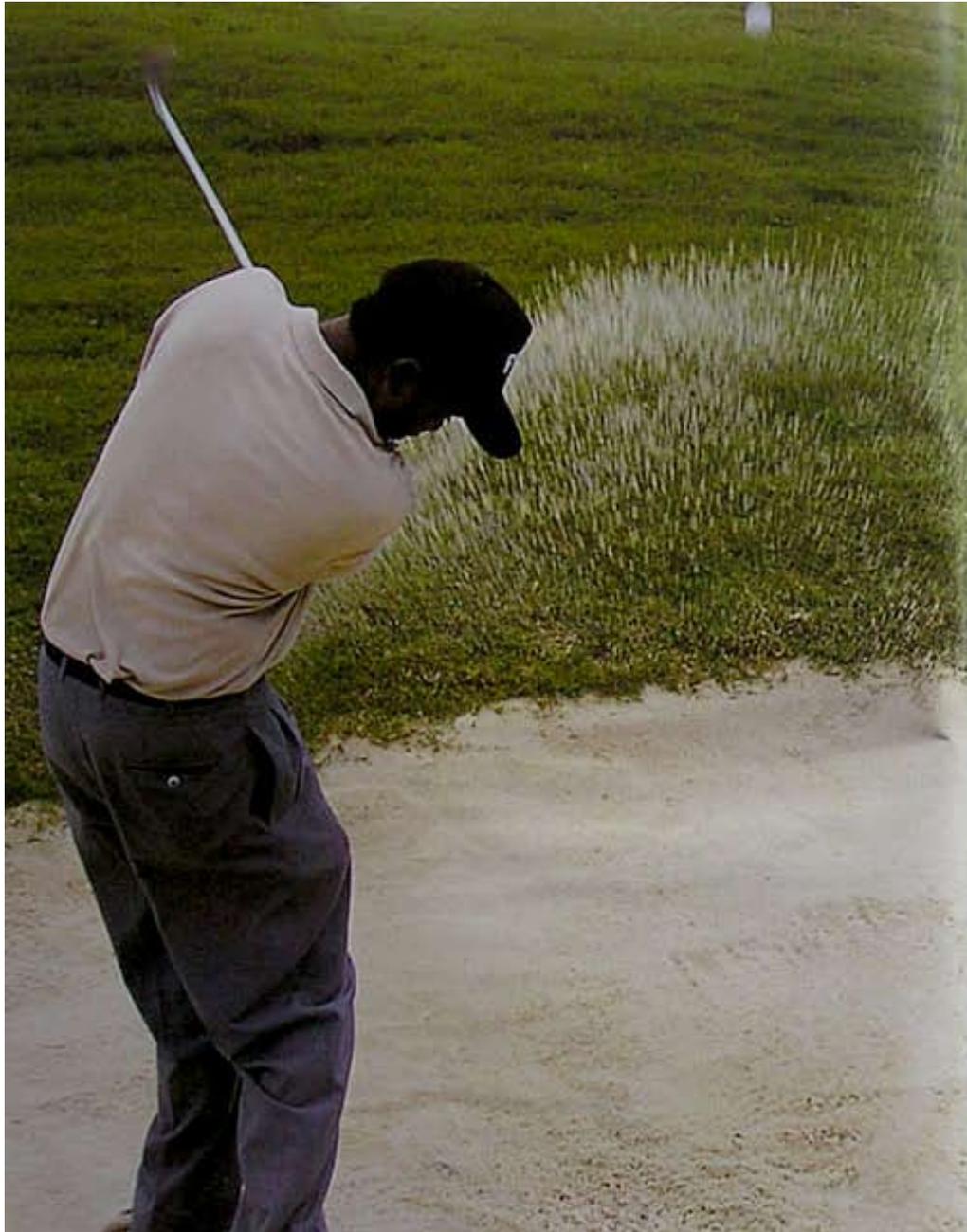
Celebrating 125 years of the Bangalore Golf Club



A Golf Story

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Ruskin Bond



A Golf Story

WHEN I undertook to write this story of the Bangalore Golf Club, I knew nothing about golf apart from what I had learned from reading P. G. Wodehouse—that is, that golf links were great places for romantic encounters with beautiful damsels in distress. Since then I have spoken to several golfers and asked them if they had met their soul mates on the golf course, but apparently none of them had! Their only soul mates were their

collection of golf clubs. And their only love affair was their love-hate relationship with the golf ball.

After finishing this book, I was still pretty hazy about some aspects of the game, even though I had discovered that a niblick worked on the principle of a toothpick and could be used to extract the offending ball from a troublesome cavity.

I did, however, learn a lot about golfers.



11th Fairway, from the 15th Green



and more importantly, about his or her weaknesses. The Golf Club rules recognize this special relationship: the caddy is the alter ego of the player. The caddy is the only person from whom the player is permitted to take guidance on every aspect of the game.

Any breach of rule by a caddy is reflected on the player, who is penalized. And to think that the caddy is ostensibly employed only to carry the golf kit and clean the clubs and soiled balls!

I wondered what a caddy grows up into if he fails to become a champ. Well, it seems that like a soldier who lays down his arms and takes to agriculture, one notable caddy at the BGC went on to become Head Barman—which seems a natural progression after the 18th hole!

Caddies and Rules

An interesting complaint came from Col Bromfield that "most of the caddies at the BGC required instruction in golf rules". "Is there no one to instruct them", he asked, and added "all of them are most slovenly and dirtily dressed, in spite of their high rate of pay". But the committee did not pay any heed to this complaint. Later that year, the same colonel proposed to raise the caddy fee to 2 annas per round, be it of 9 or 18 holes. The proposal was accepted and the secretary was authorized to provide clothing for the caddies, the club to pay half and the caddies the other half.



The Toffs



Bangalore Palace

THE most illustrious family associated with the BGC is the royal family of the erstwhile State of Mysore.

Shri Krishna Rajendra Wodeyar, whose advent to the throne heralded what is called the Golden Era of the State, was rightly termed the God King. Mahatma Gandhi, on being acquainted with his achievements while on rest in Nandi Hills, had termed the State 'Rama Rajya'—the idyllic rule.

The Bangalore Palace built in 1880, in imitation of Windsor Castle, is at the end of Palace Road which directly connects the BGC to the Palace. Both his brother, Shri Narasimha Raja Wodeyar and his son, Shri Jayachamarajendra Wodeyar (the

future Maharaja) were keen golfers.

Shri Krishnarajendra Wodeyar's nephew (elder sister's son) was the colourful Col Desraj Urs, familiar as 'Pudy' in social circles. While royalty were given token membership to the colonial clubs, membership to which were normally reserved only for the whites, it was

Pudy who broke through the colour barrier, becoming a very popular member of these clubs. He has the honour of having his portrait unveiled both in the Bangalore Club and the Bangalore Golf Club, when he passed away in the year 1945, at the young age of 42.

The BGC went even further. The 19th hole, with the now hoary bar counter, was named Pudy's Bar. The bar was presented



Col Rajkumar Desraj Urs