

... find a new hobby

A retired businessman travels the U.S. searching for nine-hole golf courses.

When **Scott Springfield '72** was a star baseball and soccer player at Aurora University, he had little interest in golf.

His first attempt to learn about the game happened after he graduated with his bachelor's degree in elementary education and decided to hang around an extra semester to play college ball. He enrolled in a class called Introduction to Golf taught by his baseball coach, **Fred Bornkamp '65**, at Phillips Park on Aurora's east side.

"I was good at sports, but I recall that golf was a real challenge," said Springfield, whose baseball and soccer achievements earned him a spot in the AU Athletic Hall of Fame. "I didn't take to it right away. It had to percolate over many years."

Today, golf is his passion. Since retiring in 2013, Springfield has spent the past decade traveling around the country playing nine-hole golf courses and ranking the experiences on his blog, "Always Time for 9."

He avoids the renowned temples of golf frequented by the rich and



famous. You won't find Augusta National Golf Course or Pebble Beach Golf Links here. Instead, Springfield explores the lesser-known courses in cities and remote towns in search of the "good, bad, and downright ugly" nine-hole golf courses of America.

"I had already started writing about my golf travels in a journal I kept for myself," Springfield said. "But it occurred to me that golf priced over \$500 was not for the everyday guy. I decided to focus my golf and travels on small, nine-hole courses priced \$20 to \$40 a round, and write about not just golf but the museums and hiking paths and other things you could visit after your round was over."

To date, he's played 214 courses in 42 states. And he developed a five-point rating system, ranking the courses from best to worst: Ace, Birdie, Par, Bogey, and Double Bogey. His golf travels have taken him to courses on an active oil field in Wyoming, next to an elephant sanctuary in Arkansas, and behind a shooting range in Arizona.

Springfield started playing golf in earnest during his career in corporate training for consumer goods companies in Denver. He traveled each year with colleagues to some of the best golf courses. But as he neared retirement, he realized that the older he got, the less he wanted to play a full round of 18 holes.

In 2013, just as Springfield was retiring, the PGA of America and

the United States Golf Association started a campaign for nine-hole play to lure more golfers to the sport. Many of the early golf courses in the U.S. were nine holes.

Springfield said he got tired of reading about the stunning 18-hole golf courses that most people really couldn't play, either because they didn't have the time or the money.

"The bottom line is to have fun, explore this country, and meet awesome people," he said.

Springfield and his wife, Karen, who is retired from her work as an administrator at the University of Colorado, moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, earlier this year. Their new home will become a base for exploring more nine-hole golf courses, particularly in North Carolina and South Carolina, two states that have yet to appear in his blog.

It was the counsel of his boss before he retired that prompted Springfield to think intentionally about this next phase of his life and to rediscover what matters to him.

"She helped me focus on what makes life meaningful and fun for me as I approached retirement," said Springfield, 72. "Spending days on the soccer field and baseball diamond with my teammates at AU, those were some of my happiest memories. Since soccer and baseball are a little too demanding for this stage of life, golfing with friends and writing about our adventures is very fulfilling and rewarding."



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—Scott Springfield '72, retired businessman and blogger at "Always Time for 9"

