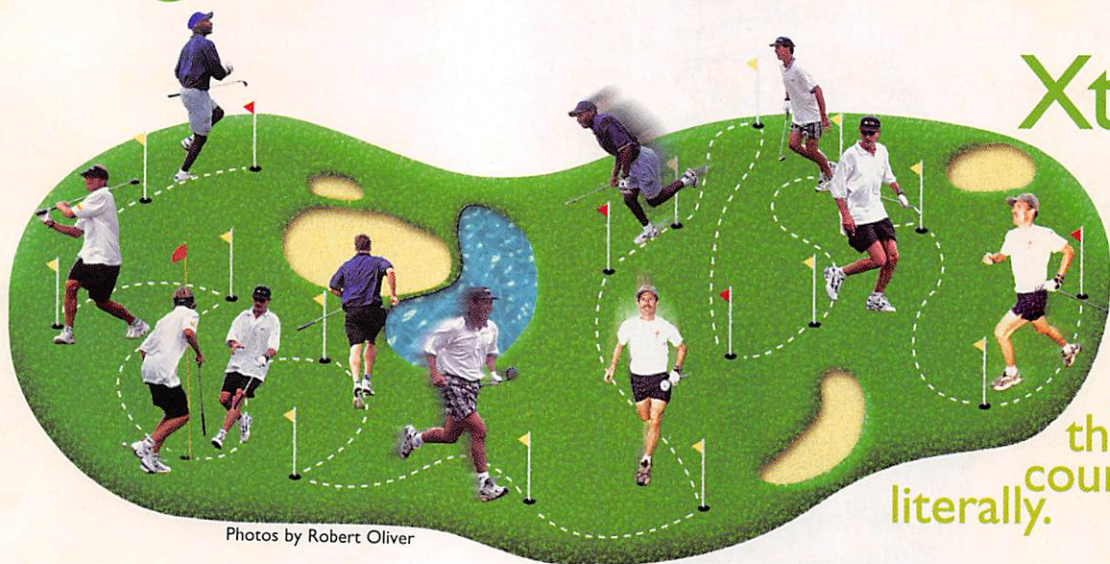


Eighteen Holes Per Hour



Photos by Robert Oliver

**Xtreme
golf
can
get you
running
around
the golf
course—
literally.**

It seems like an average day of golf on the Emerald Course at Wailea, Maui. Until 1996 U.S. Olympic decathlete Chris Huffins screams, "Get me a seven!" His partner and decathlon teammate, Steve Fritz, leaps from his golf cart before it actually stops, digs in the bag and runs to deliver the proper club. Winded, he jumps back into the vehicle that simply will not go fast enough to catch Huffins, running full blast down the fairway after the ball and yelling, "Come on, come on!"

Welcome to Xtreme golf, the brainchild of *Competitor Magazine* publisher Bob Babbitt, who decided that "the speed of running and the beauty of golf" offered the "best of both worlds." This Red Bull Xtreme Golf Open is part of XTERRA Week in Wailea, Maui, which includes an off-road triathlon and sports seminar—all videotaped by ESPN.

For the Xtreme Golf match, professional athletes and amateurs from various sports (excluding professional golf) compete in teams of two, teeing off at three-minute intervals and alternating holes. When Partner A putts in, Partner B retrieves the ball and sprints to the next tee to play. While Partner B shoots, runs and shouts for the appropriate clubs, Player A drives, caddies, keeps score and tries to recover.

How do you score Xtreme Golf? Add your number of strokes to the minutes it takes to complete 18 holes. Unlike in a normal round of golf, speed counts. But golf skill factors heavily, as several teams learned in the course of the tournament.

Legendary Ironman triathletes Scott Tinley and Mark Allen flew over the hilly course in impressive time (though not style), chasing their 131 shots in 52:03 for last place. For efficiency, the two decided not to replace clubs in the bag. Their high-speed driving caused loose clubs to bounce around the cart's seat and occasionally onto the fairway, often preventing them from finding the ones they wanted. Not that it mattered to them. "What's the 'S' for?" Tinley asked later, examining a club with a grin. "Sandtrap?"

More accomplished golfers, like Honolulu businessman Vik Watumull, didn't notice any decline in their usual golf shots. "It's so much easier when you don't think," he said. "The mental thing will kill you."

Right behind winners (and siblings) Durdam and Alexis Rocherolle were the top local finishers—beach volleyball player and Riggers Hawai'i owner Jon Anderson, along with his partner, attorney and former UC Santa Barbara volleyball All-American Alan Lau. The two finessed their way to second place with skillful golf swings, and made up for slow running by anticipating each other's club needs. Dressed in stylish twin volleyball outfits, they shot 78 and ran 57:04 for a score of 135:04—prettier, if less entertaining than other teams.

Athletic prowess didn't always transfer to success on the greens, as Island ocean legends Pete Cabrinha, Buzzy Kerbox and Rush Randle discovered. "Basically you come up on the ball and you're just gasping for air and you have to take a few seconds to center yourself and settle down before you hit it," Cabrinha said. "Windsurfing is an arm thing. I never run. I look like—I don't know—a turtle, probably. But I liked the athletic element. It was a good time."

The new sport may lead golf purists to pop antacids, but Mark Allen makes a good case for Xtreme golf: "I don't see the point in walking around spending four hours playing golf. This is a fun way to get a good workout and do something with your buddies."

"Golf and fitness do belong together," adds Babbitt, who plays Xtreme golf before work several mornings each week. Babbitt also insists that, despite a few wild stories from televised tournaments, Xtreme golfers follow etiquette. "We wear collared shirts and long shorts, we rake the traps and our running shoes do less damage to the course than spikes. We try to be good neighbors."

Still, the biggest draw is efficiency. "Listen," says Watumull, "if I could play 18 holes in under an hour, I'd play a lot more."

PAU