

Professional Golfer Tom Hoge shares his favorites about North Dakota

Fargo native Tom Hogue invites visitors to explore his home state

Tom Hoge grew up golfing in North Dakota and knows just how special it can be. Amidst the lush greens of Fargo Country Club (FCC), golf became more than just a sport for Tom—it became a way of life. Fond memories of endless days spent honing his skills on the fairways, surrounded by friends who shared the same passion, are etched deeply in his mind. If there's one place that holds a special spot in his heart, it's FCC; it's where his journey in golf began, and where he would choose to play his final round of golf if given the chance. Yet, North Dakota's allure extends beyond his hometown club.

Recently North Dakota Tourism caught up with Tom at the WM Phoenix Open in Arizona and he was more than happy to answer a few questions about golfing and why you should come to North Dakota and tee off amidst our picturesque courses, bask in the warmth of our summer sun, and discover a golfing haven like no other.

Which North Dakota courses are your favorites and why?

I grew up in Fargo and my family belonged to Fargo Country Club. I spent so much time out there practicing and working on my golf game. So many friendships and great golf memories came from FCC. It's always on my short list that if I had one round left to play, it may be at Fargo Country Club.

Other places in the state stand out as well. Hawktree in Bismarck is so unique with black sand. Golf has taken me all over the world and Hawktree is still the only place I've seen with it.

Tell about a favorite golf memory from North Dakota.

My favorite memories are really just about the people and friends that I was able to play and practice with. People are surprised all the time that we had around 10 division 1 golfers come out of Fargo Country Club in about a 7-to-8-year time period and I was in the middle of that age wise. We were all good friends and would be at the golf course all day long in the summer competing and pushing each other.

What might surprise people about North Dakota?

I think people would be very surprised with how popular golf is in North Dakota and the diversity in courses we have. The eastern part of the state is fairly flat and has more of your traditional midwestern parkland golf courses. As you move west you start getting into the badlands and some great elevation changes.

What was your favorite thing about growing up in North Dakota?

North Dakota was very accommodating to junior golf and really created a welcoming environment to practice and get better. As I travel the country, I see how rare this is and how restrictive other courses are towards kids learning the game. I was very lucky where I grew up to this kind of access to great facilities.

How did North Dakota impact or shape your professional career?

I think some of my greatest traits as a golfer are work ethic and toughness and I think both of those are direct ties toward growing up in North Dakota.

Who's your favorite person to partner with on the course?

I grew up looking up to Tiger Woods. I've been fortunate to play with him 3 times now and each of those days I will remember forever. Other than Tiger, I enjoy playing with fast players!

What else do you enjoy doing in North Dakota besides golf?

I grew up going to a lot of North Dakota State Bison football and basketball games. It has been fun to follow all their success over the years.

What would you tell someone who has never visited or golfed in North Dakota?

I tell people all the time that North Dakota would make a great golf trip in the middle of summer when it is hot throughout much of the country. We have great weather in the summer months and there is a nice rotation of golf at Hawktree, Bully Pulpit, and Links of North Dakota that would make for a great golf trip.

Did you play other sports growing up?

I played just about every sport you can think of growing up. It was great to put the clubs away for a bit as football or basketball season were in full swing. As I look back, I think it was great to play other sports or I may have got burned out only playing golf year-round.

How do you calm your nerves – or don't you get nervous?

I think every golfer out there gets nervous. Whether you are trying to win a tournament on the PGA Tour or a couple dollars off your buddies you have to get comfortable being a little bit uncomfortable. I try to replicate this in practice and have intense, competitive practice that will put pressure on myself. While the nerves never quite match what I feel in competition, I feel confident that I have prepared well for that moment.