

-----Art Fristad Desert Classic 2023 Wrap Sheet-----

By Jim Hileman

This was the 6th Art Fristad Desert Classic – AKA – “Year Ender”; and I'm declaring it a success!.

Thank you for your support of SDTGA and The Art Fristad Desert Classic. The "Year Ender" is a SDTGA tradition going back more than the 40 years since I first attended. I know Marty Marion and Dave Hastings have been attending "Year Enders" since 1978 or 1979. Almost all of them have taken place in the desert. We may not go to the desert in 2024, but I still plan to have a tournament.

Following is a post from *Jim Jewell's blog* regarding the year ender. I want to add a thank you to our Webmaster Scott Sands for his contribution to SDTGA.

November 6, 2023

[Old Boys](#) by Jim Jewell

In the good ole days, they put a limit at 100 members. There was a waiting list to join. They played in tournaments all over California. The “Year Ender” was at the finest courses in the Palm Springs area. The tournament concluded with a huge dinner for the golfers and their wives in places like the PGA West clubhouse. The tables were full. The prizes were spectacular.

It began, if i remember correctly from what i’ve been told, in the 1950’s. They played a different course in the San Diego area once a month. For years, Art Fristad, managed the affairs and had a great working relationship with the golfing world in the Southwest corner (Today, the name of the tournament is The Art Fristad Desert Classic).

The outfit is named San Diego Telephone Company Golf Association. We called it Telco, and today, it still goes by SDTGA with the Southern California Golf Association. In addition to Art Fristad, many others stepped up to make it all work. The ones i know will likely give me grief for omissions, but i wasn’t into the inner workings. Marty Marion, Phil Greco, and Jim Hileman, my Pittsburgh Pirate and San Diego Padre co-fan, have kept it going. i don’t know the reason such golfing groups like these are fading. Perhaps younger telephone guys aren’t golfers. Perhaps golfing is no longer the chosen pursuit of the younger generations. i have always considered it a wonderful sport that allows you to play at your level throughout your life. i wish i had urged Bob Padgett to teach me the game when, at 14, he took me out to shag balls at the Lebanon Country Club. i might be a better golfer, but i doubt if i would have had any more fun. Our ranks in TELCO continue to decline.

This past weekend, we gathered again in the desert for the “Year Ender.” It’s a two-day team tournament. There have been numerous formats for the rounds, but they all have been fun and many producing golfing stories that will last in old golfers lore.

Yesterday after the tournament and before the drive back from the desert to the Southwest corner, i sat in the small dining and bar area of the Desert Dunes Golf Course. The thought struck me; i and these guys were old boys on this weekend. The rest of the year, we are mostly old men, men who were work men. Telephones and friendships with telephone men was the glue, that and having fun with golf.

I can guarantee none of the banter was politically correct. Like my curmudgeons in our weekly golf game, “asshole” is a compliment. But we laughed and had fun. There is a camaraderie there.

I felt a sadness when Jim Hileman, the main manager of the group announced it was not likely the Year Ender will be in the desert next year. Our group was supposed to be six foursomes. Illnesses, a car wreck, and other complications took our number down to twenty-one, a far cry from the ole days. Cost of play has become a problem. It is something i don’t understand. When it seems the courses are getting less play as the younger generation has other recreational pursuits, i’m not sure why they keep raising their prices for everything, green fees, cart fees, equipment. Yeh, i know maintenance costs and water have made it difficult, but at least a half dozen courses i used to play have gone under. None of it makes sense to me.

Golf is sport you can play throughout your life. i’ve played with folks who passed away within days of their last game, like my father-in-law Ray Boggs, who played his last round at Singing Hills before he passed fourteen days later. The handicapping system gives everyone a chance to win. With carts, you don’t even have to walk to play. And if you are like me, golf gives you a chance to scream profanity and let off some steam.

And fun. Remember the old joke about the foursome playing their usual Saturday morning on a round? They were on the 12th green. One guy was getting ready to put when a hearse led a funeral procession to the nearby cemetery. The guy putting stopped, took off his hat, and hung his head as the procession passed. The other golfers were impressed and complimented him on his respect for the person who had died and the procession itself. “Yes,” the golfer said, “She was a good wife.”

i’m sure the year-ender will continue for a few more years, just not in the Palm Springs area. We are likely to play a local course.

The raucous stay with Jeff Middlebrook (who is the latest in a long line of great guys who filled out our foursome over the years) at Pete Toennies’s time share has been a boys weekend out. Pete has been a team member for quite a while now, and even i was not an original member — Hey, Mike Kelly, you are legendary and remembered; we still wish you were here and not in Houston.

Yeh, it won’t be quite the same, but we will keep on keeping on. These old boys were made that way.

Thanks, Jim Hileman, Marty Marion, and Phil Greco for keeping it going. – jj –