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Don't Ask What I Shot: How President Eisenhower's Love of Golf Helped Shape 1950's America

Catherine Lewis

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“Golf . . . is a sport in which the whole American family can participate--fathers and mothers, sons and daughters alike. It offers healthy respite from daily toil, refreshment of body and mind.”
--President Dwight D. Eisenhower

On January 24, 1953, four days after his inauguration, the *New York Times* reported that President Dwight D. Eisenhower had been spotted on the White House lawn practicing his short irons in the direction of the Washington Monument. This image of “The Golfing General” was one that the American public quickly became accustomed to, as Eisenhower is said to have played nearly 800 rounds during the course of his two-term presidency. He befriended the game's most beloved players, including Arnold Palmer, Ben Hogan, and Byron Nelson, and was the subject of hundreds of golf jokes and cartoons.

The public's awareness of Eisenhower's obsession with golf led directly to the sport's mid-century surge in popularity. In *Don't Ask What I Shot*, noted historian Catherine M. Lewis offers a unique alternate portrait of Ike and this watershed period in American history.

“Any time you have a person in the position of President Eisenhower, who was so enthusiastic about golf and had the press paying attention to his many excursions on the golf course, it was going to make people aware of the game and how much he enjoyed playing it.”
--Arnold Palmer

"*Don't Ask What I Shot* is a fascinating examination of one of golf's pivotal decades, and the remarkable president who did more to popularize the game than any other in history."
-Mark Frost, award-winning author of *Grand Slam* and *The Greatest Game Ever Played*

"Whatever remained to be done to remove the last traces of the average man's carefully nurtured prejudice against a game originally linked with the wealthy and aloof was done by President Eisenhower."
--Herbert Warren Wind, renowned golf writer

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