

PHIL LEADERHOUSE

Phil's golf career has been an inspiration to blind and sighted golfers. Phil was born in Prince Albert in 1915 and lost his sight at the age of 19.

After hearing about an impaired-vision golfer, Phil began working with Hubert Cooke, professional at the Prince Albert golf course, and was ready for his first tournament in 1955. Phil dominated blind golf championships, winning 20 Saskatchewan titles, 16 Western Canadian titles, five Canadian championships and was runner-up at two world championships.

In 1990 he won the British Open Blind Championship in Scotland. He held the world blind record when he shot 89 in Saskatoon in 1966. A highlight for Phil was a hole-in-one in 1990.

Phil was a guest of Bob Hope at a Pebble Beach tournament in the 1960s. In order to raise more money for the charity it was suggested that Bob and Phil could have a match, with Bob picking the venue and Phil picking the time. So Bob chose the next day at Pebble Beach. Then Phil decreed that the time of the match would be midnight! Phil also appeared on the Ed Sullivan show and was a regular guest at the Ken Venturi Guiding Eyes Classic in New York State to raise funds for seeing-eye dogs.

Phil was a pioneer for blind golf and his success on the course was an inspiration for many disabled people. He was an ambassador for the sport and appeared at many events featuring disabled athletes. Phil was inducted into the Saskatchewan Sports Hall of Fame in 1983.

He was Prince Albert Athlete of the Year in 1991. Phil died from a heart attack at age 75 after the first round of play in the Western Canadian Championships in Winnipeg in 1991. Phil died on September 10, 2011 at age 96, and is survived by his wife Cheryl, children Nicole, Natalie and Ryan, and five grand-children.

