

## ... with MARK WAHLBERG

“Mark is old school and has a deep respect for the tradition and history of the game.”

— MICHAEL YAMAKI, CORPORATE OFFICER, RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB

By Mark Pazdur, Publisher

SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA: Mark Wahlberg admits his introduction to golf was atypical.

“I was the youngest of nine children, growing up in rough-and-tumble South Boston,” explained Wahlberg. “My troubles are well documented. With little parental oversight, I made a living on the streets by hustling, stealing, and selling drugs. The only time I would hold a golf club would be to utilize it as a weapon.”

“My agent invited me to play a round of golf with him at Riviera Country Club in Pacific Palisades, California,” said Wahlberg. “At first, I said, ‘No way. You have got to be kidding. Golf isn’t a sport. I play basketball.’ He continued to encourage me to join him, drive the golf cart, and have a couple of beers. I ultimately agreed and tried to hit a couple of golf balls. I became angry and frustrated at my poor performance. That anger soon turned into an obsession to master my game, a goal that all golfers know is unobtainable.”



Corporate Officer Michael Yamaki with Mark Wahlberg at the Riviera Country Club.



The 10th hole



The 6th hole

### ANSWERS FROM MARK WAHLBERG TO 3 questions YOU MAY BE AFRAID TO ASK

Q: What would your first tee conversation be with Caitlyn Jenner?

A: “Caitlyn is a friend. We play golf together and I want to play golf with him again. He is a great guy and I am proud he made a decision that has haunted him for decades. It is sad he had to live in hiding for such a long time. He must feel the weight of the world is lifted off his shoulders. Our only hiccup in conversation would be discussing what set of tees he will now be playing.”

Q: You were scheduled to be on American Airlines flight 11 on September 11, 2001 that crashed into the North Tower of the World Trade Center. How has that changed your outlook on life?

A: “My plans changed the day before and I cancelled my reservation. I don’t know if it was luck, fate, or God. I feel fortunate in so many ways. I think about it every morning when I look at my wife and kids’ faces.”

Q: Why has golf become your passion?

A: “Snowboarding and golf are my favorite sports. During the filming of *Deep Water Horizon* [being released in 2016], I had a golf simulator on-set to practice during down times. My sons are taking golf lessons and I enjoy playing with them. I am honored to be a member at Riviera. It has so much history. I love it there. If you hit the ball good, you can score. If Riviera was on the water, it would arm wrestle Pebble Beach as best in the state.”

“RIVIERA COUNTRY CLUB is on every serious golfer’s bucket list because of its history and design. It is a shotmakers course that has been on all “top 100” lists every year. Riviera first hosted the L.A. Open in 1929 with a purse of \$10,000. Each Sunday during tournament week, as they hit their approach shot to the 18th green, Tour players know they are walking the walk every great champion has experienced.” — MICHAEL YAMAKI

“I started playing right-handed, switched to left-handed, back to right-handed, and settled on left-handed; but, I still putt right-handed.”

Mark ultimately joined Riviera Country Club and dedicated himself to improve. His first round as a member proved eventful. “I hit an errant shot and almost killed Peter Falk [aka, Columbo]!”

Mark is considered one of Hollywood’s best golfers.

“I have been as low as a five,” revealed Wahlberg. “Family life [Mark and his wife Rhea have four children] and my acting schedule limit practice time. I now carry a mid-teen handicap.”

#### LESSONS LEARNED

“My mom was a bank clerk and my dad was a delivery driver,” said Wahlberg. “Most of the time, I was on my

own. I’ve made mistakes in life, but I never blame it on my upbringing. Everything I did wrong was my own fault. My parents taught me the difference between right and wrong at an early age. I take responsibility for my wayward actions.”

Mark is Roman Catholic and attends church almost daily. “Our parish priest was instrumental in turning my life around,” continued Wahlberg. “God is an important part of my life.”

Well aware of the vices of Hollywood, Mark is careful to keep his children grounded.

“I’m proud of my achievements. One of my biggest accomplishments was receiving my high school diploma two years ago. I want them to know that not everyone is as fortunate to receive a second chance in life. It’s important to work hard and give back.” ■

MARK WAHLBERG made his big screen 1994 debut in *Renaissance Man*. His breakthrough role was *The Basketball Diaries* in 1995. In 2006 he was nominated for an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor in the Martin Scorsese directed crime drama, *The Departed*. More recently, he has been executive producer of *Entourage* and *Boardwalk Empire*.