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Playing golf good way to assess a person's character

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I HAVE read with great interest the recent comments made by Tun Daim Zainuddin and our Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the delinquent behaviour of some trade delegation members who ran off to karaoke lounges and golf courses.

Some Japanese executives will swear that the karaoke lounge is a great therapy for de-stressing and the fostering of fellowship among co-workers and customers.

In the Malaysian context, however, hard liquor and young hostesses come to mind at the mention of karaoke lounges.

This is a debatable issue but that's not my area. I must say mentioning golf in the same breath as patronising karaoke lounges with the implied insinuations is a bit too harsh.

Golf is and will always remain a gentleman's game and should be indulged in at a proper time.

I've read in the Fortune 500 magazine that some chairmen and board members of multinationals would withhold the appointment of any CEO or key personnel until they've had a round of golf with the applicant.

Reason being that a more accurate character assessment can be derived here than in any other sport, recreation or social activity.

You can assess if a person is a risk-taker or risk-averse, patient or bad-tempered, honest or otherwise, a strategist or a come-what-may ...

"What if the applicant doesn't play golf?" asked the writer. One chairman replied: "Then he's not even shortlisted."

Many who play golf must know that there were several world renowned professional golfers who disqualified or penalised themselves in major world competitions while in contention for the top prizes because they declared they could not live with the knowledge of winning because of their violation of some golfing rule some time during the event which nobody else had noticed.

I know that before I put my signature on any dotted line, I most definitely must assess my potential business partner's character in a manner I know best, preferably if we could hit a little white ball on some manicured grounds somewhere.

Within four-and-a-half hours, I may generally assess his approach towards the business we're getting into.

This timeframe may possibly save me from a bad partnership.

Whilst on this subject, I do declare that there is so much skill involved in a good game of golf that even if money is involved, it is not blatant gambling as in a game of chance ... but a good day at work.