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### LIFE, GOLF ARE MARATHONS FOR SURVIVOR

**Cary Cozby's** early November day of golf began at 6:53 a.m. and the thermometer at Wichita County Club read 24 degrees, when it could be read at all through the frost that had accumulated.

The day ended at 5:23 p.m. - 630 minutes after it started - following 111 holes of golf played, amazingly, at 8 over par. And **Cozby**, the club's pro, lived to tell about it.

But that's not the best story he has lived to tell about. No, that one would be about his fight to survive colon cancer, which led him to playing marathon golf in the first place as a way to try and pay back some special people.

**Cozby** played 110 holes last year and raised \$51,000 for Victory in the Valley, a non-profit organization that provides services to cancer patients and their families in and around Wichita.

This year, the tally is at \$42,000.

**Cozby** said he was touched by the dedication of his care-takers, especially the nurses.

"When I first went in for treatment I tried to figure out why anybody would want to be an oncology nurse," **Cozby** said. "Everybody in there is scared to death. After a little bit of time, you kind of realize how special those people are to be able to work in that environment."

**Cozby's** initial goal was to raise \$10,000 and maybe put some nicer furniture in the lounge at the Cancer Center of Kansas.

He's been able to do a lot more, just by playing the game he loves.

This year, the average time per hole was 5 minutes, 40 seconds. He didn't ride a cart, instead walking nearly 30 miles and depending on a group of six caddies, who worked 90-minute shifts and had his club ready on demand.

"The reason I walk is because I want to honor those people who are going through treatment for cancer right now and who are struggling mentally and physically," **Cozby** said. "It's a good reminder for me, personally, to not get too far away from it to appreciate what I went through."

**Cozby** couldn't forget what he went through. First, 10 inches of his colon was removed. Then he underwent six months of chemotherapy, from early July until Dec. 31, 2004.

Ten days later, he was declared cancer free.

"Before I was diagnosed, I was unbelievably fatigued," **Cozby** said. "You try and justify it by saying you're getting older, or that you're really busy."

But **Cozby** knew there was a more serious reason for his lack of energy, even before he went to the doctor. He just didn't feel right.

Now he just sees a doctor for routine checkups and feels better than he has in years. Even with his feet, hands, arms, legs and just about every other part of his anatomy crying for help during these golf marathons.

**Cozby** played one more hole this year than he did last, and his goal is to play at least one more hole next year, when he does it all again.

This isn't recreation for **Cozby**, an avid golfer who played collegiately at Oklahoma. It's his calling, thanks to the cancer scare.

"When you're 35, you're just beginning to even think about your own mortality," said **Cozby**, who grew up in Bartlesville, Okla., and has been in Wichita almost seven years. "Then, all of a sudden, it's right there laying on your doorstep to deal with. It was very shocking."

Now **Cozby** feels like one of the lucky ones, just the way Lance Armstrong, also a cancer survivor, says he feels.

"I wouldn't trade the cancer experience for anything in the world," **Cozby** said. "Of course, had things not gone as well I wouldn't say that. But so many positives have come from such a negative source. My relationship with my wife (Staci) is much closer. We were side by side during the whole thing. When it got down to it, when you shut the doors and get in the house it's just the two of you. And she was great."

**Cozby** said he has always been a glass half full kind of guy. Now the glass is overflowing and he needs to find another glass or two to contain the spill.

Or perhaps the spill is helping others, as he does by playing golf for a crazy amount of hours one day a year.

"I walk as fast as I can possibly make myself play," he said. "But when I hit shots, I take my time because there is extra money that is raised with every birdie or eagle. And I still have that golfing pride. I don't want to be out there shooting a bunch of 85s."

Instead, **Cozby's** rounds last month were 75, 71, 73, 73, 72 and 71. And he was even par through three holes on Round 7 before quitting.

Make that stopping. **Cozby** never quits.

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