

Stop Criticizing President Obama for Playing Golf

David Kopel • August 23, 2010 3:38 pm

In this polarized period of American politics, many people on the Right have been taking cheap shots at President Obama because he plays golf so much.

These golf-related criticisms are at least factually accurate, in contrast to the lies that Michael Moore told about George Bush supposedly vacationing much of the time. However, the criticisms of President Obama are misguided.

Of American Presidents since World War II, the one President who is now almost universally regarded as highly successful and constructive, by persons of all political persuasions, is President Dwight D. Eisenhower. While serving eight years as President of the United States, Eisenhower may have played over *eight hundred* rounds of golf. In other words, about twice a week.

Like President Obama, President Eisenhower was criticized by partisan opponents for his avid interest in golf.

Obviously there are many differences between President Eisenhower and President Obama. To begin with, the former came into office with demonstrated success in a very difficult executive job, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, defeating Hitler and Mussolini. By contrast, Obama was apparently successful as President of the *Harvard Law Review*, but was a failure at his only latter significant executive position, Chairman of the Board of the Chicago Annenberg Challenge, which attempted unsuccessfully to improve education in selected Chicago schools.

However, President Eisenhower demonstrated beyond any doubt that there is no inherent contradiction between being a good President and being an avid golfer. Indeed, golf helps clear the mind, and hardly any sport is better at fostering humility in participants. So unless President Obama's critics are willing to state that President Eisenhower golfed too much, they should stop carping about President Obama's golfing.