

Eddie Van Halen

THE HALL OF FAME AXMAN ON PRACTICE, PARTNERS AND HOW A ROCK STAR DRIVES A GOLF CART. [Illustration by Nigel Buchanan](#)

Eddie Van Halen will forever be cooler than you. But if it makes you feel any better, he gets just as infuriated by golf as the rest of us. If he handled his guitar the way he handles a golf club, the world of rock would be an infinitely poorer place. But this is still his game, and the member of Los Angeles's Lakeside Golf Club will be playing golf as long as he's playing "Panama." The game still drives him nuts: Rock gods, they're just like us!

Why do you play?

[My brother] Alex and I used to play pitch and putt, but it wasn't really about golf. It was about that ice chest full of beer. It was just fun to go out there and whack the ball and drink beers. But he gave it up.

Beer or golf?

Well, eventually both. Golf first.

How long have you been playing?

I never really took lessons. I just kind of have a natural swing. But, God, 30 years? 35?

Ever have an ace?

Nope.

How do you think your fans would react if you went on stage in golf gear?



I don't think they care. I just wear jeans and a T-shirt anyway. I think wearing golf gear would be a step up.

Are you competitive?

Naw. I'll hit a good ball and then two bad ones. I don't even keep score, man. What's the point?

I know it's going to be in the hundreds. The worst thing is my putting. The thing is: I never practice.

Whom do you play with?

George Lopez. He's like my best buddy now. I met him for dinner, and he said, "Man, I didn't know you were a member

at Lakeside." I went, "Yeah, man. I've been a member for 30 years." He goes, "But you never play." I go, "I know! I got no one to play with." And he goes, "Let's go." So I tee it up, crack the s--- out of the ball, straight down the fairway. And George

looks at me and goes, "You are full of s---."

Are there similarities between playing golf and playing the guitar?

If you really want to be good you have to spend the time, like I did learning to play guitar. That's how many hours you got to put in if you really want to be a pro or really, really good. You got to go out there and hit buckets and buckets and buckets of balls.

What's the best course you've ever played?

Lakeside. At first they wouldn't let me in. They said I was the only long-haired rock and roller, and Joe Pesci and a bunch of other members stuck up for me and said hey, what do you think, he's going to be dealing heroin at the back door?

How fast can you drive a golf cart?

We play bumper cars with those things.

You drive a Lamborghini. Where do you fit your clubs?

In the passenger seat.

Oh, also...

I gotta go. There's a coyote in my backyard. Big f--ker.

Interview by Will Leitch