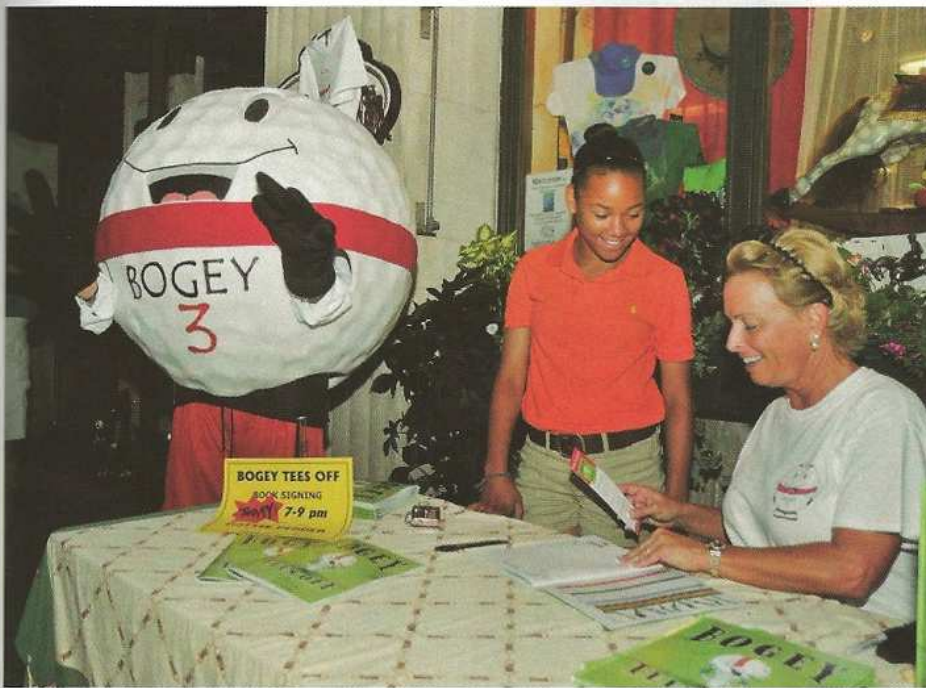


Story and Photograph by
MIKE KANE



Professional golfer and NBC commentator Dottie Pepper of Saratoga Springs autographs copies of her *Bogey Tees Off* children's book at Impressions of Saratoga.

Hello Bogey

Dottie Pepper Scores With Kids' Books About Golf

Professional golf star Dottie Pepper has been helping to turn a negative word in her sport—bogey—into a positive force for the ancient game.

Pepper is the co-author and unabashed promoter of the “Bogey Tees Off” series of children’s books that was launched earlier this year. A bogey in scoring golf is one stroke over par for the hole. Throughout her distinguished playing career, which started in her hometown of Saratoga Springs, Pepper strived to avoid bogeys.

Retired from competition, and now a commentator for NBC and columnist for *Sports Illustrated*, Pepper is deeply involved with Bogey Ballton III, the character created by writer Scott Fuller. Bogey is an ambitious range ball at the Scooter Pines Golf and Country Club, and his adventures begin with volume one, entitled *A Lesson About Being Truthful*, which was unveiled at the 2012 PGA Merchandise Show at Orlando in late January. A special 2012 holiday book featuring Bogey will be published in time for Christmas, and the second volume is scheduled for early 2013. The plan is for 18 books, the number of holes in a round of golf.

Fuller and illustrator Kenneth Templeton—friends and surfing buddies since the early 1980s—had been working on the project for years. Their concept was presented to Pepper at the Norfolk, Va. airport by her friend and fellow Furman University alum, Lee Summers, and the Bogey book quickly moved onto the fast track toward reality.

At Summers’ request, Pepper had donated her time to make an appearance at an event

sponsored by First Tee of Hampton Roads, Va., a non-profit that supports junior golf.

The airport meeting took place a couple of hours before Pepper started her trip home to upstate New York.

“He said, ‘I’ve got a couple of guys that I’d like you to meet,’” Pepper recalls. “‘They’ve got this fledgling project that’s starting to buzz a little bit, and they really need somebody who knows golf and has kind of a passion for where the game might be going. They’d like you to take a look at it.’”

As she tells the story, Pepper rolls her eyes for effect and laughs.

“I was pretty skeptical at first,” she says. “This had never really been done before, but I was pretty inspired by the two days I had just spent at First Tee at Hampton Roads, knowing how stagnant the game was.

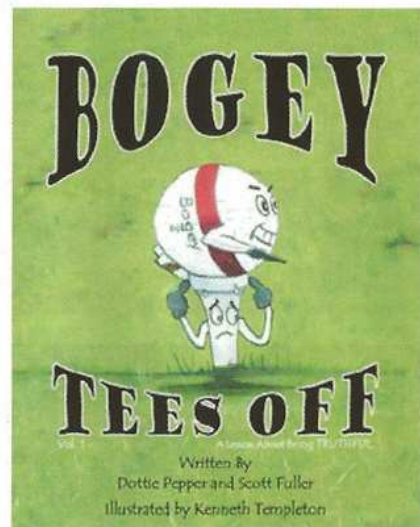
“Kids find the game really hard and pretty intimidating. It’s expensive. Parents don’t have the time. Grandparents aren’t around as much.

“It’s all kind of stacked against golf when you really look at it.”

The concept didn’t exactly take Pepper’s breath away during the meeting.

“They presented me with a very raw idea,” she says. “I had no paperwork, nothing. I didn’t know what Bogey looked like.”

Still, they got her attention. She was interested in reaching out and presenting golf to children while providing life lessons in the story. By early September 2011, they had formed a company to bring Bogey to life. A key part of their business plan is that a percentage of the profits will benefit golf charities. Pepper approached some of her



many contacts in the sport and starting selling the project.

“I got the USGA (United States Golf Association) on board and got their stamp of approval for the glossary we included,” she says. “That was really important.”

The final four months of 2011 were a whirlwind of activity as Fuller, Templeton and Pepper collaborated on ideas—weaving math and history into the story—while dealing with difficult deadlines. They added the glossary of golf terms and autograph pages to the book. Pepper recruited the children of her Saratoga Springs neighbors and friends to read the manuscript and offer suggestions.

“It’s been fun,” she says. “It’s been stressful. It’s been a business-learning experience. It has definitely been a lesson in time management; I thought I was pretty good at it until I threw a third project into my life. But it’s been a blast.” **SL**

Order books at BogeyTeesOff.com.