

FROM VICE PRINCIPAL TO PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE

EDDIE MCCULLEY, COMPETITIVE DISC GOLFER

Colt Wyatt, Sports Editor

How well do you actually know your vice principal? Eddie McCulley has been with North High School for five years now, serving two as a Student Improvement Leader (SIL) and three years as the vice principal (VP). Something you might not have known about McCulley is he is actually a professional disc golfer outside of work. Currently, he is ranked 967 in the world.

Some of you might not know what disc golf exactly is or even heard of the sport. Disc golf is just like regular golf but without the golf balls or golf clubs. Instead you have a disc (or several discs) and instead of a hole you have a basket about waist high with chains that catches the disc. The goal is still to get it the least amount of shots as possible.

I can play it alone, I can take my wife out, I can take a couple kids out that want to play, I can take out Mr. Sinclair, the new AD who's never played before.

Now some of you might think "oh that's just like golf, that's boring." But to some people it's a lifestyle, like McCulley. McCulley has been playing disc golf for 15 years now but has been playing professionally for 11 years, the last eight of which have been in Iowa. McCulley started playing in Southern California as an amateur and worked his way up to where he is now.

When McCulley first started playing nobody really got him into it except himself. He was just trying to find something to do to pass time that he could do with his wife or even by himself. He tried surfing but didn't have as much fun as he thought he would so he picked up disc golf.

Then one day he went out to play and he walked onto a course that had leagues and tournaments. Not knowing what they were, he joined some of them and got better as he played in them more and got competitive and started winning.

You may wonder, do professional disc golfers get paid? Well, the answer is yes. Now they don't make money like professional golfers do

but they do get a certain amount of earning depending on where they place in the tournament whether it be at the top or the bottom. Over McCulley's 11 year career he said he has made about \$20,000 in his career earnings but the most he's taken home in one tournament was about \$800 in the Minnesota Majestic tournament.

McCulley stated that he spends about \$1,500 a year between signing up for tournaments and buying new discs, bags, etc. "I normally buy about a bag a year and about 20-40 discs a year now and I play five to 15 tournaments a year and tournaments cost anywhere from 40 to 100 bucks to play" McCulley explained.

Since McCulley has become the vice principal at North it's impacted his time to get out and play with all the meetings and things that VP's have no choice but to attend. Before he became the vice principal he would be able stop on his way home and knock out 18 holes almost every day back when he was super competitive. Now he's lucky if he can even get nine in during the week. "When I first became a masters, which is 40 and over and I took like 18th in the world, I was playing pretty much every day after school and practicing a lot so now I can't because I don't have time anymore" McCulley said.

"It is my favorite sport because I can play it alone, I can take my wife out, I can take a couple kids out that want to play, I can take out Mr. Sinclair, the new AD, who's never played before so we can walk the course and he can learn how to play the game in 18 holes and have fun doing it and it doesn't cost any money. It's free. Costs the discs, as long as I can give away some discs and play with people it's just one of those things you can do with anybody and it doesn't cost anything" he said.



Top: McCulley out at Ewing Park in Des Moines practicing his drives. Photo courtesy of Eddie McCulley.

Middle: McCulley at Ewing Park in Des Moines getting some practice on drives and puts. Photo courtesy of Eddie McCulley.

Bottom: McCulley has his picture taken by the PDGA after birding a hole at the Minnesota Majestic.

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