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DISCOVERING BALANCE

Sunriver program combines physical fitness and golf

By Paul Ramsdell
Golf Northwest Magazine

Some golf instructors have their long-time, tried-and-true improvement drills they tell every student -- no matter what shape, size or physical condition -- to do a thousand times a day.

Repetition is the path to perfection, they say.

Well, that might work for some, but the chance that it works for everyone is remote.

In the Golf-In-Balance program offered at Sunriver Resort through Sept. 30, no drill is prescribed until a thorough physical fitness analysis is completed on the body that is going to attempt those drills.

"Knowledge is power," said Jennifer Yockey, an instructor at the Ron Seals Golf Academy at Sunriver. "When they understand why they hit the shots they do, and then can attach a drill or they can attach a stretch to that problem, it's like a light bulb going off."

Yockey teams with Susan Hill, a fitness trainer at the Sage Springs Club and Spa at Sunriver, to conduct the Golf-In-Balance program. The program starts with a detailed video analysis of a golfer's

physical flexibility.

"We're trying to really get at what is the heart of each issue with each golfer, from a physical standpoint, and find out what their weak link is," Hill said. "And if we can determine what their weak link is, then we can surely create a better golfer."

It is what the better players have done. PGA Tour players no longer just have a swing coach, they also have a fitness trainer. Yockey, a former University of Washington golfer, works with several touring players, but always does it in conjunction with their fitness coach.

If it's something that works for players who chase up to \$1 million a week in prize money, it should work for those nervous over a \$2 Nassau.

"That's what we're trying to do," Hill said. "Bring what they know and what they do to the average golfer. Helping them to understand that it's really a whole, full-body approach."

Hill said that approach works for Tiger Woods.

"He's got to make sure his body functions in the golf swing at all angles, for all reasons, under all circumstances," she said.

Neither Hill nor Yockey plan to put any resort guests at Sunriver through the



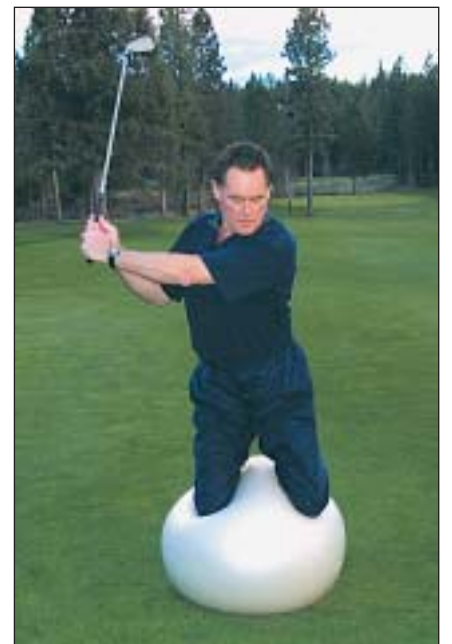
Steve Hill demonstrates some of the stretching exercises that can help someone's golf game, while Jennifer Yockey, below, works with a player's swing.

same strenuous physical training regimen Woods follows, unless they really want it. Instead, everything will be tailored for the individual.

And that tailoring starts after both Hill and Yockey view the video of the resort golfer.

"Every time I see that their body can't perform in a certain way, it really is in my best interest to give them a stretch to show them how their body is supposed to function as opposed to finding a way around it because every time you find a way around it, it's like putting a patch on it as opposed to fixing the problem," Hill said.

"How about we fix the problem that we



Photos courtesy Sunriver Resort

Don't go OB at the breakfast table

Susan Hill, a fitness trainer at the Sage Springs Club and Spa at the Sunriver Resort, has more quick fixes for someone's golf game than just personalized stretching exercises.

Eating properly at the proper times could also make a big difference in someone's final score, or final placing in a tournament.

"A lot of golfers have no idea the impact certain foods, and when they consume them, can have on their rounds," said Hill, who conducts the Golf-In-Balance program at Sunriver along with Jennifer Yockey.

That program looks at everything that can assist a golfer's performance for the full round of golf.

"It's our goal to try to get to the heart of where the trouble is, and is it a matter of consistency, is it a matter of cardio-vascular endurance, is it a matter of flexibility," Hill said.

Hill was pleased when she was watching the

Masters last April and saw Ernie Els eating an apple as he was waiting for a possible playoff.

"That meant everything to me," she said, adding that it proves Els knows that an apple slowly provides energy and does it at a constant level.

Els probably had plenty of food choices in the players' locker room, but stayed away from one item on Hill's disaster list.

"White bagels could be among the worst things that a golfer could consume," she said, adding that a white bagel will get the blood sugar to rise too sharply, and then come crashing down 15 minutes later.

"I can prove to them through nutrition that they will feel better by eating certain things and they will have less fatigue," she said of golfers looking for any edge.

-- Paul Ramsdell

saw and then the swing would actually take care of itself more naturally.”

“It’s a work in progress,” Yockey said, “and if they’re willing to put in the time and effort with what Susan recommends, then obviously that makes my job a lot easier and obviously they progress a lot faster.”

And Yockey says most golfers quickly become excited with the program.

“Once they see the video of themselves changing because of simple flexibility and exercises, that’s motivation enough.”

package is designed for all levels of players, but for those who want to put in a minimal investment in time and money. It includes a one-hour golf fitness assessment and a one-hour personal golf instruction for \$160 for a single golfer and \$95 for each additional person.

The Masters package is designed for those making a bigger commitment and includes a one-hour golf fitness assessment, a one-hour individualized fitness program and three one-hour personalized golf lessons for \$420 and

‘When they understand why they hit the shots they do, and then can attach a drill or they can attach a stretch to that problem, it’s like a light bulb going off.’

Hill said it might not take any big, serious routine to get a golfer on track.

“It could be a matter of a handful of stretches that could unleash a whole new golfer,” she said.

And after that, maybe the old tried-and-true drills will become beneficial.

“Now there’s a reason for why they can’t do what their golf instructors in the past have asked them to do,” Yockey said.

The Golf-In-Balance program is offered three different ways this summer at Sunriver. The Fit and Function

\$260 for each additional person.

There’s also a customized package where programs can be picked from the Golf-In-Balance components.

Each golfer will have a fitness and golf program designed for them by Hill and Yockey they can take with them and utilize anytime.

More information on the Golf-In-Balance program is available by calling Sunriver at 541-593-7890, or checking the resort’s web site at www.sunriver-resort.com. ❖

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