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Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly



Play “In the Zone” with Joan

GOLF SEASON RECAP

The summer golf season is winding down for most of the country while here in Florida golfers are still playing in 90+ heat and humidity wishing for a break in the long, hot summer.

The 2005 golf season is finishing on a definite upswing. The American female professional golfers have recaptured the Solheim Cup from the European team. The U.S. male professional golfers won the President’s Cup back from the International team of pros. After losing four of the last five Walker Cup Matches, the American male amateurs recaptured the Cup from the England, Ireland, Wales and Scotland team.

Michele Wie turned pro just before her 16th birthday with endorsements around \$10 million. U.S. Open Champion Michael Campbell earned \$1.81 million for winning the HSBC World Match Play

Championship September 18th. This weekend Tiger Woods outlasted John Daly in a grip it and rip contest to win his 6th tournament of the year and his 4th win out of 6 starts at the AMEX Championship.

Team Matches

Golf is not considered a team sport, but playing on a team can create or eliminate a lot of pressure depending upon your attitude. Solheim captain Nancy Lopez, Walker Cup captain Bob Lewis, and President's Cup captain Jack Nicklaus focused on uniting their team members so they all pulled together for victory.

Lopez made sure that her players got to know each other on a personal level, played practice rounds together, and created a fun atmosphere for them by decorating their rooms with balloons, flowers, chocolates, candles, photos and their red, white and blue equipment. She also pampered her team with manicures, pedicures and massages. Her strategy also included practice sessions in the alternate-shot format that hadn't been done before. Her players were bonded to each other and pumped to get started. The fans at Crooked Stick who chanted "God Bless America" inspiring the team to keep the perfect home record intact, reinforced their enthusiasm.

European team member Annika Sorenstam summed up their loss as a mental belief, "I just feel it's a matter of time before we do it. Once we really get it in our heads that we can do it (win in America), we're going to do it over and over again."

Bob Lewis, the U.S. Walker Cup captain told his players at their first meeting to check their egos at the door. Lee Williams, the senior member of the squad (at 23) said, "I think that was really big because golf is normally an individual sport, and in any individual sport you're going to have an ego. The one thing that he didn't want to happen this week was our egos getting in the way of us winning."

Lewis scheduled practice sessions, got to know the personalities of his players and put together a team chemistry of the best amateurs in America of college age or younger. Team member Jeff Overton said, "This team loved each other, and we would die together."

The U.S. Professional men hadn't won a President's Cup since 2000. This year was different. They became emotional about winning, overcame physical problems, and bonded together to win for their captain and country. "It was special to see them come together as 12 guys," Nicklaus said. "They bonded together, they worked together and they cheered for each other. That is what was special."

Most recreational and club events are team events. When you are playing in a scramble or best ball event you can use the same Lopez, Niclaus and Lewis strategies. Each member of the foursome has his or her own agenda that needs to be in sync with the others for victory. Here are some of the different agendas that golfers might have when playing in a team event:

- They want someone to play with.
- They want to play with better players. Most club teams are put together with a range of handicapped players.
- They want to be on a strong team so they can win.
- They like to socialize.
- They rely on the low handicapped player to carry the team.
- They expect the best player to make the team decisions.
- They don't want the pressure of playing their own ball.
- They constantly talk about score and how they think the team is doing.

Conversation on the first tee would determine the intention of each player. Are they serious about winning, or they just out for a day of play? Picking a captain by mutual agreement avoids dissent. Players should discuss their preferences for order of play, if they want to know where they get their strokes, and the kind of encouragement they prefer. Every player thinks and acts according to his or her own preferences. To have a winning team requires skill and ability but also mental and emotional harmony.

Individual Events

Golf excellence is ultimately a test of your belief in your ability and wholeness as a person. Three years ago Michael Campbell had lost his card on the European and Australasian tours and thought about quitting. "There's a lot of chit-chat in my head," he said. Mentally the game got too big for me. On the course I couldn't see the fairway. It looked so narrow. And the hole looked like I was putting a round ball into a square hole."

Last February Michael and his wife, Julie choose to make important changes in his personal life. "I've worked on different aspects of my life, not just golf," he said. "People think that you work on golf, golf, golf. But there are other things that make you tick as a person. There are other things in this world that make you feel better about yourself. There's a big universe out there, and I worked on a lot of things outside golf. It's personal, but I've changed my whole routine around."

When he won the U.S. Open, Campbell said his biggest accomplishment was handling his own mental demons. "The biggest thing I stared down was myself," Campbell said. "Obviously I knew Tiger was around there, but the biggest enemy was myself. If I conquered myself, I knew I could win this.' And he did. And he won again at the World Match Play Championship.

'The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it's the same problem you had last year.' ---John Foster Dulles

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