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Canada

AN EXPLORATION OF MENTAL READINESS STRATEGIES UTILIZED BY  
TOP PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS

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A thesis

presented to the University of Ottawa

in fulfillment of the thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Science

in

Kinanthropology



C. Nadeane McCaffrey, Ottawa, Canada, 1989.

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore mental readiness strategies utilized by professional golfers. Individual in-depth interviews were conducted with 23 professional golfers, 14 of whom were top touring professionals. The results indicate that there were common elements of excellence among the top touring pros, which were: Commitment, Quality Practice, Goal Setting, Imagery Training, Practice and Tournament Planning, Tournament Focus Plan, Distraction Control and Tournament Evaluation. Mental Differences Between a Good and a Bad Round were also assessed. Recommendations are made for those in pursuit of excellence.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## INTRODUCTION

A study by Orlick and Partington (1986) demonstrated that successful Olympic athletes were very consistent with respect to a number of common psychological factors. They were totally committed individuals with clearly established success goals. They engaged in High Quality Training by practicing with the highest degree of focus and intensity. They implemented High Quality Mental Preparation procedures for competition by developing precompetition plans, competitive focus plans, distraction control strategies, and competitive evaluation procedures. Over a period of years they refined these "elements of excellence".

In addition to advancing our knowledge in applied sport psychology, the above mentioned study strongly recommended further research with top performers in other disciplines. The present study examined the mental readiness strategies of a specific group of professional athletes - golfers. Professional golfers were selected because golf is a game requiring fine muscle coordination and precision and reputed to be largely a psychological game. Golf is a game which is believed to require a great deal of mental control to be consistent at the highest performance level.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A search of the literature made it clear that systematic studies related to mental strategies utilized by professional golfers were virtually non-existent.

There was clearly a lack of solid empirical research directed toward the mental aspects of golf. There were however a limited number of references which provided useful information or insights which were related to the purpose of this study.

A study by Boutcher and Rotella (1987), introduced a four-phase psychological skills educational program for closed-skill sports such as golf. A very positive aspect of this program was the initial individual assessment phase which was done by structured interview, drawing upon information from personal experience, observation, and listening to the athlete in order to develop an individualized mental skills program. The study was directed at helping novice athletes acquire mental skills, and was not directed at the professional or highly skilled performer. The researchers suggested that field studies and case studies are needed to validate different interventions and to assess individual athletes' reactions.

A field study involving golf performance of collegiate golfers investigated competitive trait anxiety and state anxiety. It was found that lower levels of anxiety were associated with better golf performance, whereas high levels of anxiety were associated with poorer golf performance (Weinberg and Genuchi, 1980). The authors claim this study provides empirical support for Oxendine's hypothesis concerning the anxiety-performance relationship, (i.e., a high level of arousal is essential for optimal performance in gross motor activities involving strength and endurance whereas a low level of arousal is optimal for tasks requiring fine muscle movements, coordination precision, steadiness and concentration (Oxendine, 1970)). It should be noted that this study was conducted with College golfers and not high performance professional golfers.

Crews and Boutcher (1986), did an exploratory observational analysis of professional golfers during competition, and reported on the effectiveness of a pre-shot routine. It was reported that pre- and post-shot periods dramatically affect performance. Having a pre-shot routine designed to direct the athlete's complete attention, reportedly focused the golfer on a series of well-rehearsed cues, images and actions. Because of the automatic, overlearned, repetitive nature of the skill (the golf swing), there is time to focus on other things unrelated to

the task and become easily distracted. The researchers proposed the following routine for professional golfers before hitting a full shot:

- "1. Setting (establishing the optimal arousal level);
2. Imagery (visualizing the ball landing on the green);
3. Kinesthetic coupling (visualizing and feeling the upcoming shot);
4. Set up (the address position);
5. Waggle (small movements of the club, hands or legs);
6. Swing thought (e.g., think "tempo" or "rhythm")" (Crews and Boutcher, 1986, p.36).

This observational study examined one facet of the multidimensional game of golf, isolating the observable pre- and post-shot periods. It would be interesting to investigate the same group of professionals on their mental sequencing, in the pre-shot routine, preparing for, the event, during practice, before the competition, and throughout the 18 holes.

The only extensive investigation reported in the literature which directly addresses the ideal mental state for optimal performance with high performance elite athletes is Mental Links to Excellence (Orlick and Partington, 1988). Individual interviews of Canada's finest athletes were carried out following the 1984 Olympics. The commentary of the Olympic medalists proved so insightful that they warranted verbatim publication in the book Psyched: Inner Views of Winning (Orlick and Partington, 1986). These athlete's total commitment to excellence, and

their persistence in developing and refining a formula of mental and physical skills, serves as a model to those interested in greater achievement. "A striking result from the interview portion of this study was the surprising consistency of certain success elements for virtually all of our best performers in all sports." (Orlick and Partington, 1988, p.110). An overview of these success elements follows under the headings, **Quality Training and Mental Preparation for Competition.**

**Quality Training:** The Olympic medalists practiced with the highest degree of quality and with absolute intensity, frequently using simulation training as if they were at the competition. To practice with quality the best athletes had clear daily goals for every training session, and well developed imagery skills for preparation, to see and feel perfection, to make corrections and to see themselves being successful by achieving their ultimate goal.

**Mental Preparation for Competition:** The world champions and Olympic medallists had developed very sound procedures for drawing upon their strengths in important competitions. Their systematic procedures included a pre-competition plan, competition focus plan, competition evaluation, distraction control and learning/developing/refining these elements of excellence through practice. Every great athlete may not have possessed every single success element discussed by the

investigators but the more elements they had working for them, the higher the probability of performing to their potential on a consistent basis. (Orlick and Partington, 1988).

In Orlick and Partington's concluding remarks it was strongly recommended that documentation projects, which draw directly from the experiences of high performance athletes continue to be supported. "Many athletes interviewed, expressed a keen interest in knowing what other high performance athletes were doing to mentally prepare themselves and felt it could be extremely useful for sport. They commented on the importance of talking with athletes and sharing experiences so that everyone would gain and grow" (Orlick and Partington, 1986, p.110).

The exploration of the mental readiness strategies utilized by professional golfers through interview methodology grows out of the recommendation in the above research study by Orlick and Partington.

Hemery (1986) interviewed tennis greats Rod Laver, John Newcombe, Chris Evert, Billie Jean King, Margaret Court and other athletes, including Wayne Gretzky, Carl Lewis, Pete Rose and O.J. Simpson for a book entitled The Pursuit of Sporting Excellence (1986). His findings have significance for tennis players more so than other sports, highlighting

factors like the average age for specialization for champions was 16 years. Nearly all played more than one sport through their early teens. Although he did not delve into mental preparation factors, all athletes interviewed mentioned that they felt that emotional intensity and control was a necessary and significant factor in their success. Eighty percent reported visualization to be a great asset to performance and one hundred percent felt commitment and effort were critical mental factors separating them from their less successful peers. Success was attributed primarily to emotional and mental toughness. (Hemery, 1986).

Mind Mastery for Winning Golf by Rotella and Bunker (1981), focused on teaching golfers of all levels of ability how to plan, practice, and play with a systematic approach to improvement and success. They point out that golf champion Sam Snead's last thoughts before going to sleep at night after a round were to always play the course perfectly. He spoke of replaying his rounds in his head correcting all of his errors. The authors quote other golfing greats and detail the important role of combining visualization with physical practice in building self-confidence for success.

Normally popular magazines are not cited in research reviews. However in this case due to the sparsity of research on pro golfers, the direct interview quotes of top pros in these publications, was felt to be of value.

It was reported in Golf Magazine (Sept, 1988) that Jack Nicklaus was recently named Player of the Century, for the Centennial of Golf in America. Jack Nicklaus, has had 71 Tournament victories, including 20 Major Championships, beginning with the U.S. Open in 1962, to the most recent 1986 Masters. No other player in the history of golf has accomplished so much success. His first coach was Jack Grout who began working with Nicklaus at age 10, and even at that time Grout said, " Young Nicklaus thought nothing of hitting 300 balls a day - and that was after playing at least 18 holes." (Andrisani, 1988, p.61). "If you want to copy Jack Nicklaus," suggests Seve Ballesteros, "start by mimicking his well-thought-out preswing routine and his slow takeaway. His preswing visualization helps him select the right club and play the right shape of shot. And a slow takeaway sets the tempo of his swing, letting Jack gradually build acceleration so that at impact the club is moving at maximum speed. Nicklaus repeats the same preswing procedure time after time. He starts behind the ball and visualizes the ideal shot. This "mental movie" prepares him for success." (Andrisani, 1988, p.56).

Nicklaus has exceptional self-discipline and determination to think through every shot in minute detail, and not let anything stand in his way when it comes to accomplishing his goals, "Practically from the time I took up the game, I knew one golf statistic cold," Nicklaus said, "Bob Jones had won 13 major championships." His own goal had always been to see how close he could come to matching Jones' record. (Goodwin, 1988, p. 47). Nicklaus comments: "There have been better ball strikers than I. There might have been guys who were tougher competitors than I. There might have been guys who were more determined or better putters. But I frankly don't think that any of them has been able to put all that together and keep it together better than I have." (Peper, 1988, p. 108). Nicklaus continued: "Part of winning is knowing how to correct mistakes you're making and not let the round get away. I knew many of the players had the physical skills I had, but I also knew that few of them had the mental skills to use that physical skill properly. That knowledge gave me the confidence that I would not lose a tournament myself." (Peper, 1988, p. 65).

Winners know from experience the excitement and pressure of a final round. Davis Love III says, "The butterflies are going to be there - you just have to make friends with them" (Fitchette, 1988, p. 73). Bernhard Langer, winner of more

than 25 tournaments around the world says that winners know how to recognize and compensate for their anxiety. When the heat is on Langer reminds himself to lighten his grip pressure, especially on putts (Fitchette, 1988, p.74). Azinger won his first three events in 1987 and speaks of how he is now able to draw on his previous experiences of victory. The problem before was overcoming a fear of failure, a fear of being embarrassed by an inability to perform under pressure. "I think I got mentally tougher in 1987, and for that I have to thank Mac McKee, a former boxing coach from Georgia who has helped me learn to concentrate and to stay positive. Mac has helped me zero in on what I want to happen on each shot, not on what I'm afraid might happen. Be aggressive and confident" (Azinger, 1988, p. 49).

Curtis Strange, leading money winner in 1987 and 1988, and winner of the 1988 U.S. Open says: "It's tough not to change your strategy if you're in the lead on the last few holes of a tournament. You know you have to keep doing what you've been doing, but when you're behind, it's easier to keep going forward, playing aggressively. Maybe you learn after blowing a couple of tournaments what you have to do to continue that pace" (Fitchette, 1988, p. 78).

Sam Snead now 75 and winner of 84 tournaments, says, "controlling your emotions is the key to maintaining your focus on each shot. Don't let yourself get too excited by your good shots or too discouraged by your bad ones. You have to stay on an even keel to play your best" (Snead, 1988, p. 52). Snead comments on the concentration necessary to win. "Great players tend to have a certain look in their eye that tells you they are concentrating well. The late Bud Ward concentrated so well that his eyes would shine like lights when he looked over a putt. Ben Hogan had that quality and so does Jack Nicklaus. They keep that look for an entire round. Curtis Strange's eyes focus with laser intensity. You could light a charge of dynamite under them and they wouldn't notice" (Snead, 1988, p. 53).

Gary Player who has won 130 tournaments around the globe and is one of four golfers to have won all major championships, presents a good example of determination, dedication and mental preparation even at this late stage in his career. When he misses a shot, he immediately "replays" the shot, making a practice swing and visualizing the ball flying perfectly toward his target. He does this so when it is time to hit the next shot, all the negative thoughts and images have been erased and the confidence, composure and concentration are in place, ready to go (Toski, 1988, p. 98).

In summary, although there have been no systematic studies on the mental preparation of golfers, it seems probable from the interview excerpts presented, that there is much to be learned from professional golfers who have been winning tournaments and have experienced time and again the feelings associated with success. Their comments have raised many of the elements of success found in the Orlick and Partington's 1986 study. Goal setting, visualization techniques, concentration and focusing strategies are all areas which have been mentioned by top golfers in media interviews as factors necessary for success.

The fact that top golfers often allude to the importance of the mental game, combined with the fact that no systematic studies have been done on professional golfer's mental preparation, creates the need for the current study. Interviewing a number of pro golfers in a systematic way is expected to be highly beneficial in terms of increasing our understanding of commitment, success elements and performance blocks in high performance sport.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study was to explore the elements of excellence and mental readiness strategies utilized by professional golfers. More specifically the purpose of the study was:

- To determine whether common elements of excellence are evident among top professional golfers (i.e., touring pros)
- To determine whether top professional golfers differ from club professionals (teaching pros) with respect to mental readiness and elements of excellence, and if so to identify the ways in which they differ.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

- PGA** - The Professional Golf Association.
- LPGA** - The Ladies Professional Association.
- RCGA** - The Royal Canadian Golf Association.
- PGA TOUR** - Access to the PGA Tour is based on the top 125 money winners from the previous year, or via the arduous selection process of the PGA qualifying school, or by winning particular tournaments. (Lancer, 1988, p. 54.)
- Successful touring professional** - A golfer who has won, one or more tournaments on the U.S. PGA or LPGA tour.
- Club professional** - A head pro or assistant pro of a golf course, and plays off a zero handicap.
- Professional** - Someone who accepts prize money.
- Bunker** - Any sand trap on the golf course.
- Caddy** - A person who carries or handles a player's clubs during play and otherwise assists him in accordance with the rules of golf. (RCGA, 1988, p. 4.)
- Scratch golfer** - Someone who operates off a zero handicap.
- Pin** - The flagstick centered in the hole on the green.
- O.B. or Out of Bounds** - Ground on which play is prohibited, it is off the golf course.
- Tee** - The starting place for the hole to be played. (RCGA, 1988, p. 11.)

## RESEARCH METHODS

This section discusses the methodology followed, beginning with an Overview of the Project Design, followed by the Method which addresses Subject Selection, Instruments, Design, Golfer Interview Guide, Procedure and Data Analysis.

### Overview of the Project Design

This study replicated the procedure followed in the research project conducted by Orlick and Partington (1986), entitled, Documenting Athlete Readiness for the 1984 Olympics and Evaluating Sport Consulting. The first part of that project focused on documenting athlete's mental readiness for Olympic competition.

This study, using the same individual interview survey, focused on a select group of successful touring professional golfers, and compared their mental strategies to another group of club teaching professional golfers.

## METHOD

### Subject Selection

Subjects selected to be interviewed for this study were professional golfers from the P.G.A. and L.P.G.A. Tour of 1987 and 1988, and local golf course professionals. The interview sample included 14 tour professional golfers, (4 males, and 10 females), and 9 club professionals (8 males, and 1 female), who had won tour tournaments (tour pros) and professional tournaments (club pros) and who consented to the interview when contacted by the researcher.

### Instruments

The Golfer Interview Guide developed for the purpose of this study, followed Orlick and Partington's (1986) Athlete Interview Guide as a baseline. The questions and issues not relevant to golf were eliminated. The guide shown in Appendix B was utilized. The interview guide explores factors associated with the professional golfer's reported physical, technical and mental readiness, examines the background of the athlete's mental training, addresses the mental state at a previous most and least successful tournament, and delves into the specifics on goal setting, pre-competition plans, focusing and refocusing strategies.

The interviewer taped all interviews. This freed her to remain attentive for listening and prompting during the interview and provided a complete interview transcript which could later be used for verifying the responses. It preserved the emotional and vocal character of replies, and avoided omissions, distortions, modifications and errors that sometimes are made in written accounts of an interview.

The researcher prepared herself to conduct successful interviews in a variety of ways. A pilot study was carried out to give the researcher practice at interviewing professional athletes and to field test the relevance of the interview questions to touring professional athletes. Four international squash players (ranked in the top 10 in the world) and 3 international tennis players (ranked in the top 75 in the world), were included in the pilot study. Through this process the interviewer was given the opportunity to refine the interview technique and become familiar with the procedures surrounding successful touring professional athletes.

Prior to conducting this pilot study the researcher repeatedly listened to and transcribed 60 interviews with Olympic athletes conducted by Orlick and Partington (1986). This allowed her to become completely familiar with the interview format they and the athletes found successful.

As a result of recent employment as a high performance consultant the researcher also conducted multiple individual interviews with team members of the Women's National Basketball, Canadian Military Teams (CAT and Boeselager) in Lahr, West Germany, the Nepean Ottawa Diving Club and ten national calibre athletes.

Together these experiences enabled the researcher to be more competent, confident and experienced at the interview process with athletes.

### **Design**

The study utilized an interview format to gain in-depth information about personal mental strategies employed by high performance golfers. The interview format was chosen for the following reasons:

- "a) Interviews provide an opportunity for the open searching and probing necessary to explore new topics such as elite athletes' personal mental preparation strategies.
- b) Interviews enable the investigator to learn and understand the terms athletes use to discuss mental preparation topics.
- c) Interviews scheduled at the athletes' convenience increase the likelihood they will participate in the study." (Orlick and Partington, 1988, p.106).

The in-depth taped interviews allow athletes to communicate orally rather than in writing, and thereby provides cooperation more readily from busy athletes, and gives much more in-depth data than can be gained on a questionnaire, (Van Dalen, 1966; Orlick and Partington, 1988; Werthner, 1985).

Several advantages accrue from the human interaction in an interview that cannot be obtained in more limited, impersonal questionnaire contacts. In a face to face meeting, the investigator is able to encourage subjects, ask clarifying questions and help express more deeply their approach or perspective, as was experienced in the Orlick and Partington (1986) survey. Through respondents' incidental comments, facial and bodily expressions, and tone of voice, an interviewer can acquire additional information or leads that would often not be conveyed in written replies.

In 1982, Rychta found elite athletes to be extremely forthright, and they will tell you in no uncertain terms how they feel about what is going on. As well it has been shown that athletes who are involved at a high performance level tend to be independent-minded and act according to their own principles, and that the longer an athlete is at the top level the more independent-minded he/she is likely to be (Rychta, 1982; Werthner and Orlick, 1986).

The interview survey was designed to provide opportunities to collect detailed qualitative information which would make "within-subject" and "between-subject" comparisons possible. This was modelled after the Orlick and Partington (1986) project design. The within-subject option was provided by items in the Golfer Interview Guide which asked for descriptions of, and comparisons between, previous best and worst international tournaments. The between-subject option allow for comparisons between touring pro golfers and less skilled golfers as well as with Olympic athletes previously studied.

## **Procedure**

### **Tour Professional**

To arrange each interview, a personal letter (Appendix C) was sent to the golfer (or publicity agent) explaining the purpose and significance of the study with assured confidentiality. The investigator then contacted him/her by telephone to determine a convenient time and place for the interview. Normally this was at a tournament site in Toronto or Montreal. The telephone contact further explained what was to be discussed in the interview and arranged for a meeting. At the tournament site it proved very difficult to meet with these successful golfers because of their practice and play schedules. The interviewer had to be prepared to keep chasing up her contacts and be on the

spot, because these very talented individuals are not waiting around for anyone. It was found that an ideal time to interview, was during the practice days preceding the tournament. The golfers were more relaxed and had more time.

### Club Professional

The investigator contacted the golfers by telephone to determine a convenient time and place for the interview. When the significance of the study was explained, this group was very keen to participate and there was no problem in prearranging an interview.

The potential for interviewer bias was controlled first, by the use of the Golfer Interview Guide to structure the "focused interview". This standardized approach introduced controls that permit the formulation of scientific generalizations (Van Dalen, 1966). It also introduced as much uniformity as possible into the procedure. Second a control measure which was observed came in the form of interviewee feedback from the pilot interviews and third, the transcripts were returned to selected golfers for review, to confirm that their accounts were accurate. Orlick and Partington (1988), came to the conclusion that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to manipulate the responses of the high level Olympic

achievers. The same held true for these touring professionals.

### Data Analysis

Typed verbatim interview transcripts were qualitatively analyzed. All transcripts were read and re-read by the researcher to identify elements of excellence within transcripts. Using the same list of elements of excellence, another researcher (the advisor) independently read selected interview transcripts and noted the elements of excellence which were evident in these transcripts. In all cases, the researcher and advisor found the same complete set of excellence elements to be evident in the selected touring pros transcripts. Two case studies are presented in Appendix D and Appendix E as examples of the interview transcripts. Highlights of each of the Elements of Excellence are represented in Appendix F, giving detailed relevant sample quotes of the touring professional's comments.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The following section is based upon qualitative analysis of the interview transcripts of successful touring golf professionals and local golf club professionals. Common elements of excellence were found to exist among successful touring pros, which were compared and contrasted with the group of club pros. Representative quotes are presented throughout to clarify common elements of excellence and illustrate differences between the groups. The element of excellence categories found to be evident for the touring pros were: Commitment, Quality Training, Goal Setting, Imagery, Practice Plan, Pre-tournament Plan, Tournament Focus Plan, Tournament Evaluation, Distraction Control, Pressure Situations and The Difference Between a Good and Bad Round.

Before presenting a detailed analysis of the common elements of excellence, a number of common attitudes and abilities, that weren't specifically asked about in the structured interviews, will be presented. They provide an overall "picture" of the top pro golfers.

1. All of the TP's interviewed indicated that they have a very competitive attitude to any sport, and a driving force to win or be the best they can be. Some attended University on a scholarship for a sport other than golf, such as football, basketball and tennis. "Baseball is probably the most natural sport I play, but I went to college on a football scholarship." It is likely that they have a generalized playing ability, as many played sports at a Collegiate, Inter-collegiate or National level, in sports ranging from, equestrian, alpine Skiing, track, volleyball, soccer, tennis, to basketball, football and baseball. "At 16, I wanted to be a top tennis player, but I was too old and my folks suggested I try golf. I qualified easily for the tour in August, 1983."

2. There was a general realization that they had the potential to be a top professional golfer and most pursued it without a doubt very early on in their golfing career. "I went on the tour with no reservations, without saying I wonder if I can make it. I had every confidence that I could make it." "I always knew I had what it takes to become a pro. I knew I had to work hard and I made the qualifying, first try." "I always knew I'd turn Pro." "I've wanted to play on the tour since I was nine or ten. I always thought I would."

3. They were unanimous in their expression of their love for the game and their desire to play every day. The enjoyment was the individual challenge to go out and do it, and be in control of oneself. One touring pro put it this way, "Getting paid to play golf is like cheating."

4. Every single successful touring professional recognized and respected the need for time off, for rest and relaxation. Some listened to their bodies for cues as when to take a break, others scheduled their time outs between the highs and lows of their tournament year and others just went home when they began to play badly. The reasons for rest varied: to stay sharp, to maintain a hungry appetite to win and play well, and to totally enjoy things they feel they may be missing out on otherwise. "There is only so long that you can keep your concentration to play well, or the level where I'd like to play at." "I like my time off. If I'm playing well, I take a break, no golf. If I'm not playing well, I work on a few things."

5. All but one of the touring professionals, reflected on the relationship between their home or personal life and playing well. If there was a lot on their mind or something was bothering them, their golf suffered. Only one person said, "I don't take my golf home with me. Whatever happens in my personal life, I seem to block out of my golf when I'm out there."

6. The touring professionals prefer a certain amount of activation or nervousness when they walk up to the first tee. Without it they may feel there is something wrong or that they are too relaxed. If they are too activated or too nervous, certain cues, like, the grip tightening up, the knuckles turning white or the neck becoming tense will indicate to them that they are charged above their optimal state for best performance. As one professional put it, "If I'm a bit nervous on the first tee, I usually play better. I need a certain amount of butterflies or jitters just to keep the awareness up." Or another, "In a tournament, I need a bit of nervousness or I feel kind of flat, if I don't have that nervous feeling, it is sometimes even harder to get going, than if I'm a bit jumpy."

7. There were certain courses the successful professionals liked better than others. They were usually the courses where they had played well in past years, or where they had grown up, or have more of a feel for. "I favour the North Eastern U.S. Golf courses where I grew up. Also the tournaments where I have done well."

8. Of those who mentioned the role of their caddy, all expressed the necessity of the caddy having a positive attitude and never to get down or negative. Two examples, "I have the same caddy every week and he is a very positive force." "I have a regular caddy and to me he's just a positive person out there with me, my cheerleader."

9. Other important comments reflect the attitude of always going into a tournament to play their best to win, to never quit on a round and never count themselves out of any tournament. "I never quit, and I think that for me came from a competitive nature of never giving up."

10. The final point worthy of a mention, concerns the number of golfers with an injury of varying degrees mostly to the lower back. They all do stretching exercises when they get up in the morning. Some have quite extensive warm up procedures, to loosen up their lower back muscles and prevent further irritation or injury. "I have a little bit of back trouble, so I do a bit of stretching in the morning."

#### **Common Attitudes - Club Pros**

The Club Professionals interviewed had only three major general orientation or attitude factors that were consistent throughout the transcripts.

1. Although the CP's generally felt they had the natural ability and can on occasion hit with the 'big ones' (tour pros), they clearly did not have as serious a golf work ethic, were not as dedicated or well prepared, and family and job obligations were always far more important than golf. "There's never been a time in my life where I contemplated the Pro Tour." "I've satisfied myself wanting to be a Head Club Pro." Only one very young professional

expressed he has always wanted to be a touring professional and still thought maybe he will be.

2. Another factor which is interesting to note is the number of professionals who are basically self taught. A few had lessons at a very young age when learning the game, and call it a solid base to go back to, but the majority did everything on their own through trial and error, never had a regular teacher, never took a lesson and basically became a scratch (par) handicap golfer through their own talents. "I was never in a position to take golf lessons." "Everything I've done with my golf has been on my own through trial and error."

3. The final point, was that all the club professionals interviewed did not have the time to practice on a regular basis because of their job as Head Pro or Assistant Pro at their Golf Club. The clear absence of serious practice in both summer and winter months was felt to be the cause of their lack of consistency in performance. During the winter months, all the golfers except one, said, they rarely practice or play, but use that time for family, curling and other pursuits.

## ELEMENTS OF EXCELLENCE

Specific elements of excellence common to all top pro's will now be discussed one by one.

### COMMITMENT

#### Touring Pros

Commitment was recognized as being the major factor contributing to their success. Commitment by their standards, meaning nothing stands in the way of their golf. Their life revolves around their golf. It has been the top priority or one of the top priorities in their life at a given point in time when they have been consistently 'in the money'.

"In 1983, I was totally committed and became the leading money winner."

"I'm really committed to golf, it is my life."

"I'm at the top level and I've worked very hard to get here. I'm still working hard and I'm still very committed. I'm a very disciplined controlling type of person."

"I work extremely hard to get the success that I do. I have grinded it and I am proud of it."

### Club Pros

In contrast not one of the club professionals were totally committed to golf. Their commitment was to their job, their families and various other activities. Since it wasn't their livelihood, golf was just a high priority leisure activity. They wanted to maintain a scratch (par) handicap but with the minimum amount of effort necessary. They felt they had above average natural ability to golf and because of the initial amount of practice they put in when learning the game, found it easy to fall back on their good well learned basics to perform at a reasonable level.

### QUALITY PRACTICE

#### Touring Pros

In the study by Orlick and Partington (1986), a common element of excellence for all the best athletes was quality training. It was no different with the touring professionals. Everyone felt it was better to have a quality practice rather than quantity. When they are playing well, their practices are often shorter and more concentrated. Their comments speak for themselves.

"I see guys go out there and hit 8 or 9 buckets of balls and I wonder how many of those they hit well. I may go out and hit half a bucket. If I applied myself to that half a bucket and I got positive results I might quit right then."

"My practice is always with quality shots in mind."

"Training could be anything from 1 to 3 hours of quality focusing. If I'm having a good time, I'll stay there. A lot of the guys have the physical and technical ability but have no idea as to the amount of time and effort needed for the mental training and waste hours and hours of practice time."

"As long as I'm concentrating at practice it's beneficial, but if I'm just going through the motions, I'll quit. It's quality time that counts."

"I can walk away even if it's half an hour of practice, but I know I got my work done. I go out there with a purpose."

"I put the ultimate effort into my training, but it's draining and takes a lot of mental discipline. I give every shot full intention and attention."

### **Club Pros**

This group had a big problem with practice in general. All acknowledged they did not have the time in their daily schedules to practice as they know they probably should to maintain a certain consistency in their game. Many of them admitted they didn't even have the time to play golf on a regular basis because of their job at their particular country club or golf course. When they play tournaments they rely largely on their natural ability as to how well they'll play.

"Because I don't practice, there is always apprehension there of whether I can execute the shots in certain situations. A lot of self doubt."

Some admit they have never been a practicer, or never developed a good practicing mode of hitting balls on a regular basis or never had a good work ethic. Others put what little time they do have, practicing their short game and putting, to get the ball up and down, because they are inconsistent with their long irons, and miss greens in regulation.

"Being a club professional doesn't give me a lot of time to practice or play."

"The main factor to me being inconsistent and lacking confidence is not enough time to practice."

"The only way to get back confidence is by hitting a lot of balls."

"Into the middle of the season I did a little more practicing and I prepared myself a little better for the events, and I went into tournaments and played very well."

## GOAL SETTING

### Touring Pros

They are all very goal oriented people. They have defined goals. They set daily practice goals, daily tournament play goals, tournament goals for the week, long term goals for the year or five years from now. Their goals are very clearly defined in three separate categories: 1) attainable, 2) unattainable unless pushed to the maximum of effort and 3) lofty goals that may or may not be possible, depending upon circumstances outside of the individual's control. None of their goals are set as a specific score because as one golfer put it, "You can't shoot 66 on the first tee. Just step up and hit the ball on the fairway on the first tee."

### Defined Goal

"If I don't set goals I don't know whether I've accomplished anything. With defined goals I can finish my day and say, 'Great"! That's exactly what I wanted to do.' They are defined, refined and achieved."

"When I set defined goals for myself, I achieve them. When I don't set goals, I don't play well."

"I was always a goal setter and I had three really good years in a row and then all of a sudden I didn't set goals and it really hurt me."

**Daily Goal**

"My daily goal is to have fun."

"Daily goals vary. It depends on what I'm working on and my swing."

"My daily goals are mostly for putting."

**Practice Goal**

"I do a lot of practicing in my room at night, as far as putting and working with my swing in the mirror, things like that."

"Like on a practice day, today, I'm going to go and work from 50 yards in."

"When I play a practice round, my purpose is to get the feel of the Golf Course."

**Tournament Goal**

"Every tournament I set goals. Play one shot at a time."

"For a tournament I set very high goals. I always set goals that are achievable and goals that are not so achievable."

**Yearly Goal**

"My goal for this year was to make the Ryder Cup Team and I've achieved that."

"I was so obsessed with becoming Player of the Year, that now I've achieved that, it's hard to see what's left."

**Long Term Goal**

"A major goal is the LPGA Hall of Fame."

"I'm setting my goals for five years from now, to be a winner every year."

### Club Pros

This group of professionals only set immediate goals for a particular day or tournament. Except for one person, aspiring to become a tour player, there were otherwise no predetermined long term goals, or practice goals. Compared to the tour professionals the goal setting was more general. "My goal in a tournament is to play well. If I win the tournament that's a bonus."

"The goal going into that tournament was to play smart...be patient. No outcome goals, no score in mind."

"Most of the time it is to perform as well as I can."

"My goal going into that tournament was to be in the top ten. After the first round I thought I would be disappointed if I wasn't in the top five. After the second round, I had a chance to win it."

"My goal in a tournament is to win."

"To play up to my ability and satisfy myself."

"I usually like to have a positive attitude."

"My goal is always to play well."

### IMAGERY

#### Touring Pros

Imagery, visualization, mental rehearsal, simulation, recall, muscle memory, or whatever the terminology is for seeing, feeling, acting and reacting for a repetitive motion that has been practiced and nurtured over a number of years,

is an important part of the top pro golfer. Every one of the touring professionals experienced in some way or many ways the doing before the actual doing of putts, shots or winning. Each has their own way of expressing the visual, or the kinesthetic (feeling), or both (synchronization) in executing a move or a routine. Some never had to think about it or had never put a name to it, as it always came naturally. Others have practiced it and imprinted it in their mind which they say makes the body perform better. They all do it on a daily basis for positive reinforcement, whether it be for seconds here and there, or concentrated hours during a practice session or a tournament situation.

#### **Putting Imagery**

"When I've putted well it is as if somebody took a little chalk and just put the path on the green for me and I saw it, and I putted along that line and the ball goes in."

#### **Shotmaking Imagery**

"When things are going well, my imagery is crystal clear and I do visualization everywhere. I feel the execution of the shot, see the target area, visualize the entire sequence, go through it, and expect it to go into the hole. No thinking, just the doing."

#### **Best Round Imagery**

"My best all time round, I visualized it and then played it. I visualized the night before, the morning and then let it happen. Feel it happen and then do it. When I'm playing

well the feel stays with me. I can practice less and the mental part and visualizing maintains the feel. The importance is to feel each shot and visualize it."

#### **Practice Imagery**

"I do a lot of visualization, particularly before bed, fifty times or three times a day depending on how receptive I am on that day. It's not always positive or crystal clear but it's not negative and I never visualize a score, just one shot at a time."

"I do a lot of visualization at night and then the next day when I go out to play I've already kind of gone over my round and seen what I want to do and I just try and let go and play, 'out of my mind.'"

#### **Winning Imagery**

"When I won the U.S. Open, I knew I'd win it and it happened just how I imaged it. Four days of par or better."

#### **Synchronization Imagery**

"I run the shot through my head before I hit everytime. Feel and see is all wrapped up into one. You and the club are as one."

#### **Simulation Imagery**

"When I'm practicing, I use imagery for quality practice time, like simulation practice. When I'm putting, I practice my mechanics for awhile, then I'll practice situation type practice."

"This par three last week, everyday I thought I was going to make a hole in one on it. The visual was there and the feeling and I got up and made a birdie on it three days out of the four. And knocked it within two feet three times. It was the complete image from within."

### **Recall Imagery**

"The day I played my best round my images were very vivid and really clear. I can remember all the good shots and I can visualize the putts I knocked in from all over the place."

"I remember shots that were played at critical times during certain events. I can recall them with extreme clarity and bring back the emotion and the situation. The recall helps in other situations, and you can certainly draw upon that. That is why good players who have achieved success go on and have more successes, because they do in fact feed upon those."

"Last year was an exceptional year for building confidence, so I continue to look at videos and relive those final holes."

"My best ever eighteen holes was eight birdies in a row and that game helps my visualization for recalling that feel, particularly when I'm down and not making a lot of birdies, I'll bring that feeling back up."

## **Club Pros**

The imagery mentioned by this group falls into five categories. Generally the shotmaking imagery skills were not as clearly defined, or as automatic as with the touring professional. They did not use imagery on a daily basis and the game situations they recalled to describe their imagery included a substantial amount of thinking or decision making when compared to the top pro's.

### **Shotmaking Imagery**

"I try and visualize the shot in my mind and what it is I'm trying to do for that particular shot. For the target, where it is going to go, and how I'm going to hit it depending on the conditions, the wind etc., the shape of the hole, left right, right left, whatever it is I'm trying to accomplish."

"The thing that I'm working on a lot now is vision. What am I looking at? What am I focusing my attention on? I'm hoping for it to become more consistent. If I focus on the target, sometimes I see a visual flight of the ball before I hit it."

### **Target Focus Imagery**

"I bring the target back and visualize target over the ball, in other words I don't look at the ball, I look at the target."

"I visualize a target where I want to swing to. The program is within with feeling."

"I look at the target and look back at the ball. I still have a kind of picture of that target in my mind."

#### **Vivid Experience Imagery**

When recalling very vivid experiences the club pros descriptions, were not unlike the touring professionals examples of their imagery techniques.

"Do you know how it is sometimes when you look at a bright light in a dark room, then turn away and you can still see the bright light. That is the kind of bright light within your visual memory. You can execute with that mental picture in mind. It's a feeling more than visual. After playing for awhile it is more of a feeling and execution because you've really hit so many balls in preparation that there should be no question of telling your body, 'develop some rhythm and tempo when hitting the shots.' It is a feeling."

"I visualize the shot, pick the target, without even thinking about it, it gets to be effortless like a natural process."

#### **Putting Imagery**

The imagery associated with the putting techniques were crystal clear, and all had experienced the feelings related to knocking putts in from all over the green, at some point during their golfing careers.

"Putting, I imagine the ball going into the hole. I look at it. I try to see where I feel the break is. I take a

practice stroke. I visualize the ball going into the hole. I'm a good putter. That was probably the only thing I consistently practiced."

"Putting, I see the line. It is two dimensional, directional and weight. You read the green. I visualize the line where I want that ball to go and it is just a matter of feeling for the weight and stroking it on that line."

"Putting is like someone has drawn a line on there. When I'm putting in a tournament it is not really the mechanics I'm going for it's where I want to roll the ball on that line and make it go in. That's very easy to visualize the line I want to take."

"I do a lot of imagery with my putts. It has made me a decent putter. I read the putt and by just looking at it, however long or short, I know I'm going to make it. It's almost like a line appears on the green as to the exact path the ball will follow."

### **Simulation Imagery**

Almost all the club professionals used simulation imagery before special tournaments at specific courses. Some were more detailed than others in their examples.

"If it is an important event, I'll be thinking the night before about the golf course in my head. I go through the whole game and think about hitting everything perfect."

"My recall is very specific and very detailed. When I was injured in 1980, I took time off and I was thinking and playing in my head and doing all the basics I'd ever learned. My first nine holes played after that, I shot 30 with two bogeys. I hadn't played golf in four months."

"The night before that tournament I played the complete course in my head. I ran through a lot of different scenarios for most of the course."

"In a tournament where I know the course I always mentally go over the course hole by hole."

"I'll be sitting in bed before I go to sleep and I'll think about some of the courses I've played. I do a lot of run throughs of situations."

## **PRACTICE PLAN**

### **Touring Pros**

The touring professionals have very detailed individualized plans for practice and tournament play. A practice plan is everything from the routine for warming up before the tournament, hitting balls after they have played on a tournament day, or the sequence followed on a practice day before and after they play. Some like to practice more when they are playing well because they feel they have the proper rhythm and the confidence that they can feed upon. Others just hit a few balls and leave it alone, "if it is not broken don't fix it." And still others, go through the

same rigid practice routine no matter how they are playing. On practice days, besides trying to have a good time, to be relaxed, and get the feel of the course, most hit more balls. Once the tournament started they just warm up and let it flow.

"I always come out here an hour before I play and putt first, hit balls, then putt again and go."

"For the practice rounds of a tournament, like today, I hit a lot of balls and I practice a lot after I play."

"I hit a few balls to loosen up, but not as many as I would before a tournament round. I hit more balls before the round on a tournament day than I would on a practice day."

"It takes me an hour to go through everything before a competition round and it might take me thirty minutes to go through it all before a practice round."

"If I went out on Thursday and hit every shot perfect, I would go out and practice everything anyway."

### **Club Pros**

It has already been stated that this group did not practice on a regular basis and the transcripts also support that they did not have daily practice plans or structured practice warm ups for tournament play. As would be expected everyone has a different approach, but in this case there is no consistent preparation pattern within individual players.

They seem to do whatever they have the time for before they tee off.

"For tournament, my routine is different everytime. I'm notorious for getting to a tournament ten minutes before tee time." "I haven't a routine to follow on a regular basis. I make sure I always take a few putts because everyone's greens are different."

"My idea of warm up practice is taking two swings left handed, two swings right handed and i hit the ball."

"I like to arrive fifteen minutes before tee off."

"I leave myself just a good amount of time to get to the tournament, about an hour before tee off. It gives me ample time to swing at the ball, a few putts and get to the tee."

"My routine starts 15 minutes before I get there. I like to hit 15 - 20 balls with a long iron. I like to hit a two iron. I groove my swing down with a two iron, then make a few putts, then I'm ready to go."

"I prepare for the tournaments around here for about twenty minutes in the car. I try to slow the pace down. I hit a few balls to loosen up and start focusing on my swing and that's about as much time as I give myself. I hit maybe twenty balls at the most, for feel."

"I like to get to the tournament just in time, (about an hour) to have a sandwich and maybe hit twenty golf balls and do some putting, just to loosen myself up and get prepared in that way."

## PRE-TOURNAMENT PLAN

### Touring Pros

The touring pro's have a very structured pre-tournament schedule or plan which includes two major categories: 1) a mental plan for course management and shotmaking strategies and 2) time frame plan (e.g., when to wake up, how long to stretch, exercise and warm up, when to eat, when to get to the course, how long to hit balls and putt, and when to arrive at the first tee before tee off).

"My tournament pattern is always the same. My pre-competition plan is getting up three hours before tee off time. When I get up I do some stretching and the exercise bike to warm up, and some exercise-weights for the rotator cuff. I eat two hours before. I get to the course one hour before tee off and hit balls and putt until I have the feel. On the first tee, waiting to go, I visualize the shot and recall the feel. My cue is 'smooth'."

"I go to the course on the day of a tournament one and a half hours before my tee off. One hour before play I hit 30-40 balls, then I putt for 25 minutes and arrive at the tee ten minutes before tee off time."

"There are certain holes on the course you get to thinking about, either you like them or you don't like them. I have a certain plan for playing those holes."

"Mentally at night before the round, I go over the course, see where I want to hit the ball and see myself make the putts."

"I go over the holes and think how I would like to play them."

"My plan for competition is going out and playing my own game and staying relaxed. To stay relaxed I try and joke around with my caddy and stay loose."

#### Club Pros

In tournament situations, this group recognized the benefits of mentally preparing and had devised some pre-planned strategies as to how they would like to play a specific course on a particular day. However the attention to detail was not on par with the touring pro's, and execution of their plan was not consistent.

"Most of the time I don't have any strategy planned. I play the course in my head in the car on the way, all pre-competition planning is in the car, crammed!"

"I do follow a plan when I'm in a situation to implement it."

"As I drive to the golf course, I'm processing and thinking and playing the course. There are maybe certain holes where I'm looking for certain things."

"My plan is to hit as many greens in regulation as possible and rely on the putting."

"I have a game plan for every tournament. One thing that I try to psychologically overcome is telling myself there are tough holes and there are easy holes. They are only tough by the way I've scored on it and indecision and second guessing which club I should hit."

"If I stick to a game plan and concentrate on that, I forget about being nervous. I always break the course up into sections. You've got to look at it by your strengths and weaknesses. I really plan the hole differently depending upon the degree of difficulty."

"I always mentally prepare for a tournament. I play the course shot by shot while driving to the tournament. The key is to make a plan and stick with it."

## TOURNAMENT FOCUS PLAN

### Touring Professionals

The tournament focus plan includes the mental focus and thought processes executed during the tournament. It has been broken down into the First Tee, During the Round, Between Rounds and In the Zone.

#### First Tee

The tour pros, to become totally focused on that one shot, describe an emotional state whether it be recalling a feel, positive image or an optimal state of mind. The club pros describe their plan in terms of a cognitive approach. Thinking about something related to how to and what not to do, rather than a feeling or sensation of execution.

"On the first tee waiting to go, I visualize the shot and recall the feel. My cue is smooth."

"I'm pretty low key and pretty calm."

"On the first tee, I always feel I have a good positive image of myself hitting it off the tee."

"Mental control and feel is the key to my playing well. My attitude is not too high, not too low... I try to maintain an even keel."

"I have an optimal state in my mind which is not too up and not too relaxed...Only golf is on my mind...Feelings are on an even keel."

"On the first tee, my only thought is to get that first shot on the fairway and take it from there. Not thinking about anything. Anything off the course, out of mind. Have the mind clear to go out to play."

"I stare at the target before teeing off. Just stare at it and think about that and nothing else and that has helped me at times. Get focused, totally one track."

"Focus. Single minded and singleness of purpose in seeing that ball and only that shot."

#### **Club Pros**

"On the tee, the only thinking is target, swing and face target, mostly target. If I face target the ball is going to be there, that's really the only thing."

"To think of not overdoing it. If I can just swing the club with some rhythm, rather than try to hit it too hard."

"To get off to a good start and avoid any serious trouble in the first two holes."

"I was focusing on a full rotation of the shoulder, I said, "rotate slowly to full position.""

#### **Plan for During the Round**

Both groups describe in great detail mental activity plans for during the round. As is evident by reading the following quotes there appears to be little difference in terms of what pros versus pros plan to do during the round (i.e., what is desirable). They know what they should be

doing. However as is clear in the section on In The Zone, the club pros don't execute the plan.

#### Tour Pros

"I won a tournament in Japan one time, primarily because I just got into my little world. The guys I was playing with couldn't speak English, and I guess I turned my attention inward, and thought about my next shot."

"I have really good concentration when I play. I don't see anybody. I'm also a very sensitive person so if I have things bothering me it'll show in my golf. That sensitive emotional side of me makes me the great player that I am but it also keeps me walking on an edge like anybody that is really creative, they kind of walk a fine line between genius and insanity. That's a real fine line."

"During the round, between shots I work on staying relaxed and I do a lot of that Quieting Reflex."

"During the round I try not to think about so much what is going on in the tournament. I try to focus on one shot at a time and what I need to do with that shot. Then just go ahead and hit that."

"During the round, what I'm doing is trying to have my open focus and then closed focus and hit my shot during closed focus and open back up again."

"I just try and go out and hit a lot of fairways and greens and play solid...I feel out how I'm playing as to my game

plan. If I'm playing real well, I'll be a little more aggressive than other times. If I'm not playing well, I try to be patient."

"I try not to think too much after I hit the shot. I try not to dwell on the shot whether it is good or bad."

"My plan is playing my own game and staying relaxed. To stay relaxed I try and joke around with my caddy and stay loose."

"The key to my playing well is making putts. If I feel like I can putt, that's what gets me going."

"When I try harder and bear down, I kind of throw that veil over myself and think of nothing except whatever it is I have to do."

"When my game is not going too good, to get myself out of a mental rut and start thinking positive I play little games out there, I bet my caddy I can make so many birdies out of so many holes, things like that."

"When I play extremely well I ignore everything around me and not pay too much attention to anything in particular and try to get myself into a tunnel vision and try to block everything else out."

"I've learnt how to take each shot as it comes, one shot at a time. I may have hit a good shot or a bad shot the last time but it doesn't affect this shot."

"During the round to refocus, I just try to think about something totally different, after my shot. When I get to

the ball at that time, is the only time I think about the golf shot I want to play. That limits the amount of time I need to concentrate. That next shot is a new game. To refocus I have to work a little harder and be patient, don't give into it. I can still pull off a pretty good round."

### Club Pros

"I tend to be a bit of a slow starter, probably because I don't prepare myself well enough. There's a point where I bear down, start thinking a little bit clearer about what I'm doing and start to make some good decisions out here, or I'm going to be embarrassed by what I do. It made me concentrate more on what I was doing and allowed me to hit the ball better."

"Between shots I'm very focused on golf."

"To concentrate on the task at hand and try to hit a good golf shot. One shot at a time."

"I relax between shots and then go into my routine again once I get to the ball."

"I try to think to be slow. Don't get quick."

"I have an attention span about thirty seconds long. Enough to hit a shot."

"Between holes, I walk off the green and walking to the next tee, I'd be thinking, this is what it looks like, these are the possibilities and go and put the ball down on the tee. All right, what are you going to do?"

"I think of a really slow pace, or a soft song, that helps me. These type of things to slow me down for when the adrenalin is pumping that makes me a little hyper."

"Between holes, the hole behind me is over and done, unless I did extremely well and used a good stroke on putting as an example and made it, I've got to remember that feeling, that's all."

"During the round I find I concentrate really good if the pace of the round is continuous. Getting into that shell where I would be walking down the fairway, I know the people are there but I don't even see them. I don't hear them and I'm just in total concentration. I know by the time I walk up to hit that shot, I know exactly how I want to play it and it is just a matter of executing."

"In the tournaments I played well I just concentrated on the principles. I knew they were going to work and they did."

"When I play well I have a very simplistic approach. I'd been building up confidence and ability and I'd told myself to keep repeating those things and not to let extraneous things come into my mental picture. I have certain cues. I can't have too many or you clutter your mind. As long as I have those certain cues they seem to give me the right sequence of things that I need in order to do well. Every shot I mentally go through those cues."

"When I play well I was cognizant of the shot I was playing, and playing it, and then immediately walking up the fairway

I was cognizant of the next shot. Immediately my mind was making decisions of what I had to do. Walking up the fairway I would be thinking, how to execute the next one. Between holes, I gather myself, think about my score, then approaching the next tee, I would start to assess elements." "Between shots, all I think about is the next shot, that's what works best. I'll try to get at least fifteen to twenty seconds before I hit the ball."

"My thought process between shots is the target area. During the tournament I bear down and keep my thoughts within the golf course. That's when my head seems clearer and that's when I'm most effective."

### **Between Rounds**

The tour pros play in a four day tournament almost every week and have a focusing plan to maintain a certain level of concentration between rounds. There were no Between Round focusing comments by the Club Pros because their regular tournament play are usually one day competitions spread over the summer golfing season.

### **Tour Pro**

"During a tournament I stick to my game plan. I never change what is working."

"During a round I'll stick with what I've got. After the round maybe I'll try and change something but not too much,

just little things. You'll begin to get into trouble if you start to fool around with the swing, or whatever."

"I don't try and change the game plan when things are going well or when things are going badly. I pretty much try to do the same thing as when things have been successful for me in the past. If it works, it works, if it doesn't that's the way it goes."

"When things are going well, I'm more relaxed, patient and easy going on the course. When things are going less well, I wasn't accepting the fact that I would make mistakes and hit bad shots."

#### **In the Zone - Tunnel Vision**

The feelings associated with playing well are referred to by the tour pros as tunnel vision or being in the zone and they expect it at least four times during the year. The club pros did not use those terms, but instead referred to the need to be pumped up or on an even keel to play well. They had only experienced what felt was an ideal mental state for golf (tunnel vision), a couple of times in their golfing career. The mental state described by the touring professionals as being in the zone reflected a special depth of concentration or totalness as compared to the best experiences described by the club pro's.

### Tour Pros

"My best rounds, I try to maintain an even keel, have no fear of failure and I experience complete "tunnel vision".

"I'm fearless with absolutely no doubts or fears.

Invincible. Win anything. There's absolute confidence and control over my swing though always a little margin for error. Feelings are on an 'even keel'. Not overly aggressive, but cautious to the point where, when playing well you take a calculated risk, gamble when the odds are in your favour. I'm tactical, confident, I read situations well and make good decisions."

"The intensity when playing consistently well, like last year took quite a bit out of me. This year the intensity is not as strong as it has been. The energy and intensity it takes to be number one is incredible and it is very hard to maintain that level. I've been in the "zone" for four straight days at four tournaments last year. It is an exhausting experience. I can't remember who I was playing with or what was happening. I was totally focused."

"When things are going really well!, I'm into the game and don't even know if anybody is around, like 'tunnel vision'."

"To keep on an 'even keel' type feeling, I didn't get excited, I smiled and all that, and remember the crowd clapping. Thought this experience is great! After the round is over with, then I finally realize how great it was. For me, when I'm playing really good, the hands feel real

relaxed and I just feel at ease. It is mostly relaxation and not getting so uptight and tense about it."

"My focus was on the shot that I was hitting every time. Nothing else. Nothing else entered my mind, it was what I wanted to do with that shot and why I wanted to hit it, and then just once I got set, the swing. No thought at all. It was like when people talk about being in the 'zone', where I didn't feel pressure. All I felt was the task at hand, that was it! There was a lot of confidence in my ability. I had a lot of confidence."

"When things are going really well, my concentration is just 100%. Everything is working well and my concentration is at its best."

"I have a real good level of concentration during a round. When I'm really concentrating and playing well I don't wander at all. There's just a calmness and simpleness about it. It is almost as if you're floating. It takes a person on an 'even keel'.

"My optimal state is when I'm in the zone. That's a total feeling of relaxation and it only happens five or six times a year, tops. I've done it twice this year already. The only thing I can remember is, I was very relaxed and confident and that whatever I was going to do was going to turn out right. There is no pattern, just real consistent golf."

"I can get into the 'zone' pretty easy. It just happens. My 'zone' comes with usually a couple of things, like I say, you've got nothing to prove to anybody, go out today and play the best golf you can play. You are the best woman golfer that has ever lived and just go out and have a nice time."

### Club Pros

"Normally I recognize when I'm pumped up, by feeling it. I take a higher club because I seem that much stronger. I really feel like I can hit it forever. I just get a great feeling of strength over the ball. I stand over the ball and feel so strong. Every part of me knows I'm going to hit it well and long. It is a feeling that I don't get very often. I'm not always in a position where I'm going to win a tournament or have a chance to win a tournament and that's when it happens."

"When I'm in a nice smooth rhythm, I hit the ball in the centre of the club and that causes me to hit the ball further. I shorten my swing a little bit, just so I won't hit the ball over the green, too long."

"For my best round, I felt so strong, so powerful and like everything is going to be good. I'm going to hit it right. I'm going to hit it exactly where I want to hit it and you feel everything is so positive. I'd accomplished something."

"To play well I just seem to relax and don't put any pressure on myself. This particular day I felt like part of the golf club or the golf club was part of me. I felt connected as time went on. We were one."

"When I'm relaxed I can make it do whatever I want it to do. I play the best when I'm feeling comfortable and relaxed. No negative feelings. Nothing seems to bother me."

### **Pre-shot Routine**

The tour pros rarely mentioned a pre-shot sequence in their interviews, because to them, it is second nature, like describing the mechanics of their swing. It is an automatic, highly individualized pattern, executed without conscious thought, like walking for most of us. The club pros relate their specific pre-shot routines as part of their tournament focus plan.

### **Club Pros**

"Every shot is the same. I have a way of preparing myself. Stand behind the ball, take your grip, put the club down, I take one practice swing, never more, and set it and go."

"I can set music to it. How many steps do I take? How long are the steps? I was within millimetres over 100 shots. The same every time. I go through a routine, same motion, target, think the same thing. I see where the ball lands. I see the target."

"I do the same thing every time. I don't take too many practice swings, I know where I want to go, it is just a matter of teeing it up and selecting my line and that's it. It's automatic."

"I'll see myself making the shot while I'm behind the ball, line up with something on the ground, once I'm set up and then I stand up a little straighter and hit the ball. I try to do that all the time."

"I stand behind it and look and I just picture the ball."

"When I stand up to the shot, I think about the swing."

"I have to concentrate over my shot. I have one swing thought. The take away after my set up. On the fairway the same routine."

"I go through the same process, by hitting the shot, focusing the target over the ball, everywhere, drives, fairway shots and putts."

## **DISTRACTION CONTROL**

### **Touring Pros**

The tour pros have ways to deal with most distractions, but still need constant reminders and preparation to stay task focused for things like slow play, delays and the leader board. Though, if they are in the zone, nothing distracts them.

"There is a lot to the fact, if you're thinking about what you're doing, you can eliminate the airplane noise and you don't have to try to. However, if you try to eliminate that (noise), then you're listening for it."

"The crowds used to bother me and make me nervous when I first started on the tour, but now I see through them. Slow play is really annoying and I must prepare ahead of time to slow down my game and go with the pace."

"My major distraction is the leader board. I try not to look and just play the game."

"Delays are my biggest worry. I know what to do that works. Get away by myself in a corner and try to keep the feel to continue on with."

"I used to get stage fright about crowds and things like that. Now I imagine the crowd as a painting, the bunch of people as a painting on a hill, and that worked pretty well."

"Most of us out here, if we can get out of our way we will do all right."

"If I'm playing well, nothing will distract me. I won't look at the leader board if I'm playing well, until I get towards the end, maybe then I'll ask my caddy, how many?"

"I don't like playing slow, but that comes with the territory, as I'm a fast player. I have to take that into my stride and prepare for it."

"One thing that really bothers me is playing slow, because I have a tendency to speed up. I try to be aware that it is happening and not let it speed me up. I don't like to look at the leader board that much, except to look at a number, but not the name. Leader boards to me, create anxiety."

"I enjoy the crowds. It is kind of fun having them cheer for me and all that. It's a positive force."

"I'm not easily distracted."

"I draw a lot from the crowd. I draw my affirmations or my response from the crowd. I'm always looking for positive reinforcement from someone out there to cheer me on."

"I love the crowds at tournaments. When a large crowd is encompassing the green, all I can see is a funnel into the hole. I use it as a positive force to channel the ball into the cup."

"Everything distracts you when playing bad. The player that is not playing well is backing off shots, telling people in the gallery to move and they're hearing every noise on the golf course. Whereas the player who is playing well, you could drop their bag at the top of their backswing and it wouldn't bother them."

"I'm really in touch with myself. You can try your damndest to control your life, but that's hard. The fewer amount of distractions, changes, highs and lows you have I think the better it is. There comes a point where you can't control

it anymore. And your game might suffer for awhile and it might elevate for awhile depending on the situation."

### Club Pros

There were no differences between the tour pros and the club pros regarding the existence of distractions. Slow play was the major distraction they felt they needed to prepare for because they play a number of five or six hour round Pro Am tournaments during the summer. They find it very difficult to maintain concentration for that length of time. Generally the club pros did not appear to be as skilled at coping with distractions as the tour pros.

"If the pace is slow, I have to work a lot harder. I'm a faster player."

"I know when it is going to be slow and I prepare for it. I don't like to wait."

"I still have to deal with learning to prepare for bad weather."

"I find slow play is the hardest thing to deal with. I haven't found a way to deal with it consistently. I try to be a little more patient."

"A ruling, by a marshal on the first hole, issued me with a two stroke penalty that wasn't anything to do with me and it ruined the first two holes. I refocused and settled down again, but lost the tournament by two strokes. I bogeyed

the second hole by snaphooking the drive because I was still upset."

"I've been distracted by waiting around, looking for other people's balls. I have to snap out of it and get back to what I'm supposed to be doing. I tend to be a fast player, sometimes too fast."

"The club is very busy and there's a lot of activity involved that requires my presence and my time on different committees. The game goes downhill at the beginning and the end of the season."

## **PRESSURE SITUATIONS**

### **Tourings Pros**

The tour pros recognize and expect pressure situations, particularly when they are playing well. Being in a position to win a tournament is generally felt to be their highest pressure situation. "When I'm in the hunt, leading a tournament, the pressure builds in that last nine holes." To win in those circumstances many factors come into play. The most important ones are the execution of the swing in a totally focused way and to feel the shot that is to be played. As was discussed in distraction control, if they do the above two things well the elimination of outside static is automatic.

"I'm one that has performed better under intense self imposed pressure. I expect a lot of myself and the times I've played well are when I expect the best from myself."

"I use pressure as a confidence builder rather than something that gets in the way."

"Self induced pressure - the release for that becomes a negative release."

"Standing over a shorter putt, there are certain things I pick up on and things can bother me."

"When I first turned Pro, I had this, 'I have everything to gain and nothing to lose,' attitude, which immediately reduces the pressure on oneself. You're always looking forward and have nothing to get tentative about and nothing to get tight about."

"If you are leading a tournament, you have to be able to turn down the volume a little bit, and slow your pace a bit. I have done that, I have walked a little bit slower. I might stop and take a couple of deep breaths. Then proceed on my journey down the fairway at a much more tolerable speed. I have my own self defined parameters as to when to let it go and when to bring it back."

### **Club Pros**

There is more self doubt, second guessing and a lack of the winning experience in the relating of pressure situations by the club pros when compared to the tour pros.

The main problem here, is the self induced pressure and how they control it.

"I can put so much pressure on myself when I play in a tournament that I want to win so badly, that sometimes I think it hurts."

"When I have to make three pars to break eighty. That's pressure. The embarrassment. Or birdie one of the last two holes to break eighty."

"My highest pressure situation is to live up to my own goals and expectations."

"Making that little putt to win."

"I put pressure on myself everytime I putt."

"If I was standing on the 18th tee needing a par to win, I know my chances would be better than if I was standing on the green needing to make an eight foot or six foot putt. I think there's more pressure to make the putt, than it is to make a four on the hole."

"If I'm on the verge of doing well and I can still see a lot of fellows reasonably within reach. There is a lot of pressure on there to keep on, and maintain that level of performance that I know I can accomplish without letting my mind wander away from the objective."

"Trying to deal with the pressure of winning when you're expected to win, that takes away from your concentration."

"The pressure you put on yourself and the pressure from people who expect you to do well, and you know that."

"Pressure is dictated a lot by the importance of the tournament you are playing in."

"I'm competitive and I don't like playing for fun, so I thrive on a certain amount of pressure."

"Chipping would be my highest pressure situation."

"At my home course, when all the members expect me to do well."

"Most of the time I create my own pressure."

## TOURNAMENT EVALUATION

### Tour Pros

Tournament evaluation was a very important element of success for the tour professional. They all do some type of assessment after every round they play, particularly the ones where the performance was less than ideal, because they often learn the most from those experiences. After their evaluation, and pulling out the lessons, they are very quick to put it away and move on.

"My mental practice is pulling out the lessons, which often times serves me better than to go out and hit five hundred golf balls. I can't practice the intangibles. If I could I would. Like when I hit a great drive, great second shot, hit the putt where I wanted, but misread it. The only thing I can do is read it more correctly."

"I think I was trying today, but rather than using one finger to try and hit the panic button, I was trying to hit it with both fists. I just couldn't do it."

"Mentally I've got this other person walking along talking in my ear. That probably has been the driving force. This other part of me that does step aside from the confusion and becomes analytical and becomes that coach or whatever it is. I try to learn from my worst rounds. I try and take a particular situation and remember it and say when faced with that situation again, hit the ball a little harder."

"This afternoon, because of this morning's round, I will sit down with my caddy and pull out what went well and set out a game plan for tomorrow. In my head I will recall what works well."

"Qualifying or not, is not the end of the world. Pull out the positive and move on."

"When I have a poor round like today, I set up a plan to rectify it. The plan is like a set of building blocks, one step at a time. I mentally practice that plan."

"I do my own evaluating. I think about the round I've played and how I would do it differently, and I'll practice mentally on the changes. I practice after I play and work on a few things and think about it for tomorrow. Then relax and stop thinking about it."

"I evaluate each round at the end of the round and then I try to work a little bit harder on the weakest part of my

game for that day. I've learned a lot from this year. Unfortunately you learn a lot from misfortune and mistakes than when things are going great."

"After a round, I think of what I could improve upon and go and practice that a little afterwards. Once I leave the golf course I try to forget it."

"I do a certain amount of evaluation after a competition round, but it is always, 'what club didn't I hit well? What aspect of my game didn't go well that day?' I just go for fifteen or twenty minutes practice (the corrections), then I'm ready to go home and relax."

#### Club Pros

The club pros also do a certain amount of evaluating after a tournament. It is not done on a daily basis like the touring pro, but they recognize the importance of pulling out the lessons, assessing what needs practice and learning from the experience. They have good intentions, but do not act on those intentions often enough, as stated in the quality practice success element.

"A lot of times I'll sit down and pull out the lessons from a day's round. I'll do my post round diagnosis. I keep track of putts and greens hit in regulation."

"I use the strategy and say, 'you've done this badly. Forget the emotion, why is it you've done this badly?' Put forward the matter of fact attitude towards what it is you

want to do and what it is you want to accomplish and get that principle working."

"Whatever I did wrong that day during the round, I would go and practice it after I was done."

"When I evaluate tournaments where I may have collapsed on the last few holes, it really doesn't disappoint me because I know that it is there but needs a little more work. They are a pretty good learning experience."

"I evaluate too much. When you evaluate you take inventory of what you've done in the past. I'm a firm believer of that. It can help a lot in the future, given the time. You'll probably find yourself in a very similar position as in the past, and then you recall from your evaluation what you did before, and what hopefully you'd do in the future given the same circumstance or similar circumstance."

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GOOD AND BAD ROUND

### Tour Pros

When evaluating a poor performance all the top pros can tell you what was happening when they were not playing up to their expectations. For example, becoming too uptight, a lack of concentration, a loss of confidence, losing patience, a lack of focus on one too many putts or vague imagery. In the following quotes some of those players discuss how they lose it and how they refocus to get back

into the game, when they think they are beginning to lose it.

"When things are not going well, no matter how hard I try I can't keep my mind on what I'm doing. Mostly it is losing my patience. To refocus I have to work a little bit harder and be patient. 'Don't give into it, you can still pull off a pretty good round'."

"During bad rounds my focus is uptight, nervous and nothing is clear. No target at all, just vague. Very clear differences between the two (good and bad round). If I stick with my game plan and do my best, that works."

"My tenseness comes in my shoulders and I have little refocusing deep breathing exercises to just try and feel my body relax. I try to focus in on my shoulders and just try to relax."

"The major difference between a good and a bad round for me is my concentration and a few putts and just flowing with the round. Making a few good putts, that's the key."

"I find when I'm playing really bad, the grip gets tighter."

"When things are going less well I wasn't accepting the fact that I would make mistakes and hit bad shots."

"When my game is not going too good, to get myself out of a mental rut and start thinking positive, I play little games out there. I bet my caddy I can make so many birdies out of so many holes, things like that."

"When I'm playing bad, the concentration is lacking in the short game. My imagination goes and my feel is bad. I can't visualize hitting a drive, or making a birdie. I make a bogey and I panic."

"When I'm not playing well there are a thousand things running around in my mind and it is just a big mess. The big difference between a good and a bad round is a big drop in confidence. Huge drop in confidence."

"It is literally one shot at a time. Sometimes I think I lose sight of that and I don't channel all of those mental gymnastics that I go through into something basic which is the swinging of the club. I get caught into a position of second guessing myself."

### Club Pros

The club professionals were similar to the touring professionals with respect to knowing why they were not playing well. They had analyzed the situation quite thoroughly but had not yet found or practiced a way to refocus effectively when it is happening. As a result it just snowballs and they lose it completely. Some of the differences they mentioned between a good and a bad round, included hitting a couple of bad shots in a row, trying too hard to concentrate, thinking too far ahead, getting angry from bad breaks, putting pressure on themselves and trying to hit shots they rarely practice. The refocusing skills

needed to overcome most of the situations they mentioned requires practice and ample tournament experience. The club pro admittedly is remiss at this kind of daily practice.

"The difference between a good and a bad round for me is putting pressure on myself. Certain tournaments that maybe you've been so close and you want to win so badly. You put more pressure on yourself and it is difficult to play your normal game."

"When you get overly conservative, then you stop hitting the ball. When you stop hitting the ball firmly, lots of things start introducing themselves in a negative way."

"When I'm not playing well, I'm not getting myself mentally prepared for every shot. I'm not going through my routines."

"When I play bad, I go away from my strategy and start to press. I don't stick to my game plan."

"The difference between a good and a bad round is when I think about missing a shot then I go off my game plan."

"When I'm out of focus, all tensed up, I'm trying to steer it and I can't feel what I want to feel."

"When I start thinking about outcome I lose my focus."

"I get annoyed at some bad breaks and I get mad. I have to get rid of those bad vibrations to get onto something positive."

"When things aren't going so well, I start to try and half steer it, hit the shot three quarter rather than hit good full firm shots."

"I found myself thinking too many holes ahead. I'd have to go back to that plan which gives me the best success.

"When I have a bad performance, I get very upset, angry and mad at the time. I try to channel that anger but sometimes it overtakes me and ruins my whole game."

"When I play bad, I'm not as patient as I normally would be and I get out of that mind set. When things aren't going well it is mostly the timing is not on and that goes back to being inconsistent. Not working enough, not practicing enough. When the timing is not there, the game is not there. That goes back to attitude, a good day or a bad day, whether your mind is in the golf shop worried about something and can't focus in on what you're doing."

"My worst performances are when my timing is too rushed. Trying too hard. Trying to do things too perfectly instead of just swinging and hitting and letting things happen. Trying to hit shots I don't practice a lot. I second guess myself. I think way too far ahead. I'm trying to think where the best shot should lie and not execute it. Thinking ahead instead of 'hit this on the green. Doesn't matter how you do it, hit it on the green.' Trying too hard to concentrate. Too hard to focus."

"If I'm playing badly I'm thinking too much of score and outcome, not shot by shot. If I'm trying too hard, I can really feel the tension in my arms and it feels like everything is twice the speed. The major difference between a good and a bad performance is I wasn't focused, in too much of a rush, wasn't comfortable, hit a couple of bad shots and it just snowballed from there."

Initially the researcher found the process of chasing after touring professionals at their respective tournament sites, very intimidating. It was not easy to do, because at first you are thinking that they are so successful, so busy, there is nothing to offer them, so why should they give their time of day. After having done the interviews the initial fears were unjustified. The touring pros were very congenial and unthreatened by the prospect of such an interview, probably, because of their superior self confidence and experience. The process of selecting and refining any new information was most often viewed as a possibility for helping them on their road to excellence. As one golfer commented, "I'm always looking for the edge, I will try new things and throw away what doesn't work for me."

Four of the golfers were interviewed after the completion of round one of the Canadian Open. It was interesting to note that round two was much improved by each of these players. One golfer in particular, who after the first round was doubtful as to whether he would make the cut, came second in the tournament. During the interview, as he was relating certain experiences and recalling specific events as to what he does, and should not be doing, it was as if a light went on in his head and he became very excited and could not wait to get back out the next day.

The reminders were enough for him to isolate what he needed to focus in on.

Ten of the touring professionals interviewed, went on to have a very successful year. Four golfers who had very successful years in the past, realized they were not following the patterns that had worked for them when they had done well, and began making quite substantial comebacks after a bit of a drought, (by their estimation), of one, two and three years.

After reading and rereading the interview transcripts many times over, there were a number of comments made, that did not fit into any category but which do contain valuable insights for the benefit of future projects of this nature.

The touring professionals interviewed, are very unique, self-directed individuals, with a very positive attitude and an incredible belief in themselves. The following quotes reinforce this perspective.

"I know me better than anyone else. I trust my judgement."

"On a given day if I am not playing well, I will still find that there is a lot that is good, because other facets of my game could be very good."

"Whatever happens during a tournament or a round of golf, I try to maintain a consistent positive attitude, and finish

as high as I can given the conditions, and get the most out of the week."

"I think it is knowing that even though I may have a bad streak, to stay patient, I will have a good one, too, you can count on it."

"I am a very positive person and when playing don't try and fight my personality. I let it express itself when it has to. I enjoy myself out there and show it."

"I never count my self out of any tournament."

"For self confidence, I concentrate on the good things that I have done and try not to dwell on the bad things."

"The greatest realization is to go easy on oneself. Be aware of the situation and make the most of it and do the best you can on that day. With nervousness, learn how to control it and use it to your advantage. There are no miracles.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions may be drawn from this study. First, there were a number of common attitudes and experiences that provided an overall picture of the touring professionals which were:

1. A very competitive attitude to any sport, and a driving force to win or be the best they can be.
2. The realization, very early on in their golfing career, that they had the potential to be a touring professional.
3. The love of the game and desire to play every day.
4. Respect for the need for rest and relaxation.
5. An understanding of the relationship between their personal life and how they play. When their personal life is going well, they play well.
6. A preference for a certain amount of activation or nervousness when they walk up to the first tee.
7. A preference for certain courses (e.g., because they had played well there, have a particular feel for it or it was near home.)

8. Viewing the caddy as a positive influence to complement their game.
9. An attitude of never quitting on a round no matter how bad.
10. A specific stretching routine or warm up to prevent further injury to the back.

The club professionals projected only a few common attitude or experience factors which were:

1. A recognition that they had the natural ability for golf but did not have a golf work ethic and were not totally committed to the game.
2. A basic experience of being self taught and achieved their successes through their own talents and trial and error.
3. An absence of practice on a regular basis.

#### **ELEMENTS OF EXCELLENCE**

A number of elements of excellence were identified as strongly influencing the success of top professional golfers and as distinguishing the touring professional from the club professional. They were:

1. **Commitment** was a critical success factor differing the touring pros and club pros. The touring pros were totally committed, while the club pros were not nearly as committed to playing or practicing.
2. **Quality Practice** was another critical element of excellence differing the touring pros and club pros. The tour pros practice with a purpose all year round and the club pros do not practice (or play) on a daily basis.
3. **Goal Setting.** The touring pros had clearly defined goals and through experience have recognized the importance of goal setting. They have discovered that when they did not set goals they did not play well. The club pros only set sporadically, for example immediate tournament goals for a particular day.
4. **Imagery Practice.** The touring pros practice and utilize imagery on a daily basis, sometimes for seconds, sometimes for concentrated hours, for every facet of their game. The club pros also use imagery but not on a daily basis. It was not as highly refined as the tour pro, and was used only for specific aspects of their game (e.g., putting).
5. **Practice and Tournament Planning.** The tour pros have very detailed individualized plans for practice and tournament play. The club pros do not practice or play on a regular basis and have little structure or consistency to

their preparation patterns. They recognize the benefits of mentally preparing but their attention to detail and execution of their preplanned strategies were lacking compared to the touring professional.

6. **Tournament Focus Plan.** There was little difference between the two groups in describing their focusing plans during the round. However, it was clear that the club pros do not often execute the plan especially for the entire tournament. The mental state of the tour pro when in the zone reflected a special depth of concentration compared to the club pro's experiences of playing well. The tour pros expect a 'playing out of your mind' state at least four times a year, where as the club pro may have experienced that complete feeling only a couple of times in their golfing career.

7. **Distraction Control.** There were no differences between the two groups in recognizing the existence of distractions. Slow play, delays and the leader board were the main distractions the tour pros needed to prepare for, and particularly slow play for the club pros. Generally the tour pros reflected a higher skill level for coping with distractions.

3. **Tournament Evaluation.** The tour pros all follow some type of individualized assessment procedure after every round. The club pros also recognize the benefits of pulling out the lessons but do not act upon the lessons with the same sort of commitment and continuity.

9. **The Difference Between a Good and a Bad Round.** Both groups appear to have a clear understanding of what is happening when they are playing well (e.g., task focus) or not playing up to their expectations (e.g., focus on distractions). With respect to turning a bad game or focus around, the club pros were not as well practiced as the touring pros with their refocusing skills.

In conclusion, this study supports the research by Orlick and Partington (1988), in that the success elements identified above were also common to the Olympic medallists and World Champions of 1984. As was the case with the Orlick and Partington study, the results of this study clearly indicates that mental skills are a critical part of success in high performance sport. These skills and perspectives need to be developed and refined for those in the pursuit of golfing excellence.

More specifically, it is recommended that those who hope to have a realistic chance of excelling at golf, be made to

recognize that in order to excel they must respect and implement the following elements.

- \* Total commitment to golf
- \* Practice with quality rather than quantity
- \* Have clearly defined goals
- \* Practice imagery on a daily basis for positive reinforcement
- \* Prepare detailed plans for practice and tournament play
- \* Focus totally on one shot at a time
- \* Recognize, expect and prepare to deal with pressure situations
- \* Prepare a plan to shift back to a task focus for distraction control
- \* Practice refocusing skills when not playing up to expectations.
- \* Evaluate the round, pull out the lessons, practice the lesson, and learn from the experience.

Once the above elements are respected it is likely that the following quote will be totally appropriate.

"Most of us out here, if we can get out of our own way we will do all right." (LPGA Tour Professional)

#### FURTHER RESEARCH

It is recognized that further applied research in mental links to excellence is needed in a variety of disciplines, in order to fully understand the human pursuit of excellence with respect to such things as, commitment, quality training, goal setting, imagery, competition planning, performance focus, distraction control and performance evaluation.

The results indicate that all of the touring professionals interviewed in this study live these elements of excellence. Based upon the commonality of response in this study as well as the Orlick & Partington Olympic athlete study, it is hypothesized that this would hold true for a larger sample of top professionals in golf as well as in other domains. Further research with more of the best performers in a variety of disciplines is highly recommended for a more explicit understanding of the mental components related to personal excellence.

In conducting further research in this area the following considerations may be of value:

- \* To get the best cooperation with top athletes after the initial information/introduction letter, go to the site to make a person-to-person contact. Persistence in this regard is critical to the success of such a study.

- \* To ensure validity of the interview schedule and responses; conduct pilot interviews with an experienced research interviewer in order to get feedback, follow the same interview guide with each subject, send interview transcripts back to a sample of the subjects for their verification and comments, do inter-rater reliability checks on various categories, make written transcripts or tapes available to other researchers as long as confidentiality can be assured.

- \* The interview schedule used in this study asked for and elicited detailed responses from athletes on focusing, imagery and goal setting. A large part of the interview responses revolved around these issues. In future research a similar attempt to draw out detailed responses could be made for other elements of excellence. For example, in the area of commitment a series of questions could revolve around the history, development, breadth, level and type of commitment for top athletes.

- \* An attempt could be made to equalize sex distribution in high performance samples, or if this is not possible, remove

references to sex in the transcripts before conducting reliability checks to determine whether external raters note differences between sexes.

\* When there is a need to do follow up work with a subject after conducting the initial interview, a taped telephone contact is an excellent choice. Person-to-person contact is ideal but often not feasible in studies such as this, and telephone contacts elicit better responses than written questionnaire responses.

As pointed out by Orlick (1989) "Many athletes express a keen interest in knowing what other high performance athletes do to mentally prepare themselves and feel it is extremely useful for their own development. It is important to talk with athletes and other high performance people and share their experiences so that everyone can gain and grow" (Orlick, 1989).

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## Appendix A

### THESIS PROPOSAL

#### I INTRODUCTION AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Orlick and Partington (1986) interviewed 75 elite Canadian athletes and found that the most successful athletes in the 1984 Olympics were very consistent with respect to a number of common psychological factors. They were totally committed individuals with clearly established success goals. They engaged in a) High Quality Training, practicing with the highest degree of focus and intensity; and b) High Quality Mental Preparation for Competition by developing pre-competition plans, competitive focus plan, competitive evaluation procedures, distraction control strategies and refining the elements of success.

The above mentioned study advanced our knowledge in applied sport psychology and generated numerous possibilities for similar research with top performers in other disciplines. This study will similarly examine in detail a specific group of high performance athletes - professional golfers. Through in-depth individual interviews with top professional golfers, it will be determined whether they have common success elements which are similar to the Olympic medalists (Orlick and Partington, 86), and whether they have developed unique and creative mental preparation strategies. It is hoped that this study will add to the field of applied sport psychology and high performance sport as was the case with the input provided through the study done by Orlick and Partington.

#### II Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to document top professional golfer's mental readiness strategies for competition. This exploration will attempt to:

1. Gather information through recording individual in-depth interviews on the mental readiness strategies employed by top professional golfers - from his or her own perspective.
2. Compare the data to the results obtained by Orlick and Partington (1986), to determine if the same common success elements are evident.

### III Delimitations

The findings in this study are limited to information gained from the following subjects:

Members of the P.G.A. (Professional Golf Association) and L.P.G.A. (Ladies Professional Golf Association) Tour who have won professional tournaments and who consented to do an interview. (Access to the P.G.A. and L.P.G.A. Tour is based on the top 125 money winners from the previous year or via the arduous selection process of the P.G.A. qualifying school, or by winning particular tournaments.) (Lancer, 1988).

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A thorough search of the literature made clear that studies related to mental strategies utilized by professional golfers are virtually non-existent.

There is clearly a lack of solid empirical research directed toward the mental aspects of golf. There are however a limited number of references which provide useful information or insights which are related to the purpose of this study. They are discussed under the following categories:

- i Research Articles
- ii Books
- iii Golf Publications and Interviews.

#### i Research Articles

A recent study by Boutcher and Rotella (1987), introduced a four-phase psychological skills educational program for closed-skill sports such as golf. A very positive aspect of this program was the initial individual assessment phase which was done by structured interview, drawing upon information from personal experience, observation, and listening to the athlete in order to develop an individualized mental skills program. The study was directed at helping those acquiring the skills, such as a novice High School athlete and not the professional or highly skilled performer. The researchers suggest field studies and case studies are needed to validate different interventions and assessment of the individual athletes' reactions.

A field study involving golf performance of collegiate golfers investigated competitive trait anxiety and state

anxiety. It was found that lower levels of anxiety were associated with better golf performance (requiring fine muscle coordination and precision), whereas high levels of anxiety were associated with poorer golf performance (Weinberg and Genuchi, 1980). The authors claim this study provides empirical support for Oxendine's hypothesis concerning the anxiety-performance relationship, (i.e., a high level of arousal is essential for optimal performance in gross motor activities involving strength and endurance whereas a low level of arousal is optimal for tasks requiring fine muscle movements, coordination precision, steadiness and concentration (Oxendine, 1970)). Again this study was conducted with College golfers and not high performance professional golfers.

Crews and Boutcher (1986), did an exploratory observational analysis of professional golfers during competition, and reported the effectiveness of a pre-shot routine. It was observed that pre- and post-shot periods dramatically affect performance, and having a pre-shot routine designed to direct the athlete's complete attention, focuses the golfer on a series of well-rehearsed cues, images and actions. Because of the automatic, overlearned, repetitive nature of the skill (the golf swing), there is time to focus on other things unrelated to the task and become easily distracted. The researchers propose the following routine for professional golfers before hitting a full shot:

- "1. Setting (establishing the optimal arousal level);
  2. Imagery (visualizing the ball landing on the green);
  3. Kinesthetic coupling (visualizing and feeling the upcoming shot);
  4. Set up (the address position);
  5. Waggle (small movements of the club, hands or legs);
  6. Swing thought (e.g., think "tempo" or "rhythm")"
- (Crews and Boutcher, 1986, p.36).

This observational study has examined one facet of the multidimensional game of golf, isolating the observable pre- and post-shot periods. It would have been interesting to investigate the same group of professionals on their mental sequencing, in the pre-shot routine, preparing for, the event, during practice before the competition, and throughout the 18 holes.

The only investigation reported in the literature which directly addresses the ideal mental state for optimal performance with high performance elite athletes is Mental Links to Excellence (Orlick and Partington, 1988). Individual interviews of Canada's finest athletes were carried out following the 1984 Olympics. The commentary of

the Olympic medalists proved so insightful that they warranted verbatim publication in the book Psyched: Inner Views of Winning (Orlick and Partington, 1986). These athlete's total commitment to excellence, and their persistence in developing and refining a formula of mental and physical skills, serves as a model to those interested in greater achievement. "A striking result from the interview portion of this study was the surprising consistency of certain success elements for virtually all of our best performers in all sports." (Orlick and Partington, 1988, p.110). An overview of these success elements follows under the headings, Quality Training and Mental Preparation for Competition.

**Quality Training:** The Olympic medalists practiced with the highest degree of quality and with absolute intensity, frequently using simulation training as if they were at the competition. To practice with quality the best athletes had clear daily goals for every training session, and well developed imagery skills for preparation, to see and feel perfection, to make corrections and to see themselves being successful by achieving their ultimate goal.

**Mental Preparation for Competition:** The world champions and Olympic medallists had developed very sound procedures for drawing upon their strengths in important competitions. Their systematic procedures included a pre-competition plan, competition focus plan, competition evaluation, distraction control and learning the elements of success developed and refined through practice. Every great athlete may not have possessed every single success element discussed by the investigators but the more elements they had working for them, the higher the probability of performing to their potential on a consistent basis. (Orlick and Partington, 1988).

In Orlick and Partington's concluding remarks it was strongly recommended that documentation projects, which draw directly from the experiences of high performance athletes continue to be supported. "Many athletes interviewed, expressed a keen interest in knowing what other high performance athletes were doing to mentally prepare themselves and felt it could be extremely useful for Canadian sport. They commented on the importance of talking with athletes and sharing experiences so that everyone would gain and grow" (Orlick and Partington, 1986, p.110).

The exploration of the mental readiness strategies utilized by professional golfers through interview methodology grows out of the recommendation in the above research study by Orlick and Partington.

## ii Books:

Hemery (1986) interviewed tennis greats Rod Laver, John Newcombe, Chris Evert, Billie Jean King, Margaret Court and other athletes, including Wayne Gretzky, Carl Lewis, Pete Rose and O.J. Simpson for a book entitled The Pursuit of Sporting Excellence (1986). His findings have significance for tennis players more so than other sports, highlighting factors like the average age for specialization for champions was 16 years. Nearly all played more than one sport through their early teens. Although he did not delve into mental preparation factors, all athletes interviewed mentioned that they felt, that emotional intensity and control, was a necessary and significant factor in their success. Eighty percent reported visualization to be a great asset to performance and one hundred percent felt commitment and effort were the critical mental factors separating them from their less successful peers. Success was attributed primarily to emotional and mental toughness.

Tennis champions, Jimmy Connors, Chris Evert, Gabriela Sabatini and Steffi Graf were reported to often follow certain rituals. For example, during a tournament, they often ate the same food at the same restaurant, sat at the same table, and dined with the same people. They also had close family ties and often travelled to tournaments with family members. Billie Jean King liked to stare at a ball before going on court. It reminded her to look only at the ball when she played (Hemery, 1986).

Mind Mastery for Winning Golf by Rotella and Bunker (1981), focused on teaching golfers of all levels of ability how to plan, practice, and play with a systematic approach to improvement and success. They point out that golf champion Sam Snead recalls that his last thoughts before going to sleep at night after a round are to always play the course perfectly and spoke of replaying his rounds in his head while showing and correcting all of his errors. Further, authors state that research and application have consistently detailed the important role of combining visualization with physical practice in building self-confidence for success. Henry Longhurst clearly understood the value of visual imagery to mastery of the golf swing. "Watch some of the best professionals before a tournament and let them do the work, and see "yourself" swinging perfectly in your imagination". (Rotella & Bunker, 1981, p.33). Bob Toski, a teaching professional, frequently mentions the proprioceptive or "feeling" type of mental rehearsal that is usually nonvisual. Ben Hogan suggests a practice swing as part of the pre-swing routine, reflecting the rhythm, and to teach you the "feel" of the upcoming shot. Arnold Palmer emphasizes the importance of

self-perception on performance. When he had to play on a very wet and cold day in a British Open, Palmer reminded himself that everyone else had to play in these conditions too. He perceived that he could control his mind and play well despite the conditions, so he had the advantage over many others (Rotella and Bunker, 1981).

Most instructional golf books available have very little material devoted to the mental preparation elements. One recent exception is The Natural Golf Swing by George Knudson, a Canadian who won 8 times on the P.G.A. Tour. His swing is said to be among the best in the history of golf. Knudson reinforces the statement, "Golf is a physical activity for relaxation." (p.31). A golfer cannot be relaxed if he clutters his mind with what to do and what not to do. This is the old "paralysis by analysis", making ourselves crazy by thinking so much. "There's no need for you to suffer on the course. Golf can be a real joy. But you have to understand what you are trying to do" (Knudson, 1988, p.31).

Gallwey, the author of The Inner Game of Golf, recounts that while he was practicing a silent drill-sergeant voice barked: 'Don't slice. Step into the ball. Stay loose. Flex your knees. Don't rush your swing. Watch the ball. Light grip. Slowly back'; and he asked himself: Who is that giving orders and who is he speaking to? Gallwey called those two parts of the same personality, Self 1, the drill sergeant, the conscious mind, which knows it all and Self 2, the subconscious mind which is perfectly capable of learning everything there is to know provided there is no interference. Gallwey suggests gagging Self 1 and focusing your attention on the cue word "Back" and "Hit" (Gallwey, 1985).

### iii Golf Publications - Interviews

It was reported in Golf Magazine (Sept, 1988) that Jack Nicklaus was recently named Player of the Century, for the Centennial of Golf in America. Jack Nicklaus, has had 71 Tournament victories, including 20 Major Championships, beginning with the U.S. Open in 1962, to the most recent 1986 Masters. No other player in the history of golf has accomplished so much success. His first coach was Jack Grout who began working with Nicklaus at age 10, and even at that time Grout said, "Young Nicklaus thought nothing of hitting 300 balls a day - and that was after playing at least 18 holes." (Andrisani, 1988, p.61). "If you want to copy Jack Nicklaus," suggests Seve Ballesteros, "start by mimicking his well-thought-out preswing routine and his slow takeaway. His preswing visualization helps him select the right club and play the right shape of shot. And a slow

takeaway sets the tempo of his swing, letting Jack gradually build acceleration so that at impact the club is moving at maximum speed. Nicklaus repeats the same preswing procedure time after time. He starts behind the ball and visualizes the ideal shot. This "mental movie" prepares him for success." (Andrisani, 1988, p.56).

Nicklaus has exceptional self-discipline and determination to think through every shot in minute detail, and not let anything stand in his way when it comes to accomplishing his goals, "Practically from the time I took up the game, I knew one golf statistic cold," Nicklaus said, "Bob Jones had won 13 major championships." His own goal had always been to see how close he could come to matching Jones' record. (Goodwin, 1988, p. 47). Nicklaus comments: "There have been better ball strikers than I. There might have been guys who were tougher competitors than I. There might have been guys who were more determined or better putters. But I frankly don't think that any of them has been able to put all that together and keep it together better than I have." (Peper, 1988, p. 108). Nicklaus continued: "Part of winning is knowing how to correct mistakes you're making and not let the round get away. I knew many of the players had the physical skills I had, but I also knew that few of them had the mental skills to use that physical skill properly. That knowledge gave me the confidence that I would not lose a tournament myself." (Peper, 1988, p. 65).

Winners know from experience the excitement and pressure of a final round. Davis Love III says, "The butterflies are going to be there - you just have to make friends with them" (Fitchette, 1988, p. 73). Bernhard Langer winner of more than 25 tournaments around the world says that winners know how to recognize and compensate for their anxiety. When the heat is on Langer reminds himself to lighten his grip pressure, especially on putts (Fitchette, 1988, p.74). Azinger won his first three events in 1987 and speaks of how he is now able to draw on his previous experiences of victory. The problem before was overcoming a fear of failure, a fear of being embarrassed by an inability to perform under pressure. "I think I got mentally tougher in 1987, and for that I have to thank Mac McKee, a former boxing coach from Georgia who's helped me learn to concentrate and to stay positive. Mac has helped me zero in on what I want to happen on each shot, not on what I'm afraid might happen. Be aggressive and confident" (Azinger, 1988, p. 49).

Sam Snead now 75 and winner of 84 tournaments, says, "controlling your emotions is the key to maintaining your focus on each shot. Don't let yourself get too excited by

your good shots or too discouraged by your bad ones. You have to stay on an even keel to play your best (Snead, 1988, p. 52).

Curtis Strange, leading money winner in 1987 and winner of this year's U.S. Open says: "It's tough not to change your strategy if you're in the lead on the last few holes of a tournament. You know you have to keep doing what you've been doing, but when you're behind, it's easier to keep going forward, playing aggressively. Maybe you learn after blowing a couple of tournaments what you have to do to continue that pace" (Fitchette, 1988, p. 78).

Sam Snead comments on the concentration necessary to win. "Great players tend to have a certain look in their eye that tells you they are concentrating well. The late Bud Ward concentrated so well that his eyes would shine like lights when he looked over a putt. Ben Hogan had that quality and so does Jack Nicklaus. They keep that look for an entire round. Curtis Strange's eyes focus with laser intensity. You could light a charge of dynamite under them and they wouldn't notice" (Snead, 1988, p. 53).

Gary Player who has won 130 tournaments around the globe and is one of four golfers to have won all major championships, presents a good example of determination, dedication and mental preparation even at this late stage in his career. When he misses a shot, he immediately "replays" the shot, making a practice swing and visualizing the ball flying perfectly toward his target. He does this so when it is time to hit the next shot, all the negative thoughts and images have been erased and the confidence, composure and concentration are in place, ready to go (Toski, 1988, p. 98).

In summary, although there have been no systematic studies on the mental preparation of golfers, it seems probable from the interview excerpts presented, that there is much to be learned by the professional golfers who have been winning tournaments and have experienced time and again the feelings associated with success. Their comments have raised many of the elements of success found in the Orlick and Partington's 1986 study. Goal setting, visualization techniques, concentration and focusing strategies were all areas mentioned by these top golfers in media interviews as factors necessary for success.

The fact that no systematic studies have been done in the sport of golf provides the need for the current study. Interviewing a number of pro golfers in a systematic way is expected to be highly beneficial in terms of increasing our

understanding of commitment, success elements and performance blocks in high performance sport.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This section discusses the methodology to be followed, beginning with an Overview of the Project Design, followed by the Method which addresses Subject Selection, Instruments, Design, Golfer Interview Guide, Procedure and Data Analysis.

### Overview of the Project Design

This study replicates the procedure followed in the research project conducted by Orlick and Partington (1986), entitled, Documenting Athlete Readiness for the 1984 Olympics and Evaluating Sport Consulting. The first part of that project focused on documenting athlete's mental readiness for Olympic competition.

This study will focus on a select group of top professional golfers, using the same individual interview survey.

## METHOD

### Subject Selection

Subjects selected to be interviewed for this study were professional golfers from the P.G.A. and L.P.G.A. Tour of 1987 and 1988. The interview sample included 15 professional golfers who had won professional tournaments and who consented to the interview when contacted by the researcher.

### Instruments

The Golfer Interview Guide developed for the purpose of this study, followed Orlick and Partington's (1986) Athlete Interview Guide as a baseline. The questions and issues not relevant to golf were eliminated and the guide (shown in Appendix B) was utilized. The interview guide explores factors associated with the professional golfer's reported physical, technical and mental readiness, examines the background of the athlete's mental training, addresses the mental state at a previous most and least successful tournament, and delves into the specifics on goal setting, pre-competition plans, focusing and refocusing strategies.

The interviewer taped all interviews. This freed her to remain attentive for listening and prompting during the interview and provided a complete interview transcript which

could later be used for verifying the responses. It preserved the emotional and vocal character of replies, and avoided omissions, distortions, modifications and errors that sometimes are made in written accounts of an interview.

The researcher prepared herself to conduct successful interviews in a variety of ways. A pilot study was carried out to give the researcher practice at interviewing professional athletes and to field test the relevance of the interview questions to touring professional athletes. Four international squash players (ranked in the top 10 in the world) and 3 international tennis players (ranked in the top 75 in the world), were included in the pilot study. Through this process the interviewer was given the opportunity to refine the interview technique and become familiar with the procedures surrounding successful touring professional athletes.

Prior to conducting this pilot study the researcher repeatedly listened to and transcribed 60 interviews with Olympic athletes conducted by Orlick and Partington (1986). This allowed her to become completely familiar with the interview format they and the athletes found successful.

As a result of recent employment as a high performance consultant the researcher also conducted multiple individual interviews with team members of the Women's National Basketball, Canadian Military Teams (CAT and Boeselager) in Lahr, West Germany, the Nepean Ottawa Diving Club and ten national calibre athletes.

Together these experiences enabled the researcher to be more competent, confident and experienced at the interview process with athletes.

### Design

The study utilizes an interview format to gain in-depth information about personal mental strategies employed by high performance golfers. The interview format was chosen for the following reasons:

- "a) Interviews provide an opportunity for the open searching and probing necessary to explore new topics such as elite athletes' personal mental preparation strategies.
- b) Interviews enable the investigator to learn and understand the terms athletes use to discuss mental preparation topics.

- c) Interviews scheduled at the athletes' convenience increase the likelihood they will participate in the study." (Orlick and Partington, 1988, p.106).

The intensive taped interviews allows athletes to communicate orally rather than in writing, and thereby provides cooperation more readily from busy athletes, and gives much more in-depth data than can be gained on a questionnaire, (Van Dalen, 1966; Orlick and Partington, 1988; Werthner, 1985).

Several advantages accrue from the human interaction in an interview that cannot be obtained in more limited, impersonal questionnaire contacts. In a face to face meeting, the investigator is able to encourage subjects, ask clarifying questions and help express more deeply their approach or perspective, as was experienced in the Orlick and Partington (1988) survey. Through respondents' incidental comments, facial and bodily expressions, and tone of voice, an interviewer can acquire additional information or leads that would often not be conveyed in written replies.

In 1982, Rychta found elite athletes to be extremely forthright, and they will tell you in no uncertain terms how they feel about what is going on. As well it has been shown that athletes who are involved at a high performance level tend to be independent-minded and act according to their own principles, and that the longer an athlete is at the top level the more independent-minded he/she is likely to be (Rychta, 1982; Werthner and Orlick, 1986).

The interview survey was designed to provide opportunities to collect detailed qualitative information which would make "within-subject" and "between-subject" comparisons possible. This was modelled after the Orlick and Partington (1988) project design. The within-subject option was provided by items in the Golfer Interview Guide which asked for descriptions of, and comparisons between, previous best and worst international tournaments. The between-subject option was provided by comparing the golfers to other golfers in the sample and to the Olympic athletes.

### Procedure

To arrange each interview, a personal letter (Appendix C) was sent to the golfer (or publicity agent) explaining the purpose and significance of the study with assured confidentiality. The investigator then contacted him by telephone to determine a convenient time and place for the interview. Normally this was at the tournament site in Toronto or Montreal. The telephone contact further

explained what was to be discussed in the interview and arranged a meeting.

The potential for interviewer bias was controlled first, by the use of the Golfer Interview Guide to structure the "focused interview". This standardized approach introduced controls that permit the formulation of scientific generalizations (Van Dalen, 1966). It also introduces as much uniformity as possible into the procedure. Second a control measure which was observed came in the form of interviewee feedback from the pilot interviews and third, the transcripts are returned to the golfer for review, to confirm that their accounts are accurate. Orlick and Partington (1988), came to the conclusion that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to manipulate the responses of the high level Olympic achievers.

#### Data Analysis

Typed verbatim interview transcripts will be qualitatively analyzed. Selected transcripts will be read and re-read by the researcher and another experienced researcher in high performance sport to independently identify elements of success within transcripts. The researcher and independent investigator will list common success elements of each interview, after which the inter-rater reliability between will be assessed. For the remainder of the questions a content analysis will be conducted question by question to determine response categories and percent response per category. Highlights in the case studies of the professional golfers will also be presented, giving detailed relevant examples.

This study will evaluate a relatively unexplored domain of mental readiness with professional athletes. There is little to draw on from the published literature. The guiding principle here is to strive to learn from the experiences of real "experts in the field" (i.e., professional golfers on Tour) and attempt to record and present their expertise as accurately and fully as possible.

## Appendix B

### GOLFER INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. When you walk up to the first tee of a tournament are you mentally ready?  
Do you think that you trained differently than other golfers?  
How did you get yourself to push, to practice, when you didn't feel like it?  
Do you think that your mental preparation differed from other golfers?  
If not ready, what is missing?  
What would you have done, if you could have done something differently?
2. Did anything unforeseen happen, either before or during the tournament (specific tournament) which may have affected your performance, for better or worse?
3. What was your goal for a/this particular tournament? Did you achieve it? Before the tournament began, did you believe that you could achieve your goal?  
If no, why do you think you lacked that belief?  
If yes, how did you develop the belief that you could do it?
4. What kind of mental training and psychological preparation did you initiate yourself? (Probe for details about source of ideas, actual strategies, and mental training practices in terms of when, where, how often, with whom, and with what success?)
5. We are interested in the kinds of things that you generally do and think about on the day of the tournament. How do you start preparing that day? Mental imagery? Do you usually follow a specific pre-competition plan prior to the tournament? If so, please outline. Did you follow that plan for this tournament?
6. What were you thinking or saying to yourself,
  - a) immediately before the start of the tournament?  
How were you focused?
  - b) during the tournament (when going best, and when going less well?)  
What were you thinking?
  - c) between specific shots - holes?

7. What was your best performance? What were you thinking or saying to yourself immediately before that tournament? How were you focused? What were you thinking between rounds? Now think of your worst performance in a major tournament? Which one was it? Again, what were you thinking before? How were you focused during? What were you doing or thinking between rounds? What were the major differences between these two performances in your preparation, thinking, feeling, or attentional focus?
8. What is your highest pressure situation in golf? How do you prepare and how do you focus in that situation?
9. Since competing in the last major tournament, in general how have things been going?

## Appendix C

### LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Professional Golfer:

Over the past ten years we have been exploring the mental aspects of high performance in a variety of athletic fields. Following the 1984 Olympics we interviewed 75 Olympic athletes, many of whom were Olympic and World Champions. We discovered a number of very important mental links to excellence for athletes competing at the Olympic level.

We would now like to conduct a program of interviews with selected professional golfers who achieve a superior level of excellence, in order to evaluate similar mental links influencing their optimal level of performance.

We realize there are considerable demands on your time, but we would be extremely appreciative if during your stay at the Canadian Open we could arrange to interview you about the mental aspects of your game. The proposed interview would take approximately one hour and would be scheduled at your convenience.

Based on feedback from our Olympic Champions, we feel certain that you will find this interview to be an interesting and worthwhile experience. Following the interview we would be happy to share the findings of our Olympic study with you and respond to any related questions you may have. We feel that many of the aspects of the Olympic study are relevant and directly applicable to professional golf at the tour level.

Enclosed is an outline, which gives relevant detail of our academic and professional background.

If we can provide further information, we shall be glad to do so. If you would be willing to participate please fill out the enclosed sheet for us to schedule a suitable date and time. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Yours sincerely,

Nadeane McCaffrey & Terry Orlick.

## Appendix D

### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

#### CASE STUDY 1

Outside interests and other influences have come about and started taking more and more of my time. Consequently the more time spent away from the playing and thinking of the game, and putting that effort towards something else, the less return you get in your primary objective. When I was playing my best golf, or when I have played my best golf, the thing that I have found quite easy to do - I can't tell you exactly that there is a triggering mechanism that made it all happen, but I found it quite easy to shut out the outside world. Really if I wished to have a primary objective or singular purpose, the purpose being just to think about this particular shot, not the one I just played, and not the one I must play after this one. But I was able to focus in on just that instant, and take in the parameters under which I had to play that shot, or the conditions under which I had to play, if it was for the tournament lead, or whatever it may have been. Just to take it all in and be able to throw it into the mental process and spit out a decision of whether it be to go for the pin or go for the middle of the green or with what club, under what conditions, and throw all those things together.

You can work on your physical game, work on your body and keep it in shape, you can work on the technical part of it and you can work on the chipping and putting and all the little tricks of the trade, that help score, but it is difficult to go out and practice thinking. I think that for me came from a competitive nature of never giving up. For instance, in 1976, I believe, I was playing in Orlando and I had had a very bad first round, and I went to one of the officials and asked what the procedure was to withdraw. As I was sitting there and he was explaining what I needed to do, I told myself I've never quit anything in my life, if I start now it might be awfully easy to do it the next time. As the story goes I ended up winning the tournament, because I just wouldn't give up, and I think that is what I needed to do to make me bear down. And often times in my 20 sum odd year career, I'll bet I'm over par before I'm under par on a given day. That seems to be the catalyst that gets me going and makes me try harder.

The techniques of concentration to help me bear down are almost on a daily basis. Sometimes it just depends on which side of the bed I get out as to what might trigger something for that day. I won a tournament in Japan one time primarily because I just got into my little world, and played my game. The guys I was playing with couldn't speak

English, so I was really by myself. I didn't have anyone to talk to and I couldn't get upset and complain to anybody because no one understood, no one would listen. I guess I turned my attention inward, and thought about my next shot. I look back at another tournament that I played particularly well. I went up to the golf course the first day to play in the afternoon, and there had been some extremely low scoring. I had to win that tournament that week to get into the world series. It was sort of a goal. The low score that morning had been 64 or 65, or something, and there were a lot of low scores, and here I was, I hadn't even teed off and I had to shoot something like that to even get into contention. Again I won that tournament, a long story made short, I focused on just what I had to do.

If you had to have a technique for me, I was very much a goal oriented person. I would give myself a lofty goal yet an attainable goal. I felt it was very important to establish the fact, for me to play at my best or near my best I had to play for a goal that pushed me. I had to have something in return. I had to feed that id or that ego or whatever that creature was inside me, to have some satisfaction to be able to pat myself on the back and say 'nice job'. Yet I was not going to do it with a low set goal, it had to be something difficult to attain but I could do it with maximum effort. I went that way for quite a number of years and as I say, as other interests, (my business and my family has grown), have naturally encroached into the time spent on golf. I think also, it maybe the time itself, 20 years of doing the same thing, you might get calloused. Maybe it is time to turn over a new style or new technique, maybe I need to wear knickers or dye my hair blonde or get it all poofed up. I think I was very much a goal oriented person and then through time those goals became sort of muddled. They became undefined and now as I sit here, I say I don't have any goals. Not that I have achieved everything, far from it, but it just seems to be such a time consuming task to focus on that one goal. I think of that one, and all of a sudden I think of ten others that I might have to do along with that, and it is just hard to focus in on that one single solitary act. I can still play. I can still hit shots and I can still play, but I find it very hard to focus and get that tunnel vision, and wear the blinders and focus only on that one objective.

Like today, is sort of in miniature what has transpired over the last couple of months. Today I did not play badly, even though I had a high score, I really didn't play badly. Possibly I wasn't as patient as I could have been, but my patience has been tried the last couple of months. I'm sure you've had it some ways. You're not doing something badly but you are not getting the results out of it that you feel

you should. I have been doing that. I made no birdies today, I've made 7 birdies in my last 6 competitive rounds of golf. That is unacceptable. I don't know what it is. I think the goals I need to set for myself have to be more defined and maybe more elementary rather than a complex goal of 'gosh' I've got to shoot 66 tomorrow, although I don't have a definitive plan of how to do that. I should say, O.K. You can't shoot 66 on the first tee, just step up and hit the ball on the fairway on the first tee. I've had many a person, ask me going into a final round, a press person come up and say to me 'what is your strategy tomorrow?' I don't have any. My strategy is predicated on the first shot I hit on that day. After that it is reaction. I react to how I hit that shot. I react to the wind and all that. It is literally one shot at a time and as I play now, I think I'm losing sight of that and I'm not channeling all of these mental gymnastics that I'm going through into something basic which is the swinging of the shot. As I say that, I find myself maybe trying to get so elementary, so basic, that I'm forgetting just the reaction part of it. I don't have to think how to play. I think there are shots out there where if I let it happen it happens well, but the next shot if I try to let it happen I screw it up. So I'm caught in a position of second guessing myself.

In the days when I was playing my best, I never let up on the pressure on myself to perform. In fact there was a period of five years where I didn't miss a cut, in the U.S. or around the world, and there were some very intense times there. Not that it was any big deal. But when I finally missed the cut, I'd hurt my wrist when playing tennis. Of all things, I'd run into a side wall bent and hurt it. Then 2 or 3 weeks later after I'd had some therapy on it, I tried to go back and play, and I missed the cut. It was as if somebody had plucked this enormous pressure off of me, but I missed 7 cuts that year. So I'm one that has performed better under intense self imposed pressure. Some people don't, but I do. I expect a lot of myself and often times people say, 'Oh, you are too hard on yourself'. I look at my game and my career, and the times I've played well and that is when I play best, I expect the best from myself. What does that? I don't know.

I was the same as a junior. Golf was never the main focus of sports or athletics. I played a lot of baseball. Baseball is probably the most natural sport I play. I went to college on a football scholarship. I've played a lot of different sports. I've played them all fortunately rather well to be competitive and to be a winner. I think that is important to be a winner or to know how to win. Know the feeling of winning. I think it is important for kids to participate but I think it is also important for them to

know how to win. I'm not saying you win at all costs, don't get me wrong, but that was my natural inclination. I enjoyed whatever I was doing. Playing cards, I was competitive. I wanted to win. That was the driving force. If I struck out at bat in little league, (10 or 11 years old), I was so upset with myself. I might hit a home run the next time up. I was also a pitcher, and if somebody got a hit off me, I might strike out the next five batters. That was my response. If possible I tried harder or bore down. I kind of throw that veil over myself and think of nothing except whatever it is I have to do. Whether it is to shoot the basketball to make the shot, or whether it is to throw the strike, or whether it is to hit the ball or run for that extra yard or to make that putt. Those are things that are elusive for me now and I think are elusive for a lot of people that may have not had that natural instinct of wanting to be the best, or to follow a path that is self defined. You can't lay out a program for me, I can't lay out one for you that will lead you to success. I can show you some of the mechanics which may help you and vice versa, but in the end you have to be the person that understands it, believes in it, has faith in it and then does it. All those things we can sit and talk about but in the end it has to be that person who goes out and does it. I think we are seeing it in Jeff Sluman. He wins the PGA, he knuckles down, he focused on what he wanted and he played an unbelievable round this afternoon. That is what happens. It takes a big win, a major win.

I try to think of positives. There are many times when I've not let myself miss the shot or miss the putt. I just refuse to accept it. Then there are other times when it is just impossible to get the darn thing going the other way and you think, how can I have been so good and been so bad? We've seen it on two different occasions. A guy shoots 78 one day and 64 the next. Or Jeff shoots 64 today and he might shoot 70 tomorrow. How does that happen? It is the same person in less than 24 hours (or approximately that time the next day), what happens? I think you lose that trance. Self hypnosis I think would be great. I don't know. I've always felt the more I try, the more I bear down, generally, the better I will play. I don't mean to say that I wasn't trying today, because I think I was trying today. Rather than using one finger to try and hit the panic button, I was trying to hit it with both fists. I just couldn't do it.

Visualization is something that I never use to really think about but it came naturally, until the mental part of golf became a more popular topic and hence why you are writing. These things never use to be really written or talked about much. It wasn't really applied to golf so to

speaking. I can remember many a time sitting there visualizing a shot. If you imprint it in your mind it makes the body work better. I sit here and I tell you these things and I know these things and I get out on the golf course and I lose the visual experience and I'm not seeing the ball in flight. I'm not seeing the chalk line on the putting green. When I've putted well it is as if somebody took a little chalk and just put the path on the green for me and I saw it, and I putted along that line and the ball goes in. But now I'm not seeing those things.

I use to probably concentrate more on that. I don't know and maybe I'm wrong on this, I never would really practice it as such. I never go to the putting green and practice it, I would use it as I was playing.

I went over the golf courses, lay out, shot making, more in my head ahead of time when I didn't know the golf courses. Now after many years of playing, I think I know the golf courses, that is not to say that I shouldn't take 30 seconds and mentally click off in my mind what I want to do at #1, 2, 3, and 4. It really doesn't take long, but it is that reinforcement that I'm not doing.

If I felt uncomfortable with the course or it was a new course, or something I wasn't real sure of, I did do it on a daily basis. I can remember sitting there at dinner grabbing the knife and putting it in my lap, and just sort of mentally hitting some shots, from here and there. I would do that. Now whether in fact I would go out there the next day and all those things would happen, one never knows. I think there are times when I feel I've been there before through that reinforcement. I think it is all positive. I may step up with my knife in my lap and mentally swing and hit it right down the middle and the next day I get out on the first tee and slice it out into the rough. Yet that previous practice was always a positive. It was a positive step and it was an encouragement of the positive. The encouragement of the goal. Certainly in golf there is going to be a lot of set backs along the way. All of those techniques or those thoughts were geared toward a positive result.

Are you telling me I need to go back to my room tonight and get a fork and a knife and shoot 64 in my room? I don't think I could even do that the way I'm going. I'm sure I'd miss a putt along the carpet somewhere.

Earlier in my career I practiced more than I do now. Even now I do it though, this is the putt that wins the U.S. Open. This is the shot I need to hit at the 18th hole at Augusta. It was rarely a shot I had to hit at a lesser

known tournament. It was always one of the big tournaments. Always a shot that needed to be played on a difficult hole for me. A tee shot that is set up difficult, or a green that was hard to putt. I still do those things.

I've always felt it is better to have quality practice than quantity. I see guys go out there and hit 8 or 9 buckets of balls, and I wonder how many of those did they hit well? I may go out and hit half a bucket. If I applied myself to that half a bucket and I got positive results I might quit right then. Rather than keep on with it. Sometimes when I'm swinging really well, I'll go out after I've played. Maybe I've played well and turned in a good score, I'll go out and just hit a few shots to leave the golf course on a positive note. Now the reason why I'm not doing it today, is I'm feeling very negative about it and I don't want to go out there and try to regurgitate the positive. I just want to swallow the pill and wash it clean. Sometimes for me, washing it clean and getting away from it is the positive. O.K. that is behind me. I did it. I am not proud of it. It is on the board, it is posted, I can't do anything about it. Now what do I do? I would rather go think about this is what I should've done here, I could've done there, this is why I hit it into the water there, this is why I missed that. That is my mental practice which often times serves me better, than to go out and hit 500 golf balls. That is what I have done since I was very young. I always felt like playing and hitting fewer balls, but when I did practice it was always with quality shots in mind. I couldn't stand up there and hit ball after ball. Hogan for one always hit a lot of balls. Like many of these young men. I always laughed at people, maybe not to their face when they would say, 'Man I hit a 1000 balls today'. Who are they kidding? My question always to them was 'How many did you hit well?' If I go out and hit four 8 irons and they are all good, I quit and go to the 6 iron. If go out and hit 20 balls really well, that is a positive, and I must have something going in my mind that is creating positive results with the shot. If you get too elementary, too basic, you'll get to the point of analysis to paralysis. I'm not paralyzed, but I'm hitting good shots that are going into sand traps. I'm hitting good shots which are 40 feet from the hole. I can't play that shot better. I'm not able to reach out and pat myself on the back and say nice going. One of the really good shots I hit today was down here at 11. I hit it four feet from the hole. Well on those greens I barely made a four. There wasn't the return. I played a fairly decent drive and good second and I walked off with a par. That is what I did at the first hole I hit a great first, a great second, hit the putt where I wanted, miss read it, and made four. I can't go and replay the drive any better, I can't replay the

second any better and I hit the putt where I played it, the only thing I can do is read it more correctly. How do I go and practice that? I can't go practice those intangibles. If I could I would.

This year in a tournament I was distracted. Most unusual. I think in my good years I was a very difficult person to beat when I was going well, particularly in match play because I just didn't make mistakes. It was difficult for the others to catch up. The same can be said for Watson, Nicklaus, Hubert Green and Ray Floyd. You just focused on what you were doing. This year I had just finished second at the Memorial Tournament, played well over there, Curtis Strange won. I played well. Curtis just beat me on the last day. I had nothing to feel bad about, and I didn't, I felt pretty good. I played well enough to win but I didn't. So let's go to the next week and try again. I shot 2 under the opening day, which was a good round, and I was in the middle of my second round through 7 holes. I was four under for the tournament which was on the leader board, not in the lead but certainly within a couple of strokes. The 17 hole that day was playing rather difficult, it was a long par three, the wind was sort of blowing into us, left to right, and I had a 3 iron in my hand. Again a 3 iron is not an easy shot, it is over water, but it wasn't that difficult. I got to the top of my swing and a watch alarm went off. I've had babies scream, cannons go off, cars honk horns and I never even heard them. For some reason and I don't know why this went off and literally startled me. I almost topped the ball and it went off in the water. I ended up making a six. Then I parred the next but I just literally came unglued. I'm trying but all of a sudden I went from 4 under to off the board just like that, and I had to birdie the 8th hole which was my 17 hole to make the cut. I went from a leader in the tournament and in 11 holes, literally almost vanished, and I look back and say, how could a watch alarm? I'm swinging and the guy was right behind me, and it got me, it startled me. Unglued! Yes, I came unglued. That was one of the few times where something distracted me so much, where an outside agency distracted me so much, I became unglued. I have from poor play, my own poor play have had bad rounds and lost it as I was playing, but not something like that.

How could that have bothered me that much? It must have been that I really had a lot of anxiety about the shot. I was not really focused in on what I was suppose to do. My concentration level must have been somewhere else, I wasn't paying attention and when that did go off, what little mental effort that I was making towards that shot was shattered. That surprised me. I was literally so shocked that my reaction was so negative. I don't know how many

people have come up to me and say, 'I'm sorry I dropped my bag', or 'I'm sorry this' or 'sorry that', the players that are standing near, or 'I didn't mean to drop my club'. What! What are you talking about? I didn't hear it I didn't see it, it didn't make any difference, I would never have known it. There is a lot to the fact, if you're thinking about what you are doing, you can eliminate the airplane noise and you don't have to try to. If I try to eliminate that noise, then I'm listening for it. I've just tried to go about my business and not looked for people walking, or things like that.

I feel very comfortable with the balance in my life. Maybe too comfortable. I think that may be part of my golf problem, is that things are great. My family is great, my kids are great, my company is becoming more and more a factor in that part of the business. I want to phase it into my career, and I suppose that requires phasing out some of the playing, although I still want to play. I enjoy playing, though I don't enjoy playing like I did today, nor with the frequency that I'm presently playing.

There will always be a hard core number of tournaments that I want to play in, that is necessary. It matters to me a lot not to win as much anymore. I still in my mind see myself as a winner, but I'm not doing it and that is a burr under my saddle. I'm not happy with that. Although I understand why it is not happening that never the less doesn't make it an easier pill to swallow. I still yearn for that opportunity to win. I think that is all I've ever asked for, is that opportunity. Given the opportunity, most of the time I have won. Sometimes I have not. If I can be in position with nine holes to play then I've got a great chance. Over the last few years, too much effort has been deflected away from playing, and now I feel like, sort of a piano key board, instead of just playing a couple of notes, I'm playing the whole keyboard, and you can't do that, especially if you don't know how to play the piano!

I've been my own coach and mentor, I've never had anyone help me with my game either mentally or physically. I suppose by choice. There are no books that have made an impression. That person may have been saying something, but he didn't know me. I know me better than anyone else. I'm not saying I'm right, but this has been my belief. I know my golf game, I know what makes a ball hook or slice, and I know if I have done something badly, I can trace it back to why it did that. Mentally I know what turns me on and turns me off, almost as if I've got this other person walking along talking in my ear. Good or bad he's there. That probably has been the driving force, this other part of me that does step aside from the confusion and can become

analytical, and can become that coach, or whatever that is. I think I have had that ability to step back from it and analyze it and step back into the fray. That again, I'm not saying is the best thing, but maybe it comes down to trust. I trust my judgement. I'm not sure I know anyone else whose judgement I trust as much as mine. I've believed in myself and still do. I don't fail to go the golf course everyday not expecting a good round. A ball I hit into a tree, that I don't expect it to come out onto the fairway. There is not a ball that I hit into the rough that I don't expect to have a good lie. Obviously, that doesn't happen all the time, but that is the way I expect good things. I'm not getting those things now, so I suppose my whole approach I'm questioning. This other part of me is stepping back and saying wait a minute here, let's circle up the wagon train and think about this again, maybe we are on the wrong track here, maybe we ought to try something else. Is that something else, to try harder? Or is it to back off and let it happen?

I can remember shots that were played at critical times during certain events. I can recall them with extreme clarity and bring back the emotion, and the situation. I may not have all the names right, but the other things that were there I can plug them in and tell you exactly what they were. The recall helps in other situations, but you will never have that same situation exactly, but you can certainly draw upon that. That is why the good players who have achieved success go on and have greater successes, or at least more of those, maybe they are not greater but at least there are more successes, because they do in fact feed upon those. Just point to fact of Jeff Sluman, I think we are seeing, although it may be early to call that, it is an example that might happen. Here is a guy that has played fairly well, he almost had success a couple of years ago at the TPC, and he did have success at the PGA, and bang. Goes out on a very difficult afternoon and shoots a great score and if indeed he does go on to win, it is not because Jeff Sluman is a better player now physically than he was a month ago, he is feeding on what he learned and he has that confidence now, that inward drive now is letting him shoot at the pins with a little bit more authority, putting with a little bit more authority, going down into the valley greens and seeing pure greens and not bumps like the rest of us are. Again it's that visualization and that clarity of detail. It is not a forced issue. I think right now, for me, I'm forcing those issues. I'm forcing that clarity and it shouldn't happen, it should come like that.

I don't think about my worst rounds. I try to learn from them. Like today, I try to learn from it. In 1984 I was leading the U.S. Open, going to the last round, and I'd

won at Wingfoot in 1974, and we were back at Wingfoot again and I had a lot of self-induced pressures; a) the romanticism of coming back to Wingfoot ten years later and winning again. b) maybe the greatest pressure was my father was dieing of cancer and I kind of wanted to make this one more for Dad. I had built up this pressure cooker to where I couldn't stand the pressure anymore. There was no release for that, except on the golf course and that release became a negative release. The Saturday of that round, (the third round), I played very well. I was playing with Fuzzy, and it was a very 'pro' Fuzzy Zoeller crowd. That is fine, Fuzzy is a popular player, and a good player, but I defeated it. Not just Fuzzy and the field, but I defeated kind of the whole environment. That day was mine. But I had exerted so much effort that the next day, again, with all this other build up, I went out and I was just a wash rag. I just never could get myself on track, and as the day wore on, no matter how hard I tried, or how hard I tried to focus, I couldn't get it going. Fuzzy won that tournament and Norman played well but I felt I really did lose it. One year, I won the U.S. Open and had gone to the British Open and was leading after three rounds and again the pressure from the press, 'win the U.S. and the British in the same year, there has only been 3 or 4 people who have ever done that, what do you think?' I didn't really think anything at all, although I knew I wasn't playing particularly well when I got there, but I was just sort of managing, and each day was a little harder to manage, and as the pressure got a little greater, a little greater, and a little greater, my game wasn't up to the calibre of play that I needed to have to combat all those outside influences. Ballesteros went ahead and won and I finished 5th or something, but I didn't play well. But now, in each of those cases I look back and try to learn from what I did wrong. What was it that kept me from performing better? That I remember. But as to how I played or the shots I played, I can't recall those. I just wipe those clean and just pick the meat from the carcass.

The goal for tomorrow is to make a birdie. Today I made three 6's on the par 5's. That is awful. I did a lot of good things today. I went out with two drivers before I started the day and selected one that I felt comfortable with. I was not unhappy with my selection of drivers. It is a driver I have been using for a number of years, I don't hit it long but I hit it relatively straight. I have been working with some other drivers trying to keep that accuracy but gain a little more distance. And one that I used at the International, I was iffy on it. So today I wanted to feel comfortable off the tee, and I did. As the round progressed my irons weren't on, yet my driving was on but my irons, I was missing too many greens. I'd hit a good shot and miss a

green, and I'd hit a bad shot and really would miss a green. Or I'd hit one shot on a par 5 and just didn't quite carry a bunker, it hit the dirt and ricocheted way back into the bunker, now I'm on the down slope and I don't have a shot. That was sort of an unfortunate situation, because I'd played 3 pretty good shots, and I was this far from hitting a great shot from 85 yards, to land the ball within a yard. I can't complain. The end result was it got a bad bounce, in going back there. I try to take that situation and remember it, and say when faced with that same situation again, hit the ball a little harder. Your mistake should not have been short, your mistake should have been long. I think I'm not identifying the safe zones. The safe areas. I'm just so intent on that hole, that I'm getting away from what I used to do so well and that was to define my target. I'm too specific with that. I used to not care where the pins were. Now they have these pin sheets, and they tell you exactly where it is. I used to just say what area is it in? I would hit to the area, say the right front of the green, if the pin was in here somewhere, well gosh if I hit to the right front I would be within 10 feet from the hole. With any club that is fine. I think I'm trying to hit it 89 yards now, instead of just go ahead and hit it 90 or 91. I think that's what I want to start trying to do with my irons, to become less detailed and more general in scope, to give myself a break, to give myself an opportunity of putting it on the green to have an opportunity. That's what I'm trying to pick out of today and what I will try to do tomorrow. Right now with my driving that's what I'm doing, I'm not trying to put it in the right side or the left side, I'm just putting it in the fairway.

In my Social Studies class in the 8th grade, I wrote a paper on being a professional golfer. I played golf since I was three years old. My mother has a picture of me at age three with a golf club. I won't say I was playing. She has the same picture with a football, with a baseball, 'see my little boy he can do almost anything'. In 8th grade I really liked golf, I liked the opportunity to go out and do it myself. I didn't have to rely on anyone else to catch the baseball and throw it back to me, or kick the football so I could kick it back. I enjoyed the individual challenge, and as time wore on and I lived in Colorado, I didn't have the family money to play a lot of amateur golf, I played locally and in some state tournaments but I couldn't travel around the country to play. The football scholarship attests to the fact that I liked golf but it wasn't my single goal in life. I played public golf courses. We weren't members of a country club, so I would caddy, then I would take the money from the morning to pay green fees to play in the afternoon. The practice that I did was always with the balls that I found, and I would go

over to a little area that they had. I could only hit maybe 5 irons or 6 irons, and that's why I think I learned to play more because I didn't have the facility to practice. The playing was sort of a dress rehearsal. That's where I think I developed my quality shot playing. Learning to see the shots and to play the shots. That's where I think it came from. A sort of indirect way of doing it. As college wore on I could see I had a talent for golf. There wasn't another sport that I was turning to. I didn't have my eyes set on something in the business community. I thought if I can win a national amateur tournament then I feel I could compete, I did win the NCAA tournament when I was a senior in college. That was the catalyst. That said O.K., you've beaten those you would probably compete against later, do it. I did it with no reservations, with not saying I wonder if I can make it, but I had every confidence that I could make it. I did realize I had a lot to learn. I had to go out and know how to travel and sleep in strange beds, eat in restaurants, get sick on the road, get well on the road, drive, and all that stuff that goes with being away.

In the way of injuries I've had a little tennis elbow. We all have tight muscles, but I've been relatively free of injuries.

I talk to myself all the time out there on the course. "You jerk! What did you do that for." I think it is one thing to think it but I think often times it helps to hear it. I just want to be comfortable with me on the golf course. I know me is competitive. I know me away from playing is probably a lot different than some people realize. I think sometimes, if you try to repress the natural part of your game, or the natural person while you're playing, you are trying to do too many things. I think you have to let the competitor come out. Maybe you modify it, but you have to let the competitor come out. If you are a happy go lucky person, you have to let that person come out but you have to know when to temper it and be serious about it. I try to let that competitiveness come out but cut the razor sharp edge off. Dull it a bit to where it is not so critical of oneself, where you don't allow yourself any room to miss a shot. I can't say I trained myself that way, it is just the way it happened. Using Craig as an example, I think if you were to hold Craig back, he might not be the player that he is. I think if you were to tell Jack Nicklaus to be more demonstrative than he really is, or if you were to tell Fuzzy to quit being as loose, or Chi Chi, then they are going away from their personalities. It needs to be along the path of the natural. You can put some parameters to your personality and don't go beyond those boundaries. Again, this game is such an individual game, I can not blame my caddy, I can not

blame a marshall, I can not blame the gallery, and I have to live with what I do. If the person can't accept that then they have to start modifying their behaviour, but if they can stand up to that and identify what their personality is and know themselves and have confidence in themselves, and know what turns them on and turns them off, and how to turn on and off, then I think it is important.

If you are leading a tournament , you have to be able to turn down the volume a little bit, slow your pace a bit. I've done that, I've walked a little bit slower. My inclination is to walk fast and to get to the ball before I'm ready, and to do everything too fast, and get caught up in the speed of things. I know to back up. I might stop and take a couple of deep breaths. Then proceed on my journey down the fairway at a much more tolerable speed. There are times when I've let myself go, where I think it is important to let myself charge and get the adrenaline going, get that speed up, get the lethargic out, then I have gone ahead and done that. But I have my own self defined parameters as to when to let it go and when to bring it back. That is what I believe some people can't do. They try to carry this same pace all the time, or fast all the time and don't know when to adjust. There are very few times in my career, and I can become just as angry as the next person, but I don't believe there are half a dozen shots in my career, where what I did on this hole negatively affects the next shot negatively. Now I may have done something positive here that makes it positive there, but rarely will the two negatives be back to back. It may go negative, positive, negative, but rarely will there be one shot played poorly because of another shot played poorly. Again it is that drive.

## Appendix E

### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

#### CASE STUDY II

When I first turned pro, I had this philosophy towards golf, 'I have everything to gain and nothing to lose', that attitude immediately reduces the pressure on myself. I'm always looking forward, I have everything to gain and I have nothing to lose, nothing to get tentative about and nothing to get tight about. I always had that philosophy and it has tended over the years to vascilate a little bit because many times when you're successful, there's that question of where do I go from here? A lot of famous people in many fields have this feeling of where do I go from here? That can tend to put a level of fear in you and also maybe a level of being tentative, because you play like you don't know where you are going, instead of continually keying towards success.

My mental attitude is just to go out and try to relax and tell myself, 'today I'm going to play the best golf I can possibly play'. I have been around and done it for so long. For me I have to fight being too lackadaisical about it, like it is just another round of golf. I have to play less tournaments, so I'm more hungry to play. I love to win that is why I continue to play. I've only got to win four more tournaments before I'm in the hall of fame, so I think that is the thing that motivates me now. I have been playing for so long, I think the thing that whenever I go out to play, I say, 'today you are going to go out and play the best you can play. Just swing the club and let it happen'. That's my mental feeling and try not to get in my own way. I don't think others think like that. I think everybody is different. Depends on what level you are in golf. I'm at the top level and I have worked very hard to get here. I am still working hard and still very committed. It is different now. It is like a marriage. The first two years are exciting and probably the honeymoon is still on. After twelve or thirteen years you have got to constantly be working at it otherwise it is going to slip and become more disjointed. You have to continue to put your time in to work on it, and its changes. You and the golf club are like a relationship. The relationship between your attitude about golf changes. That's why they say golf is a lot like life. It demands the most concentration in single massive thought. You have got to be nice to yourself and let yourself go out and play the game.

I can get into the zone pretty easy. It just happens. My zone comes with usually a couple of things, like I say,

you have nothing to prove to anybody, go out today and play the best golf you can play. You are the best woman golfer that has ever lived and just go out and have a nice time. You don't have anything to prove, you have money in the bank.

I stick with the same schedule every day. I get up, I stretch and do some exercise. I ride a stationary bicycle, I stretch. I get in a pool and do a lot of backstrokes and side bends, just to keep myself stretched. I am not the kind of person that can play good golf if I have things on my mind and things bothering me. I have really good concentration. When I play I don't see anybody. I am also a very sensitive person so if I have things bothering me it will show in my golf. That sensitive, emotional side of me makes me the great player that I am but it also keeps you walking on an edge like anybody that is really creative, they kind of walk a fine line between genius and insanity. That is a real fine line. I'm really in touch with myself. You can try your damndest to control your life, but that's hard, the fewer amount of distractions, changes, highs and lows you have, I think the better it is. There comes a point where you can't control it anymore. And your game might suffer for awhile and it might elevate for awhile depending on the situation.

Miller Barber on the Senior's Tour told me, 'Honey, the only thing that is important in a golf tournament on that first day is that you stand on that first tee and you golf that ball. You golf that ball right into the middle of the fairway, because if you hit into the trees or the rough or whatever, it is going to start your day off awful.' If you can put the ball in the fairway and put it down there you can set the tone for your day. That is all you try to do to get off to a good start.

I have a real good level of concentration during a round. When I am really concentrating and playing well I don't wander at all. There is just a calmness and simpleness about it, it is almost as if you are floating, and you can facilitate that for four and a half hours. It is all tied in with one's life, like what we were talking about, one's concentration level. There is also age. There is an advantage to age and experience and there is also a wiseness that comes about, but maybe there are more distractions too. When you are young you have that attitude, I've got everything to gain and nothing to lose and you are fearless and you are climbing that mountain. When you have tasted that, the staying there, and then go onto the next level. Very few people have to even think about going onto the next level.

I do not analyze very much at all. I probably just kind of have that attitude where I am just going to go onward and forward. It is just another round of golf and the sun is going to come out tomorrow and if you live and die and breathe the sport, and let it really affect you all the time, you will end up with a hole in your stomach. You can't compete competitively over a period of time and have any kind of longevity if you are up and down and too emotional. That is what rookies have to overcome. You can kind of see it if they have success in the making. If they have a real quick fuse, it takes a person on an 'even keel' pretty much.

People here in Canada, remember me coming into the last hole at Richelieu Valley, with a one shot lead over Nancy Lopez. Short par five hole, and I went for it in two, put it on the green eighty feet from the hole and made the putt for an eagle to win the tournament. I was just trying to get it close but it was one of those real memorable moments in my life that I'll never forget. Things like that kind of happen when you are floating along. Magical. My most exciting probably was my first tournament win because I was a young kid, who had just turned nineteen. On the day of my nineteenth birthday, I made a twenty foot putt against all of these veterans, and I mean I was like the youngest to ever win a golf tournament on the tour. I had won in my third week on the tour. Many moments are exciting because of the differentness of the moment. The U.S. Open, because I won that in 115 degree heat. Houston last year, the Hall of Fame Classic, because I shot 68 in the pouring rain on a terribly wet golf course.

One of my worst moments would have been at the U.S. Open, when I was tied for the lead coming to the last tee, had a simple three wood tee shot and I snapped hook it into the trees and ended up bogeying the hole and finishing second, when the tournament was right there. I think that was the most discouraging for me. That is how one shot can be so critical. If it happens at the beginning of the round you don't remember it. It happened on the last hole, on National TV on the last day of the tournament.

The major difference between a good and a not so good round for me is my concentration and a few putts, and just flowing with the round. Making a few good putts that is my key.

I am a very disciplined, controlling type of person. I am very much in control out there. Consistent, I am probably one of the most consistent golfers on the tour. Over the years, I have won a tournament every year that I have played. My record is one of consistency. That is the

key and trade mark to my game. I am never really much out of the top ten and that takes tremendous control, determination, will and lack of distractions. It all has to do with focusing. Single minded, and singleness of purpose, and seeing that ball and only that shot. I do visualization more so during practice rounds. Practice is short and intense. I can't practice for long sessions anymore. I just can not. I get bored too easy. I go out and make sure I am going to practice my bunker shots and really work on my short game and really be concentrated on that. Then someday I may spend more time in certain areas. I try to do a little bit of everything, but just walk away even if it is a half hour practice, but know that I got my work done. I go out there with a purpose. I know that there are a lot of people that wonder why they are not as successful as they are, but they don't practice with a purpose.

My daily goal is to shoot par and anything under that I am happy with. Probably every year I would like to win the Vare Trophy for the low scoring average, because if I do that, I know I have played pretty well. That is more important to me than any other award. My scoring average has always been in there. I won it a few years ago.

I have no injuries. I eat a high protein diet and snack on the golf course, as hard as that is for me. Sometimes crackers and I drink a lot of water all the time.

It is hard to maintain a high confidence level because you go through the ups and downs of your game. Golf is a game where your confidence can wane from one shot to the next. I just try and think positive and try and be around people that are positive and try my damndest to always look at the bright side of things.

## Appendix F

### ELEMENTS OF EXCELLENCE

#### COMMITMENT

\* The more time spent away from the playing and thinking of the game, and putting that effort towards something else, the less return you get in your primary objective. When I have played my best golf, I found it quite easy to shut out the outside world. The singular purpose being, to think about this particular shot, not the one I just played and not the one I must play after this one, but to focus in on just that instant.

\* Commitment is a major factor. In 1983 I was totally committed and became the leading money winner.

\* I have many other pleasures, but golf is in its proper perspective for me. Golf is my means of making a living and to help me enjoy life. Golf is my greatest enjoyment in life. Eighteen years of the last thirty I have been practicing and hitting balls.

\* I have worked extremely hard to get the success that I do. I have grinded it and I am proud of it. Last year I walked off the course with headaches, but I knew I was going to win. I would love to go through it again, but my subconscious is telling me to take a break.

\* I am committed to God. Golf is secondary. I have never had to work hard at golf because I have a lot of raw talent. So you could say I could be more disciplined than I am.

\* The most important thing I have acquired is self-discipline and the most important thing I have learned is patience.

\* I am a hard worker. I hit a lot of balls and practice very hard. I probably practiced a lot more than most people. I am pretty much totally committed to golf. Since I started so late. I don't think I want to be out here until I am fifty five. I want to be here and I am known to do everything 100 percent.

\* I am very committed to golf. It is all I want to do right now. Golf is probably the most important thing in my life. I have trouble sometimes with discipline in practicing. I think that is what happened last year. Success can make you a little lazy and a little complacent and not work as hard as you should. I won last year and I am successful; and this year will be just the same. It

doesn't work that way. You have to stay out there and you have to work just as hard as last year, because the players are getting better and so you have to improve, and that is discipline.

\* I am really committed to golf, it is my life. Although this year I have had less of a good time at it, being a lot of hard work and not seeing much results. That is tough. The results do not always happen immediately and that is hard to take. I am still fighting because I am very disciplined. I want to see an improvement. There are things I want to achieve.

\* I think I have a pretty good inner drive to succeed. I am real competitive and I will pay the price to work at it. I do not work as hard at the tournaments but I put a lot of work in away from tournaments which a lot of girls don't do. I am totally committed to golf for now. I will play as long as I keep winning. I enjoy the competition playing in tournaments.

\* I am at the top level and I have worked very hard to get here. I am still working hard and still very committed. It is different now. It is like a marriage. The first two years are exciting and probably the honeymoon is still on. After twelve and thirteen years you have got to constantly be working at it otherwise it is going to slip and become more disjointed. You have got to continue to put your time in to work on it and its changes. You and the golf club are like a relationship.

\* I am committed to golf, but I don't work as hard as some people. I think the practice habits are very important.

\* I am totally committed and disciplined to working hard at my golf otherwise I would not be here. My focus is here. I have a strong desire to play well and finish in the top ten and win.

**QUALITY PRACTICE**

\* I have always felt it is better to have quality practice than quantity. I see guys go out there and hit eight or nine buckets of balls and I wonder how many of those did they hit well? I may go out and hit half a bucket. If I applied myself to that half a bucket and I got positive results I might quit right then. After I have played well and turned in a good score, I will go out and just hit a few shots to leave the course on a positive note. My practice was always with quality shots in mind. If I go out and hit twenty balls really well, that is a positive and I must have something going in my mind that is creating positive results with the shot. ... It is difficult to go out and practice thinking, but the techniques of concentration to help me bear down are almost on a daily basis.

\* My basics from the beginning were very solid. Growing up I use to practice about twelve hours a day. I don't have any problem in getting my swing in the groove at any point in time. When things are not working well, I go back to intense concentrated training/practice of shot execution.

\* The many hours hitting balls, the driving, pitching, bunkers, or putting, stays. The mental quality side of that practice being the most important aspect.

\* I have no problem in disciplining myself to a rigid practice schedule. I love the game and I am fully aware of the work involved for me to stay on top of the game. Training could be anything from one to three hours of quality focusing. If I am having a good time, I will stay there. A lot of the guys have the physical and technical but have no idea as to the amount of time and effort needed for the mental training, and waste hours and hours of practice time.

\* If I am weak at something during a round, I work on it after the round. I practice with concentration to minimize strokes which gives me a good practice session.

\* My short game is not very creative and I know this can be a problem, so I chip and putt a little after each round. It is gettin better. When I play well, my practices are shorter and more concentrated.

\* When I take a week off, I hit a lot of balls each day, not playing too much, just getting it to where I felt I was swinging real good. For practice and competition, everyday is much the same. I usually hit more balls on Monday and Tuesday. When the competition starts I don't hit quite as many. If I am playing well, if it is not broken, don't fix

it'. If I am not playing well, I will stand out there and work it out, to get something positive going for the next day. ... To build confidence, making putts really counts. On the putting green for practice I make myself make so many four footers. I will hit some long putts for feel. Just going back and forth across the green. If I feel like I am putting well, I will quit. ... On a daily basis I practice six or seven hours. Competition days it is similar.

\* As long as I am concentrating at practice I will stay there, but if I am just going through the motions, I will quit. It is quality time. I don't necessarily spend a lot of time, but there is only so much quality time and I make the most of that. When I practice, I practice then leave the course and go do something else.

\* Practice is short and intense. I can't practice for long sessions anymore. I just can't. I get bored too easy. I go out and make sure I am going to practice my bunker shots and really work on my short game and really be concentrated in that. Then someday I may spend more time in certain areas. I try to do a little bit of everything, but just walk away even if it is a half hour practice, but know that I got my work done. I go out there with a purpose.

\* My practice habits are extremely concentrated. I can go out and in fifteen minutes get a lot accomplished. A lot of quality training in my practice. Whatever I am concentrating on, whether it be chipping, putting or hitting the ball, it is always concentrated, working on specific things. I can't stand out there and beat balls, that's why my practice time is so concentrated.

\* I protect the good feeling. After my round in Toledo I went out and hit a few balls just to maintain that same consistency type of feeling the next day. I put the ultimate effort into my training, but it is draining and takes a lot of mental discipline. I give every shot full intention and attention. You are standing out there and it does get tough and you get tired. The on course practice and simulation training is absolutely necessary.

\* I am better off hitting fewer balls and concentrating better on those fewer balls and going through my entire routine for each ball. I get more out of that. If I were to go out and hit a ton of golf balls, my concentration would not last that long. So it really doesn't do me any good. If things aren't going well then I will grind harder to figure it out. Once I have figured it out then that is it. My mind says, 'O.K. you have figured it out, you do not need to hit anymore,' and I usually don't.

\* I was very much a goal oriented person. I would give myself a lofty goal, yet an attainable goal. I had to play for a goal that pushed me. It had to be something difficult to attain, but I could do it with maximum effort. The goals I have to set for myself have to be more defined and maybe more elementary rather than a complex goal of 'gosh! I have got to shoot 66 tomorrow', although I do not have a definitive plan of how to do that. I should say, 'O.K., you can't shoot 66 on the first tee, just step up and hit the ball on the fairway on the first tee.'

\* My goal for this year was to make the Ryder Cup Team, and I have achieved that. In 1983, I set goals which seemed almost unattainable but I accomplished them and was the best. When I set defined goals for myself, I achieve them. When I don't set goals, I don't play well.

\* My daily goal is to have fun and maintain the feel. At this point in my career, there are no specific skills to work at, the ability and know how is ingrained.

\* I was so obsessed with becoming Player of the Year that now I have achieved that, it is hard to see what is left. I had four wins under my belt last year coming here, now this year only one. A major goal is the LPGA Hall of Fame. My goal for every time I play is to push myself to the limit and meet the challenges head on. If I am not playing well I will play a game with myself.

\* My daily goals are mostly for putting. When I am playing, my goal is to put shots behind me and don't carry bad shots over to another shot.

\* My immediate goals are to be Player of the Year and maybe win the Vare Trophy for low scoring average. Every week my goal is to tee it up with the idea of winning.

\* When I play my practice round, my purpose is to get the feel of the golf course the day before I play.

\* I am setting my goals for five years from now and trying to improve my game to be a winner every year and not just every other year or every two to three years. Before I hit that first tee shot, I am saying to myself, 'just relax and go out and play my own game. Don't try and go out and play against anybody. Don't try to think too far ahead. Play one shot at a time. That is all you want to do. Whatever happens, happens'. This year has been a down year. I have to take it one step at a time, and finish in the top 20 a couple of times, then the top ten, and then start thinking about winning. Every tournament I set goals. This year I

would like to win one tournament before the finish. This tournament my goal is to finish in the top ten. The first day I would like to shoot under par. Dream goal to win it.

\* I was always a goal setter and I had three really good years in a row. Then all of a sudden I did not set goals, and it really hurt me. I always have to set goals, to strive for something. In 1982, I won five tournaments. If you are going to set a goal of the number of tournaments to win, what are you going to say at the first of the year, 'O.K., this year I am going to win six tournaments'. Well that is kind of awesome to even think about and I just kind of stopped setting goals. I decided I didn't need to set them anymore. Well I was wrong! This year I set practice goals. I do a lot of practicing in my room a night, as far as putting and working with my swing in the mirror, things like that. Then I usually set tournament wins, money list goals, things like that. For a tournament I set very high goals. I always set goals that are achievable and goals that are not so achievable.

\* I've set goals for this year. Achievement goals of where I would like to finish. In the top five or the top ten. Daily goals vary. It depends on what I am working on and my swing. This year one of my big goals was to work on my short game, as well as my chipping. It has definitely improved.

\* I have only got four tournaments before I am in the Hall of Fame, so I think that is the thing that motivates me now. I have been playing for so long, I think the thing that whenever I go out to play, I say, 'Today you are going to go out and play the best you can play. Just swing the club and let it happen'. That is my mental feeling, and try not to get in my own way.

\* When I am out practicing on the golf course my goal is basically getting a feel for the greens, the bunkers and the grass. My competition goals are four good rounds in a row. Yearly goal, to win three tournaments. Dream goal is to win four majors in a year. To prepare each day, it is not completely the same all the time. I have in my mind the things that are important that I need to do. Like on a practice day, today, I am going to go and work from fifty yards in. I am going to go and work in the sand, then my putting, and a little bit on my alignment. That is my goal setting for today. If I don't set goals I don't know whether I have accomplished anything. I can finish my day and say, 'Great! That is exactly what I wanted to do. They are defined, refined and achieved'.

\* Imagery is something that I never use to really think about but it came naturally. If you imprint it in your mind it makes the body work better. When I have putted well it is as if somebody took a little chalk and just put the path on the green for me and I saw it, and I putted along that line and the ball goes in. I take thirty seconds and mentally click off in my mind what I want to do at hole number one, two, three, four, and it really does not take long, but it is that reinforcement that I am doing. If I felt uncomfortable with the course or it was a new course, or there was something I wasn't real sure of, I did do it on a daily basis. I can remember sitting there at dinner grabbing the knife and putting it in my lap, and just sort of mentally hitting some shots from here and there. I think there are times when I feel I have been there before through that reinforcement. I think it is all positive. It was always one of the big tournaments, this is the putt that wins the U.S. Open. This is the shot I need to hit at the eighteenth hole at Augusta.

\* I learnt my quality shot playing by learning to see the shots and to play the shots. When things are going well, my imagery is crystal clear and I do visualization everywhere. I feel the execution of the shot, see the target area, visualize the entire sequence, go through it and expect it to go into the hole. No thinking just the doing. As long as I am completely there when I stand over the ball, I see and feel that shot and its execution.

\* My best all time round, I visualized it and then played it! I visualized the night before, the morning and then let it happen. Feel it happen. Then do it. When I am playing well the feel stays with me. I can practice less and the mental and visualizing maintains the feel. The importance is to feel each shot and visualize it. I am a great believer of the benefits of relaxation and I think it is very important to every aspect of my life, crisis or fun.

\* Confidence and positive aggression are my cues for a good feel. I do a lot of imagery, particularly before bed. Fifty times or three times depending on how receptive I am on that day. It is not always positive or crystal clear but it is not negative and I never visualize a score, just one shot at a time.

\* My imagery is very clear. I feel every shot and then execute it.

\* I do a lot of daydreaming and dreaming about golf. When I won the U.S. Open, I knew I would win it and it happened just how I imaged it. Four days of par or better. My shot making is feel and seeing it happen.

\* I have read a lot of books on relaxation. They tell me to relax when I am playing, then visualize feeling good, relaxed and seeing the ball go into the hole and hitting good shots. I will think about the course and sometimes I think about playing every shot right. When I am striking it well, I am really getting into visualizing shots and getting the feel of the swing, and concentrating harder. I try to get myself thinking as positively as I can especially when things are not going well. I run the shot through my head before I hit every time. Feel and see is all wrapped up into one. You and the club are as one.

\* I work a lot on my visualization. Seeing myself making the putt, seeing myself winning a tournament. Your mind does not know the difference between real and fake, so if you constantly see yourself winning and constantly feel that you are a winner, eventually it will happen. I do a lot of breathing exercises to help me to relax and I do a lot of imagery at night, and then the next day when I go out to play I have already kind of gone over my round and seen what I want to do, and I just try and let go and play. With relaxation tapes I try and get my brain waves into a slower pattern and that is when you can play, what you say, 'out of your mind'. My imagery is visual. I can feel a shot but primarily I am visual. I see the shot, see the path of the ball, see myself hitting it, then I just get up and try and feel that swing. But I am primarily visual. I run through every shot before I hit it. I stand behind the ball and I look out and I try to see the shot, see the path of the ball. I can drive along in a car and be listening to music and not remember for ten miles, just daydreaming. I do a lot of that. I don't image complete rounds, but I picture myself on that last hole, on that last day. I can produce anxiety by daydreaming. I can really get myself excited and raring to go.

\* I don't visualize by seeing it or anything. I pick my target. I know what kind of shot I want to hit if I want to cut it or if I want to draw it in there, and then I do sort of imagine the target. Where the ball starts out on and where it ends up. I don't actually see the ball going in the air. It is all in the feel, where you have gone through the motion and it has gone where you expect it to. I never visualize results or scores, it is only shot by shot. My putting imagery is when I am standing behind the ball looking at the break, and once I decide on the break, I try to see a line on it, on the putt. I see where it will go.

\* I am a feel person. I don't see very well. I know when it is right. I don't do a great deal off the golf course. When I recall a very good round it is mostly feel.

\* I do visualization more so during practice rounds.

\* I do imagery before every shot. I will visualize and try to hit the shot on the driving range and do it like that. I feel a lot more than actually seeing, but your body senses that you can hit the shot, or you want to hit a certain shot, or you want to feel a certain feeling, that is the way that my senses work in this game. I am programmed through muscle memory and all that.

\* I work on relaxation techniques. When I decided to play golf, I got every book on the power of positive thinking that I could find. I realized that was important and I didn't know much about the golf mechanics. The first time I ever tried, I geared up for qualifying for the U.S. Open. I made the U.S. Open and learnt something from that. My first summer of amateur tournaments. At the qualifying I birdied the last four holes to get in. It was just incredible! I know it was all in the preparation that I did visually in my head. I work on imagery and relaxation every day for about an hour. It is not enough. I do my relaxation at night before I go to bed. When I am practicing, I use imagery for quality practice time, like simulation practice. When I am putting, I practice my mechanics for awhile, then I will practice situation type practice. I practice some imagery and visualization during those times I am out there practicing. The day I played my best round my images were very vivid and really clear. I can remember all the good shots and I can visualize the putts I knocked in from all over the place. My imagery is more visual. I am visual and the I kinesthetically get it. Feel is a little bit harder for me. I am mostly visual. This par three last week, every day I thought I was going to make a hole in one on it. The visual was there and the feeling. I got up and made a birdie on it three days out of four, and knocked it within two feet three times. It was the complete image from within.

\* I can remember shots that were played at critical times during certain events. I can recall them with extreme clarity and bring back the emotion and the situation. The recall helps in other situations and you can certainly draw upon that. That is why good players who have achieved success go on and have more successes because they do in fact feed upon those. Feeding on what you learn and building confidence. That inward drive now is letting you shoot at the pins with a little more authority. Putting with a little bit more authority. It is that visualization and that clarity of detail. It is not a forced issue.

\* Last year was an exceptional year for building confidence, so I continue to look at videos and relive those final holes.

\* My best ever eighteen holes was eight birdies in a row and set a record. I remember I played the front nine in even par and then I started the back nine on ten and I birdied ten through seventeen. I can remember every single shot. I can remember how I felt playing. I have never been more excited. All my putts were within ten to fifteen feet, except one putt, the seventh birdie was about forty five feet and I made that putt too. I shot twenty eight on that side. That game helps my imagery for recalling the feel, particularly when I am down and not making a lot of birdies, I will bring that feeling back up.

\* I can draw from my best eighteen holes, and say 'hey, I have been through this before and I know what it is like and therefore I can do it again.

\* My best performances get me pumped up thinking about them. I can recall those feelings.

\* I go to the course on the day of a tournament one and a half hours before my tee off. One hour before play I hit about thirty balls, then I putt for twenty five minutes and arrive at the tee ten minutes before tee off time.

\* My tournament pattern is always the same. My precompetition plan is getting up three hours before the tee off time. Two hours before I eat. When I get up I do some stretching and the exercise bike to warm up. I do some exercises with weights for the rotator cuff. I get to the course one hour before tee off and hit balls and putts until I have the feel. On the first tee, waiting to go, I visualize the shot and recall the feel. My cue is smooth.

\* There are never any changes in a game plan that has been going well, particularly major changes within a given week. Maybe small changes to adapt to the surroundings and environment to get into the even keel frame of mind. I have a daily routine that is not too rigid because I like to feel I can walk up to the first tee and hit my best shot even if my caddy is late or whatever. The one thing I do worry about is being on time for tee off. I eat basically the same every day. One to one and a half hours before I play, I go to the course to hit balls and practice putting to get the feel.

\* I have my schedule planned in advance, and I stick to it. I skipped the Tucson event the following week even though I had won two tournaments in a row. Four or five weeks in a row is my maximum. A lot of people wondered why I didn't keep playing and try to keep the streak going.

\* There are certain holes on the course you get to thinking about, either you like them or you don't like them. I have a certain plan for playing those holes. At the start of the tournament I just try and go out and hit a lot of fairways and greens and play solid and hopefully get under par and see how it goes. I feel out how I am playing as to my game plan. If I am playing real well, I will be a little more aggressive than other times. If I am not playing well, I try to be patient and try to get the birdies where I can. My pretournament plan is to get up two hours before tee off and get warmed up, stretching then eat. I always come out here an hour before I play and putt first, hit balls, then putt and go.

\* Mentally at night, before the round, I go over the course, see where I want to hit the ball, see myself make the putts and then the next morning I just go out and warm up about an hour before and hit some balls, putt and chip and go out and play. If my tee off is at eight, I get up about six and then I eat breakfast and get here by seven.

My physical warm up is hitting balls. I do a little stretching to make sure I don't pull any muscles. For the practice rounds of the tournament, like today, I hit a lot of balls and I practiced a lot after I played. Once the tournament starts I may not do that, I just let it flow. I have a detailed schedule for the day of competition. When I get up, eat breakfast and time I need to get here.

\* I will hit a few balls to loosen up, but not as many as I would before a tournament round. I hit more balls before the round on a tournament day than I would on a practice day. After the round I might have a tendency to hit more balls on a practice day. It takes an hour to go through everything before a competition round and it might take me thirty minutes to go through it all before a practice round. My pretournament schedule if tee off is at eight, I would get up at five thirty. I do a lot of stretching exercises morning and night because I have a bad back, so that is twenty minutes. Get ready, have breakfast and get to the course an hour before, so I would be here at seven. Hit balls for thirty minutes, chip and putt and then tee off. I try to set up a game plan. I try to decide what holes I want to be aggressive on and which holes I don't want to be aggressive on. I am constantly evaluating the round. If I went out on Thursday and hit every shot perfect, I would go out and practice everything anyway. I would go through my same practice routine. I like to practice more when I play well because then I feel I am in the proper rhythm, things are going well and I am confident and I can feed on that.

\* Practice days I hit more balls and chip and putt more, but once the tournament starts I will not hit too many balls after I play. I hit warm up before I play, but after I play I will not hit as many. Tournament day, I try to sleep in on the late tee off days. I try and get out about an hour before tee off time. Always the same preparation. I putt for fifteen minutes and then I will hit ball for about twenty minutes, then I will chip for ten minutes and then I will putt the rest. I try to eat two hours before tee off time. Sometimes I go over the holes and think how I would like to play them. On Thursday of the tournament, I am pretty low key and pretty calm, then depending on where I am in the tournament. If I am in contention, by Saturday and Sunday the adrenalin is going and that is good. I create it if it is not there. If you are playing well, you use it to your advantage. I try not to think too much after I hit the shot. I try not to dwell on the shot whether it is good or bad. During a round I will stick with what I have got. After the round maybe I will try and change something but not too much, just little things. You will begin to get into trouble if you start to fool around with the swing, or whatever.

\* I stick with the same schedule every day. I get up, stretch and do some exercise. I ride a stationary bike and stretch. I get in a pool and do a lot of backstrokes and side bends and just keep myself stretched. My daily goal is to shoot par and anything under that, I am happy with. Every year I would like to win the Vare Trophy for the low scoring average, because if I do that I know I have played pretty well. That is more important to me than any other award. I won it one year. My scoring average has always been pretty much in there.

\* I don't change the game plan when things are going well or when things are going badly. I pretty much try to do the same thing as when things have been successful for me in the past. If it works, it works. If it doesn't, that is the way it goes. My daily schedule is to hit balls about an hour before I play. Eat before I practice. Touch on every club, or every other club. A few shots around the green, some sand shots, then putting and just go. Practice day and competition day are very different. On a practice day, I am out having a good time looking over the golf course. I am so concentrated when I am in competition that I can not do that to myself the other days. I have to give myself a break. For competition, my plan is going out and playing my own game and staying relaxed. To stay relaxed I try and joke around with my caddy and stay loose.

\* I have a twelve month plan, where I have developed my own little program and thought I would stick with it and see how it goes. For competition, I get up two hours before I tee off. Do stretching, have breakfast and I work out physically after the round on competition days if I have time. It takes out some tension that has built up. I get to the course an hour ahead of tee off time and I have an hour warm up which is a comfortable time frame for me. I hit balls, go and putt and then I am ready to go. On the first tee I always feel I have a good positive image of myself hitting it off the tee. Before I tee off, I am just loosening up, just swinging and talking to people. I might be nervous, uptight, but I am usually good off the first tee. During the round, what I try to do is have an open focus then a closed focus, and hit my shot during closed focus and open back up again. During a tournament I stick to my game plan. I never change what is working.

\* I won a tournament in Japan one time, by gettin into my little world, because the guys I was playing with couldn't speak English, so I guess I turned my attention inward, and thought about my next shot. It is literally one shot at a time. Sometimes I think I lose sight of that and I don't channel all of those mental gymnastics that I go through into something basic which is the swinging of the club. I get caught into a position of second guessing myself. In the days when I was playing my best, I never let up on the pressure on myself to perform. In fact there was a period of five years where I didn't miss a cut, in the U.S. or around the world, and there were some very intense times there. I will try harder and bear down and kind of throw that veil over myself and think of nothing except whatever it is I have to do.

\* Mental control and feel is the key to my playing well. My attitude is not too high, not too low, I know the feel and what it takes to have a good day. I try to maintain an even keel. My best rounds have no fear of failure and I experience complete tunnel vision. I have an optimal state in my mind which is not too up and not too relaxed. When I have a great performance only golf is on my mind. I am fearless with absolutely no doubts or fears. Invincible. Win anything. There is absolute confidence and control over my swing though always a little margin for error. Feelings are on an even keel. Not overly aggressive, but cautious to the point where when playing well you take a calculated risk, gamble when the odds are in your favour. I am tactical, confident, I read situations well and make good decisions.

\* The intensity when playing consistently well, like last year took quite a bit out of me. This year the intensity is not as strong as it has been. The energy and intensity it takes to be number one is incredible and it is very hard to maintain that level. I have been in the zone for four straight days at four tournaments last year. It is an exhausting experience. I can't remember who I was playing with or what was happening. I was totally focused.

\* My tenseness comes in my shoulders, and I have little refocusing deep breathing exercises and just try and feel my body relax. I can feel myself like this and I can relax completely. I try to focus in on my shoulders and just try to relax.

\* When I first came on tour, I don't think I concentrated very well. I use to do some drills in my room at night just to get me to focus a little better. What I would do is just stare at the doorknob on the door and see how long I could stare at that, without anything else coming into my mind. I

think it really did help me. During the round I try not to think about so much what is going on in the tournament. I try to focus on one shot at a time and what I need to do with that shot. Then just go ahead and hit that. My best eighteen holes, my focus was on the shot that I was hitting every time. Nothing else. Nothing else entered my mind. It was what I wanted to do with that shot, and why I wanted to hit it, and then it was just once I got set, the swing. No thought at all. It was like when people talk about being in the zone, where I didn't feel pressure. All I felt was the task at hand, that was it! There was a lot of confidence in my ability. I had a lot of confidence.

\* I have a real good level of concentration during a round. When I am really concentrating and playing well I don't wander at all. There is just a calmness and simpleness about it. It is almost as if you are floating. It takes a person on an even keel. I am never really much out of the top ten and that takes tremendous control, determination, will and lack of distractions. It all has to do with focusing. Single minded and singleness of purpose in seeing that ball and only that shot.

\* When I play extremely well I ignore everything around me and not pay too much attention to anything in particular and try to get myself into a tunnel vision and try to block everything else out. My optimal state is when I am in the zone. That is a total feeling of relaxation and it only happens five or six times a year, tops. I have done it twice this year already. The only thing I can remember is, I was very relaxed and confident and that whatever I was going to do was going to turn out right. There is no pattern, just real consistent golf.

\* On the first tee, my only thought is to get that first shot on the fairway and take it from there. Not thinking about anything. Anything off the course, out of mind. Have the mind clear to go out to play.

\* First you have to learn to win. Second you have to learn how to win consistently. I am still learning. When things are going well, I am more relaxed, patient and easy going on the course. When things are going less well, I wasn't accepting the fact that I would make mistakes and hit bad shots.

\* When my game is not going too good, to get myself out of a mental rut and start thinking positive I play little games out there. I bet my caddy I can make so many birdies out of so many holes, things like that. I have a set plan for Tuesdays. I like to play early, then I have the afternoon to practice and then relax. When things are going really

well, I am into the game and don't even know if anybody is around. Tunnel vision. The key to my playing well is making putts. If I feel like I can putt, that is what gets me going.

\* Focusing for my best eighteen holes was to keep on an even keel type feeling. I didn't get excited, I smiled and all that, and remember the crowd clapping, thought this is great! After the round is over with, then you finally realize it. For me it is mostly relaxation and not getting so uptight and tense about it. When I am playing really good, the hands feel real relaxed and I just feel at ease.

\* I have learnt how to take each shot as it comes, one shot at a time. I may hit a good shot or a bad shot the last time, but it doesn't effect this shot. If I had a bad previous hole, I use to let that affect me. I would get quick and I would go ahead and just swat at my shot. I have played in a lot of tournaments and I think that experience has made me mentally strong. I am pretty much use to it and I have a good mental approach to the game, as far as the competitiveness and concentration. When things are going really well, my concentration is just one hundred percent. Everything is working well and my concentration is at its best. During the round, to refocus I just try to think about something totally different after my shot. When I get to the ball, at that time is the only time I think about the golf shot I want to play. That limits the amount of time I need to concentrate. That next shot is a new game.

\* I have really good concentration when I play. I don't see anybody. I am also a very sensitive person so if I have things bothering me it will show in my golf. That sensitive emotional side of me makes me the great player that I am, but it also keeps me walking on an edge like anybody that is really creative. They kind of walk a fine line between genius and insanity. That is a real fine line.

\* Between shots I work on staying relaxed. I do a lot of that Quieting Reflex. My focus for my best eighteen holes was on relaxation and one shot at a time. I can remember the last round in every detail and those feelings. I putted really well. I had seven birdies. Made putts from everywhere. I was at a really good level of confidence and excitement. I was anchoring well, too. I was really patting myself on the back, which normally I don't do. I judge the bad shots, but I don't give myself a lot of credit for the good shots. That day I said, 'O.K., I am not going to judge any bad shots, I am just going to let those go. I am not going to remember them. I am not going to pay any attention to them. I am going to remember those good shots and those good images'.

- \* While on the course during a round, I am constantly talking/reminding myself: 'Everything is all right. Be patient. Maintain a positive frame of mind.'
- \* To refocus during a round I might walk off the green and go to the next tee before the group has finished putting, and just try to get more into myself and tell myself I can turn it around. Give myself a little time to think and be by myself and try to clear things up and go on. I give myself a pep talk.
- \* Whatever happens during a tournament or a round of golf, I try to maintain a consistent positive attitude, and finish as high as I can given the conditions, and get the most out of the week.
- \* During the round I keep talking to myself, 'don't pay any attention to that, never mind what someone else is doing because you have no effect on their game.'

\* The score is posted. I can't do anything about it. I would rather go think about, this is what I should have done here. I could have done there. This is why I hit it into the water there. This is why I missed that. That is my mental practice, pulling out the lessons, which often times serves me better than I go out and hit five hundred golf balls. I can't practice the intangibles. If I could I would, like when I hit a great drive, great second shot, hit the putt where I wanted, but misread it. The only thing I can do is read it more correctly. If I have done something badly, I can trace it back to why it did that. Mentally I have got this other person walking along talking in my ear. That probably has been the driving force, this other part of me that does step aside from the confusion and can become analytical and become that coach, or whatever it is. I don't think about my worst rounds. I try to learn from them. I try and take a particular situation and remember it, and say when faced with that same situation again, hit the ball a little harder. Your mistake should not have been short, your mistake should have been long. I am not identifying the safe zones.

\* This afternoon, because of this morning's round, I will sit down with my caddy and pull out what went well and set out a game plan for tomorrow. I will do some quality training in my head and recall what works well. My records are a real benefit for recall when I do it on regular basis. Qualifying or not is not the end of the world. Pull out the positive and move on.

\* When I have a poor round like today, I set up a plan to rectify it. I mentally practice that plan, like what I want to feel and swing like tomorrow. The plan is like a set of building blocks, one step at a time.

\* I think about the round I have played, and how I would do it differently and I would practice mentally on how I would do good swings. I do all my work at the course. I practice after I play and work on a few things and think about it for tomorrow, work on putting and once I am gone I just try and relax and stop thinking about it. When I do my evaluating, I don't depend on my caddy or anyone.

\* I evaluate each round at the end of the round and then I try to work a little bit harder on the weakest part of my game for that day. I have learned a lot from this year. Unfortunately, you learn a lot from misfortune and mistakes than when things are going great.

\* After a round, I think of what I could improve upon and go and practice that a little afterwards. Once I leave the golf course I try to forget it.

\* I do a certain amount of evaluation after a competition round, but it is always, what club didn't I hit well, what aspect of my game didn't go well that day and I just go for fifteen or twenty minutes and practice that and then I am ready to go home and relax.

\* I do a bit of evaluation, like go through the round and remember the good ones. I need to do more of that.

\* One of the few times where something distracted me so much was, I got to the top of my swing and a watch alarm went off. I have had babies scream, canons go off, cars honk horns and I never even heard them. For some reason this literally startled me and I became unglued. Why? It must have been that I really had a lot of anxiety about the shot that I was not really focused in on what I was suppose to do. My concentration level must have been somewhere else and I wasn't paying attention and when that did go off, what little mental effort that I was making towards that shot was shattered. There is a lot in the fact, if you are thinking about what you are doing, you can eliminate the airplane noise and you don't have to try to. If I try to eliminate that noise, then I am listening for it. I don't believe there are half a dozen shots in my career, where what I did on this hole negatively affects the next shot negatively. Rarely will there be one shot played poorly because of another shot played poorly.

\* The crowds use to bother me and make me nervous when I first started on the tour, but now I see through them. Slow play is really annoying and I must prepare ahead of time to slow down my game and go with the pace. I get troubled by what other people think of me. Golf being so individual and all year round, seems to have a fish bowl affect. I don't like the assumptions and stories reporters trash together. Only I know what it is like to wear my shoes.

\* My major distraction is the leader board. I try not to look and just play the game. That is easier said than done. I know how, but I don't always pull it off.

\* Delays are my biggest worry. I know what to do that works, get away by myself in a corner and try and keep the feel to continue on with.

\* I used to get stage fright about crowds and things like that. Now I imagine the crowd as a painting, the bunch of people as a painting on a hill and that worked pretty well. There are certain people I enjoy playing with more than others, then there are others I really hate to play with, but I still do well because I really want to beat them and it really motivates me. Most of us out here if we can get out of our own way we will do all right. If I am playing well, nothing will distract me. Other days I will growl at everybody. I won't look at the leader board if I am playing well, until I get towards the end, maybe then I will ask my caddy, 'how many?'

\* During the round I am aware of crowds. I use to be very nervous. Now they don't bother me, particularly when I am playing well. On the days when I am not playing well, I

hear every little sound. If I am playing bad, anything will distract me. I don't like playing slow. It comes with the territory, as I am a fast player. I have to take that into my stride - prepare for it.

\* One thing that really bothers me is playing slow, because I have a tendency to speed up. I am much better at it now. I try to be aware that it is happening and not let it speed up my game. I find I will look out at the crowd and not see anyone. I don't look at the leader board that much except to look at a number and not the name and say, 'well, I am three shots back', that sort of thing. Leader boards create anxiety for me.

\* There are people I like and dislike to play with, but my concentrating is not going to be affected much by the people that are with me. I enjoy the crowds. It is kind of fun having them cheer for me and all that, it is a positive force. There are a lot of distractions, but not one thing distracts me the most. There are a lot of little things like the caddy not showing up on time or sleeping in.

\* There are certain players I would rather play with and there are players the other way too. I can prepare myself the night before, when you find out who you are playing with and you start preparing to basically ignore them and when you have a pairing with people you like you don't have to prepare, just go out and have fun. Usually I play my best when I have a good time. I am not easily distracted. On the whole I do well in getting my mind back on track.

\* I draw a lot from the crowd. I draw my affirmations or my response from the crowd. I am always looking for positive reinforcement from someone out there. Making the cut use to be a problem. I go out the second day of a tournament and my score was always higher because of the cut, but I pretty much got that under control. There are certain people I don't enjoy playing with but I have ways to deal with them. I kind of work through my head different situations of how I am going to deal with them. If I know I am going to be playing with a really slow player, then I just gear my head up for my own game and don't let it get me upset.

\* I am one that has performed better under intense self imposed pressure. I expect a lot of myself, and the times I have played well are when I expect the best from myself. Self induced pressure, there is no release for that, except on the golf course and that release became a negative release. I had built up this pressure cooker to where I could not stand the pressure anymore, because of unrealistic expectations. Each day was a little harder to manage, and as the pressure got a little greater, a little greater and a little greater my game was not up to the calibre of play that I needed to have to combat all those outside influences. I looked back on those situations and tried to learn from what I did wrong and pick the meat from the carcass and just wipe those clean.

\* When I joined the LPGA Tour I had a bad temper and was always putting a lot of pressure on myself. I thought that is the way you were supposed to play the game. Now I try to be loose and have a good time. Now I try to use pressure as a confidence builder rather than something that gets in the way.

\* If I am over par on the Friday of a tournament and I have to really shoot to make the cut that is when I really put more pressure on myself.

\* When I first turned pro, my philosophy towards golf was, I have everything to gain and nothing to lose, which that attitude immediately reduces the pressure on oneself. You are always looking forward, you have always got everything to gain and you have got nothing to lose, nothing to get tentative about and nothing to get tight about.

\* I don't get nervous during a tournament unless I am right there in the hunt, leading a tournament and that usually does not happen until the last nine hole.

\* The one time when things can bother me is when I am standing over a putt. I will begin to feel pressure.