



# GRAAA

Welcome to the April issue of digital *Golf Range Magazine*!

Inside this issue, you will find the following features:

- **Junior Programs:** Josh Jacobs had a simple but effective idea 11 years ago. Now entrepreneurs from all walks of life are signing up to execute his school-based concept
- **Range Renovation:** An upgraded practice complex plus the leadership of a top-ranked director of instruction have turned Fairbanks Ranch into a serious place for game improvement
- **Range Research:** A new wave of number-crunching lets golf coaches dissect on-course performance, offer strategy that isn't guesswork and supervise practice in a way that fast-tracks lower scores
- **Video File:** PGA apprentice Bill DeVore on how to communicate with golfers and colleagues efficiently using social media

Keep it fun and thanks for supporting the GRAA.

Best Regards,

Rick Summers  
CEO & Publisher, GRAA  
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*Golf Ranges: Where the Fun Starts*

# Golf Range



**M A G A Z I N E**

Volume 22 No. 4  
April 2014

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- A Leap Forward at Fairbanks Ranch
- In the News: Golf Academy Dispute

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**Page 18** **Analytics Set to Change Golf**



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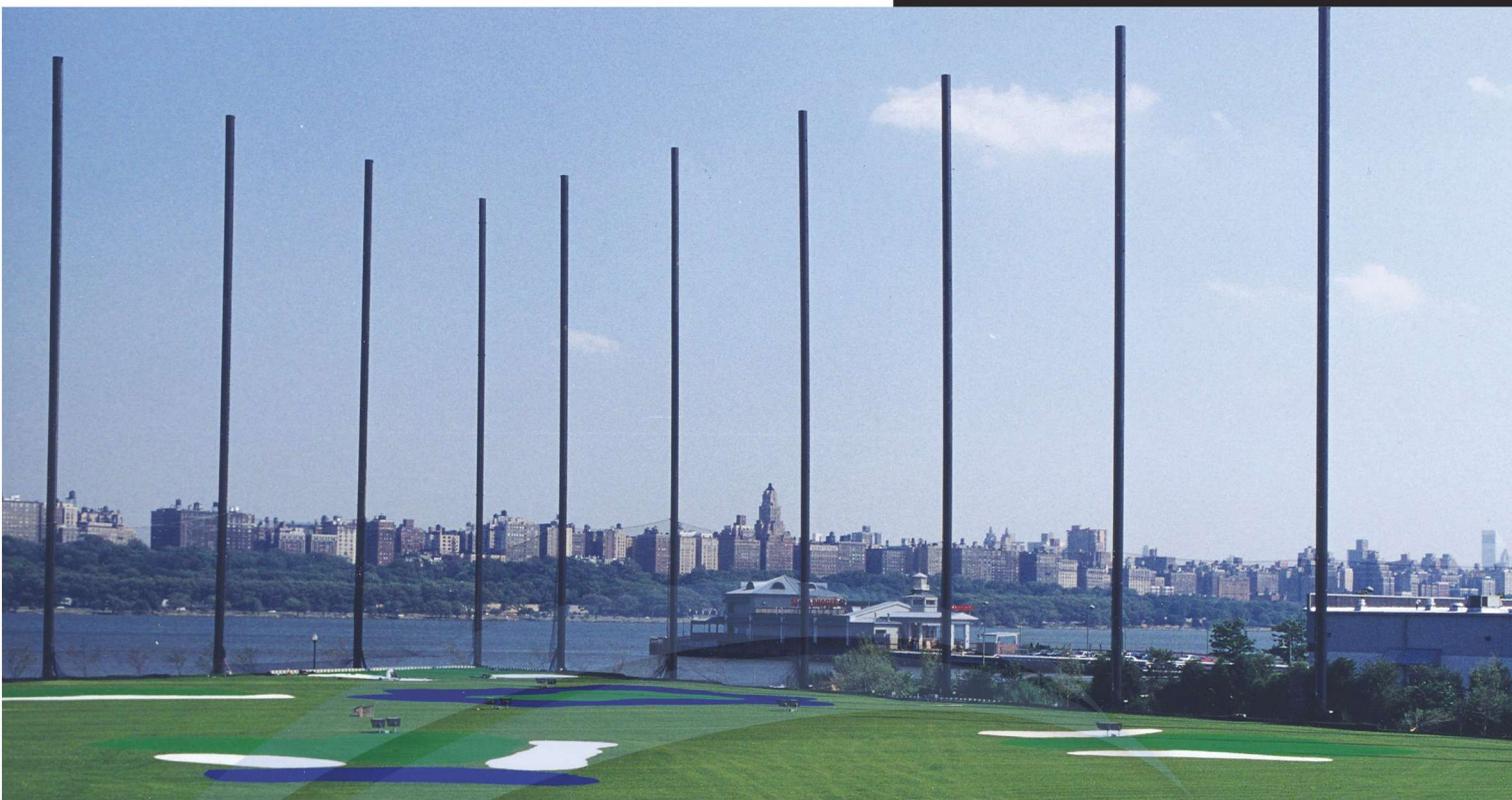
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**Page 34** **Fresh Start at Fairbanks**

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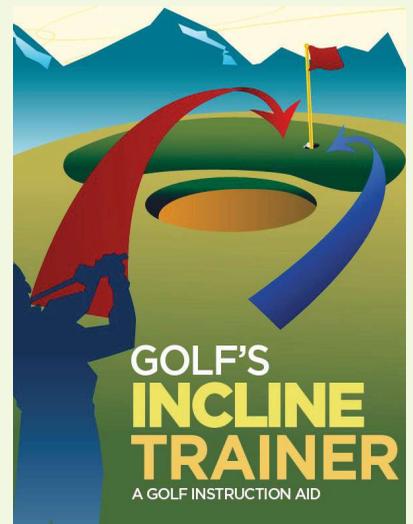
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# Golf Range



## MAGAZINE

Volume 22, Number 4

April 2014



18

### Features

#### 34 Fresh Start at Fairbanks Ranch

Renovation of the practice complex plus the leadership of a top-rank director of instruction have turned a prestigious club into a serious place for game-improvement. **By Scott Kramer**

#### 40 TGA Looks Like a Junior Juggernaut in the Making

Josh Jacobs had a simple but effective idea 11 years ago. Now entrepreneurs from all walks of life are signing up to execute his school-based golf participation concept. **By Art Stricklin**



26

### Departments

#### 6 Teeing Off

#### 16 From the CEO

**18 Range Research:** A new wave of number-crunching lets golf coaches dissect on-course performance, offer strategy that isn't guesswork and supervise practice in a way that fast-tracks lower scores.

**24 Weather Effect:** Courtesy of Pellucid's golf-focused research, a national map displaying and measuring recent climate conditions, as the winter of 2014 grudgingly loosens its grip.

**26 Golf Range News:** Read about a European course that is mostly synthetic turf, a lawsuit against an academy instructor, new hires, the USA junior national team, Game Golf's rollout and lots more.

**30 Video File:** Communicating with your customers and colleagues using social media is an elusive skill, one that Carolinas golf professional Bill DeVore can help you feel more comfortable pursuing.

#### 48 GRAA Featured Partners

#### 50 GRAA Preferred Vendors



34



40

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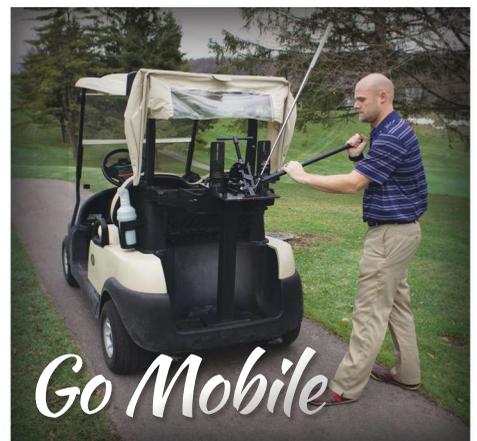
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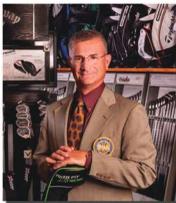


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# A Fresh Approach Attracts Entrepreneurs

"Necessity is the mother of invention." Everyone knows this nugget of a saying, especially those of us with the entrepreneurial spirit. The necessity in golf right now is, of course, more people playing the game. And some of the programs people are inventing to bring more golfers into our sport are very impressive.

One of those programs – TGA Premier Junior Golf – is spotlighted on the cover of this month's *Golf Range Magazine*. Started in 2003 by entrepreneur Josh Jacobs, TGA is a curriculum of junior golf instruction meant to be taught at schools. TGA works on a franchise model, meaning entrepreneurs can buy a territory and work to bring the TGA program into schools in their area.

That's where things get really interesting. Many TGA franchisees around the country are golf professionals or others with business ties to the sport. But many others are simply businesspeople with an interest in golf and an eye for trends. Our story on TGA, which begins on page 40, highlights three individuals who have become franchisees. For them, getting involved is an investment in the future of golf that is paying immediate dividends.

As you read the story, you'll see the opportunity that TGA presents for golf ranges and other facilities. While TGA classes are designed to be taught at schools – where kids are already on-site – the goal is to eventually get students outdoors for a fuller golf experience. That's an exciting step forward for the young students, and a potentially lucrative partnership opportunity for range facilities. By reaching out to your local TGA franchisees, your facility could find a vibrant feeder program for your youth golf efforts.

Take a look at the story for yourself and see how businesspeople from a variety of backgrounds are looking at youth golf and seeing new opportunities. While our game is in need of new ideas and revenue streams, it's exciting to see these entrepreneurs putting the power of invention to work.

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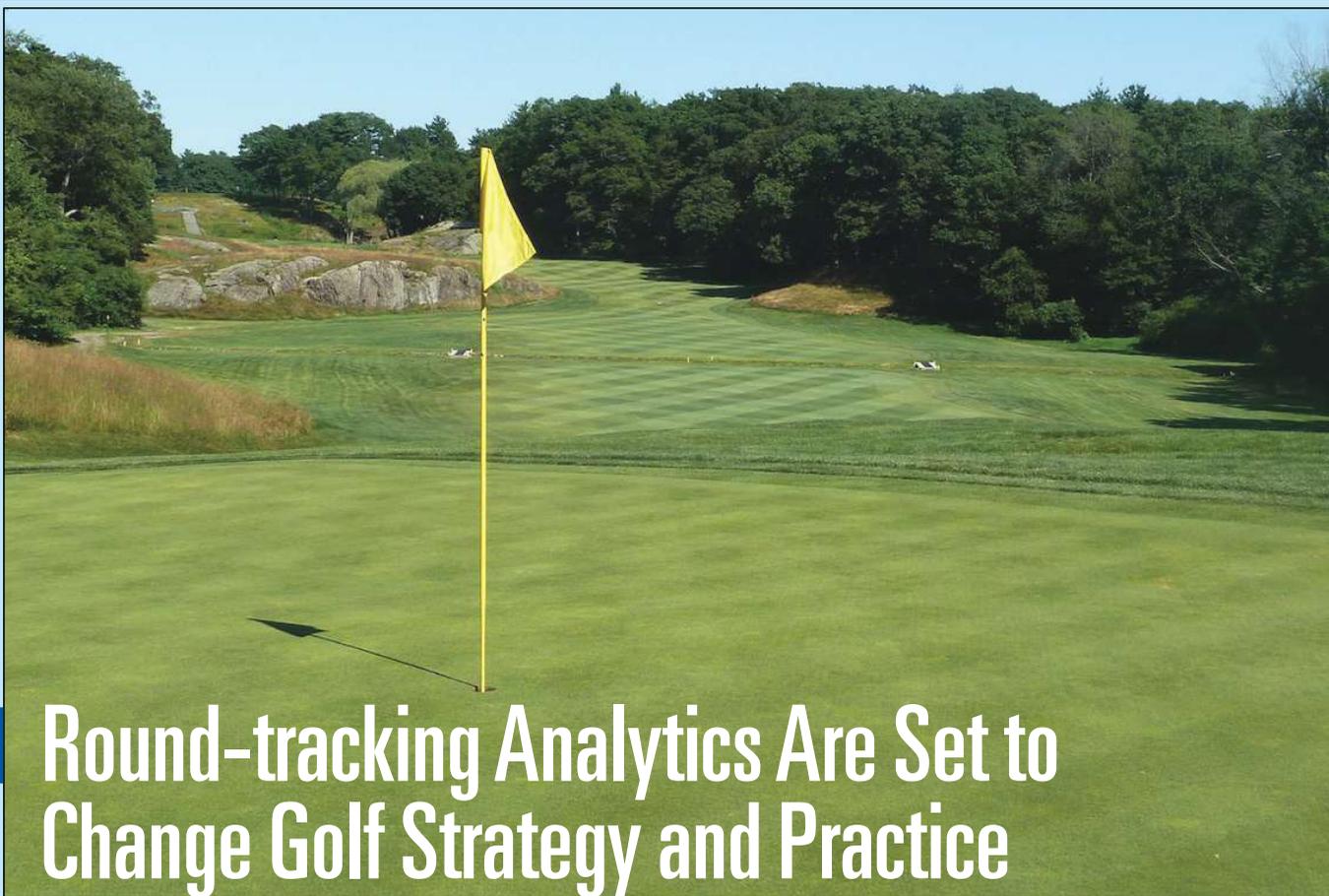
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# Round-tracking Analytics Are Set to Change Golf Strategy and Practice

A new wave of number-crunching will empower the golf coach to dissect on-course performance, offer strategy tips that aren't guesswork and supervise practice in a way that fast-tracks lower scores. **BY DAVID GOULD**

**R**esearch, metrics, analytics, diagnostics, programmed practice, repetitions and motor skill acquisition. These concepts are waves that keep rolling to shore in what used to be the laid-back field of golf instruction. It's been happening for a while, but the appearance of new books by Mark Broadie – a professor at Columbia Business School – and Dan Abrahams, who is the Lead Psychologist for England Golf, make this a corner-turning moment. Other new indicators include the PGA of America's endorsement of the round-tracking, data-harvesting Game Golf system. In tandem with Golf Channel, the PGA is sending a signal that the sort of teaching practiced by the Jack Grouts, Harvey Penicks and DeDe Owens of the world will live on only partially.

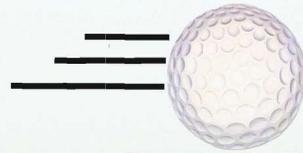
In Broadie's insightful book, "Every Shot Counts," several chapters plunge deep (though with clarity and very direct language) into the professor's "strokes gained" argument. Compared to the performance stats we are used to, it stands as a much sharper and more

meaningful read on the relationship between shot-playing and scoring. Broadie divides his analysis into strokes gained putting and strokes gained off the green, often qualifying his citation of facts with the phrase "... in the

For a typical member, layup strategy on this par-5 hole at The Country Club (picture above), outside Boston, should favor close to the green in rough over farther away on the fairway. In the decade since ShotLink data began to be captured on the PGA Tour, Luke Donald has been at or near the top in Strokes Gained Putting.



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MARK BROADIE  
WITH A FOREWORD BY SEAN FOLEY

ShotLink era.” That’s his nod to the decade-old data-crunching machinery represented by ShotLink, with its capacity to probe, test, theorize—then confirm or deny the theory—how tour players are able (or not so able) to attack golf courses. It is only now being manipulated in a way that approaches what sabermetrics provides to baseball. Nuggets from the Broadie book include:

- “Among the 40 top PGA Tour pros, approach shots accounted for 40 percent of their scoring advantage, driving accounted for 28 percent, the short game 17 percent and putting 15 percent.”
- “Across a range of golfers from amateurs to pros, longer hitters tend to be straighter hitters.”
- “Most golfers [in laying up] will score worse from 80 yards from the hole than from 30, even if every layup to 30 yards lands in the rough and every layup to 80 yards lands in the fairway.”

Remember, the pro tour is the laboratory where all these discoveries are taking place—just as major league baseball, not your corporate softball league, is where “Moneyball”-type data revealed what really matters to wins and losses on the diamond. Strokes gained putting (you may



Mark Broadie (left) and Sean Foley at MIT’s recent Sports Analytics conference

already recognize “SGP” as a featured PGA Tour stat on its website) is the tour average number of strokes to hole out minus the number of putts taken by the golfer being evaluated—adjusted for distance. In a given round, Play-

## Systems like Game Golf, now in its rollout phase, deliver to amateurs what ShotLink has provided to PGA Tour players over the past 10 years.

er X has so many feet of first putts: if he hit every approach shot (or par-3 tee shot) to 10 feet, that would be 180 feet of putts, and there is a known tour average from that distance.

Let’s assume for Player X that, instead of 10 feet, all 14 approach shots and all four tee shots on par-3 holes stop 33 feet from the hole. That’s a 36-putt day for Mr. Average PGA Tour Player. His SGP would be +1 if he took 37 putts, -1 if he took 35. From 2004 to 2012, on a per-round basis, Luke

Donald led the PGA Tour with a -.70 SGP. Three players including Tiger Woods were next with -.64. Ranking 50th on the list is Kevin Na, who putted well enough to post a -.29 against the tour average.

Strokes gained off the green is also a clear, cold, reality-based metric, in which tour average is known from the millions of ShotLink-logged golf shots in the database. It can be held up against Player X’s tee-to-green performance (also reported by ShotLink) on a given day or throughout any period. The best way to understand strokes gained off the green is to grasp the fact that a large volume of relevant, valid data could be gathered by having our Player X spend the day hitting one shot per hole on a PGA Tour course (even if he never holes out), perhaps going around three times to beef up the data.

He could hit tee shots on the par-5s and a handful of long par-4s. He could tee off on all the par-3 holes. You could have him hit from the 225-yard mark on six of the longer holes. You could drop a ball for him in 6 different fairway bunkers and have him play from there. All you would have to do is then identify the spot where his shots land—each of which is rated according to the average number of shots (including, of course, fractions of shots) the average player needs to get down from that spot. There is a baseline for all shots, given their distance from the hole and whether the lie is fairway, off-fairway or sand.

All the measurements and stats in the new era that Broadie’s book heralds are based on the strokes a golfer executes and how those strokes correspond to scoring—because we now know with absolute certainty how the scores of tour players are compiled. We know that, on tour, four-foot putts require 1.13 strokes to get themselves holed. If there were exactly 100 four-footers in the second round of the ninth tour event of the season, the players who faced those four-footers would need 113 putts to get them all to drop.

Chapter 8 in Broadie’s book is titled, “Tee-to-Green Strategy: How Data and Optimization Can Lower Your Score.” As in other sections of the book, the author here spends time extolling

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This average golfer is just inside the 33-foot mark—a distance from which PGA Tour players average exactly two putts.

the value of computer simulation as applied to the play of a given hole. Armed with huge amounts of precise, recorded information on actual play of that hole by actual golfers (of identified skill levels), Broadie is able to whip through examples of how scoring is affected by every conceivable shot outcome. By seeing the outcomes and how they numerically relate to final score on the hole, he can move straight to the strategic question of where the 10-handicap (or 20-handicap, etc.) has planned to hit his shot, and address

the question of whether that plan is as low-risk and high-reward as it can possibly be.

These are the very early days of analysis and diagnosis of golf skill as it relates to scoring. But even though it's the early days, things are happening fast. Hardware-software systems like Game Golf, now in its rollout phase, deliver to amateurs what ShotLink has provided to touring professionals.

Within the expanding world of golf coaching, the analytics of the golf game John Q. Student currently plays

are about to get much more meaningful. Some of what's coming is a relief, because it dismisses golf strategy that sounds smart because it's cautious, and yet the cold numbers don't back it up. As in the bullet item above describing layup strategy, the data favors aggressive play considerably more often than most people in the golf world would expect.

So, the new analytics do a lot. They clear the fog, they get us past certain strategy concepts that frankly take fun out of the game, and they set the stage for coaching that can make great use of metrics, such as Trackman data, SAM PuttLab data, scores on target games, etc. Once those numbers get generated, they can be compiled and even shared on social media using eye-catching graphics that appear on smartphones and laptop screens. Practice was always a basically good idea, but supervised practice targeting the skills proven to be most needed and influential—followed by post-mortems on the round that accurately nailed each of the stroke-saving or stroke-spending decisions—is a whole new ball game for both the golf coach and the golfer. ■

# are you an industry insider?



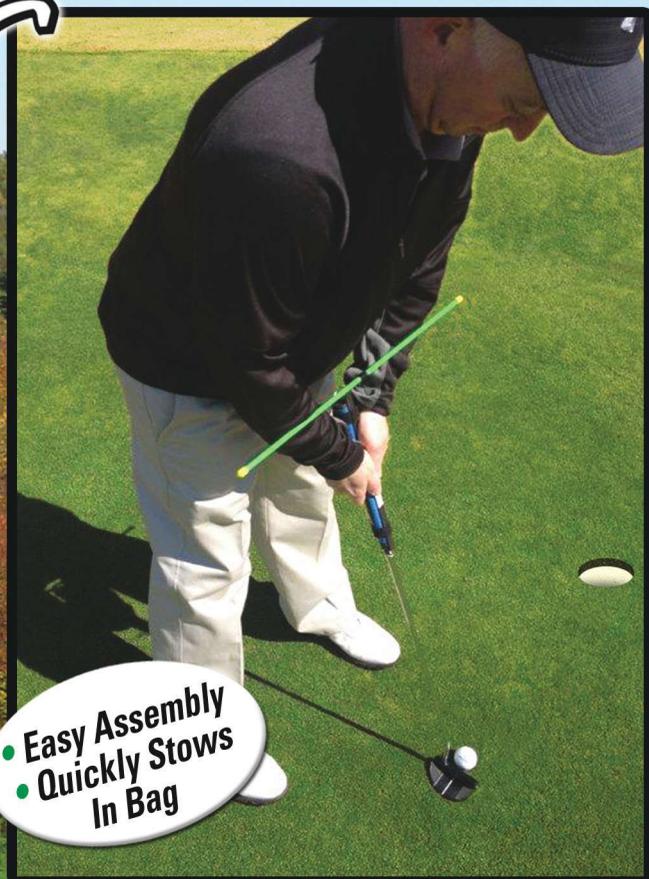
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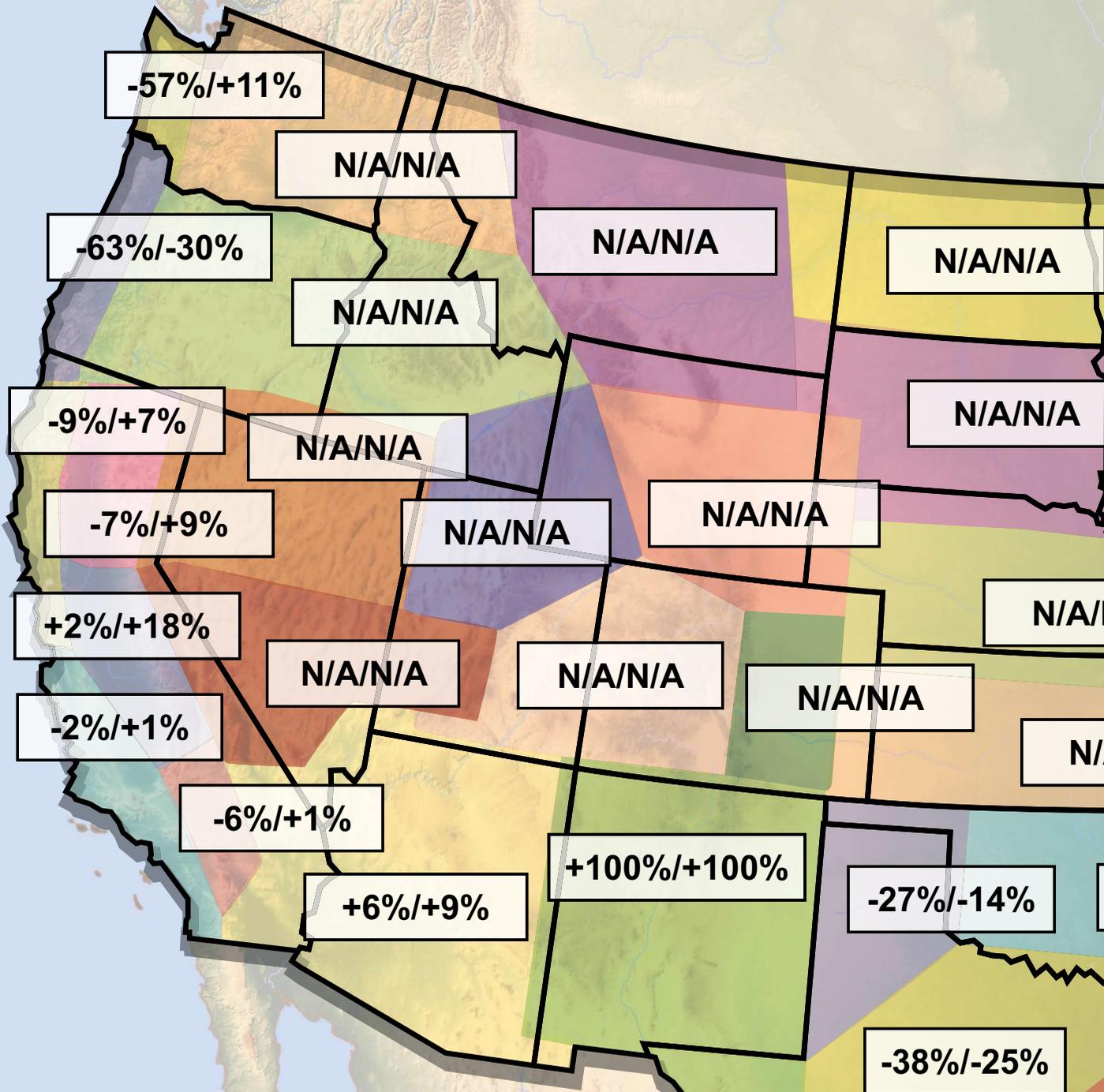


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### WEATHER IMPACT ANALYSIS

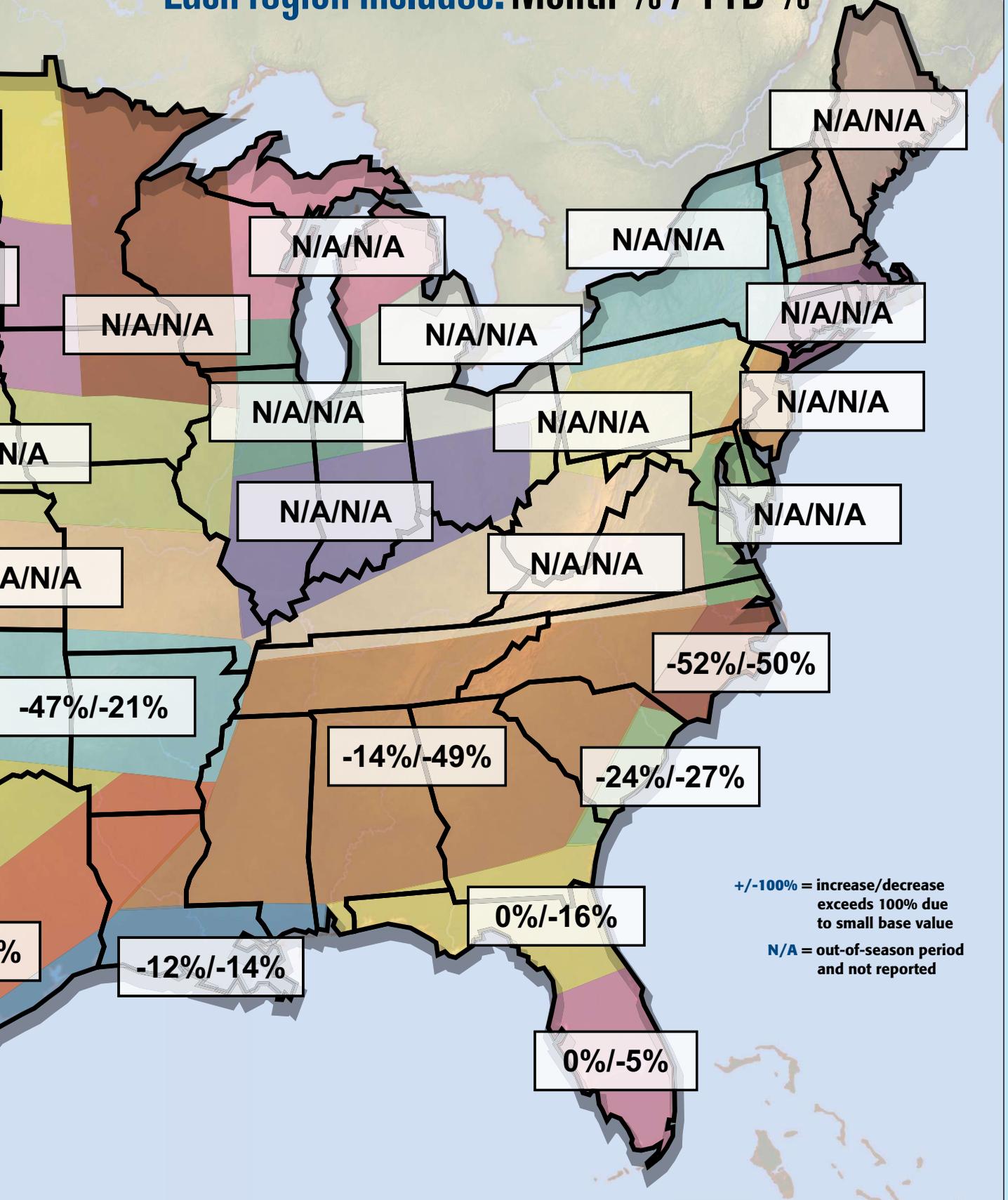
In cooperation with Pellucid Corp, a leading industry insight and information provider, each month *Golf Range Magazine* will present research which demonstrates how the weather has impacted the number of "Golf Playable Hours" in multiple regions of the country. While ranges may be somewhat less influenced by the weather than golf courses, the above information should still

provide a performance metric worthy of review. This map shows the percentage increase or decrease for the month shown vs. the comparable month from a year ago followed by the year-to-date results from January through the current month reported.

For more information about Pellucid Corp and how the data was compiled, visit [Pellucidcorp.com](http://Pellucidcorp.com).

# Golf Playable Hours: February

Each region includes: Month % / YTD %



**+/-100%** = increase/decrease exceeds 100% due to small base value  
**N/A** = out-of-season period and not reported

# A Wide Range of News

Keeping you up to speed on trends in the golf practice-and-learning sector



The West Palm Beach gated community **Ibis Golf & Country Club** has doubled down on clubfitting as a service to players. By building and promoting a new Golf Equipment Fitting Studio, management is pushing for correctly fit clubs to become universal among its golf members. The Studio features equipment from all major manufacturers and showcases the latest diagnostic technology. "Member sessions are complimentary and take approximately one hour," states the club. "The main purpose is to ensure the proper fit of the member's equipment. It may be a simple fix with the loft-and-lie machine or even a club extension on their putter."



**Steve Patterson**, PGA teaching professional at Hiwan Golf Club in Evergreen, Colo., has been appointed a Certified Coach of the **USA Junior National Golf Team Program**, to begin his duties in spring of this year. The first national junior golf developmental program ever offered in this country, USA Junior National Golf is a team-based organization divided nationally into five regions. Its player levels are Developmental I, Developmental II, Future Stars, Pre Elite and Elite. Patterson, who commented that the new program "is going to be a game changer for junior golfers across the U.S.," is also



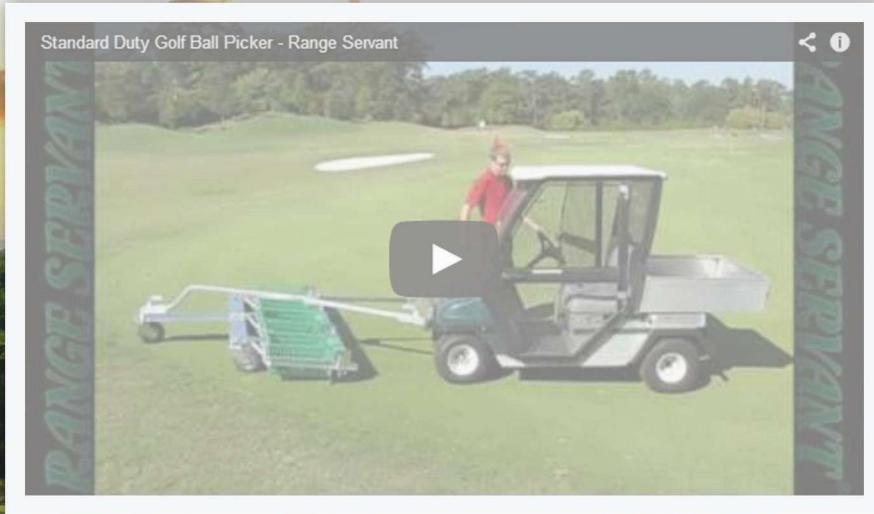
The tendency of golf instructors to work without formal written agreements—either employment contracts or independent-contractor agreements—generates many a tale of sudden livelihood loss on the part of the teachers. And what usually follows is a scramble to locate new lesson space. A recent survey of **Proponent Group** members, who are known to be particularly well established in their field, showed that only 46 percent of these golf instructors have a formal contract or letter of agreement spelling out terms of their service. In reporting this result, Proponent Group president **Lorin Anderson** called it "a disturbing trend." Now comes word that going without such documentation can also bring perceived harm to the employer or host facility. Last month in Hilton Head, S.C., a legal dispute arose between the International Junior Golf Academy (**IJGA**) and a former instructor there, **David Goolsby**. In its wrongful-competition lawsuit against Goolsby, the IJGA claims he acted unlawfully in starting up a rival enterprise, the Hilton Head Junior Golf Academy, which offers similar services as IJGA and targets a common pool of prospects. On his well-regarded blog covering golf and legal disputes, attorney **Rob Harris** echoed Anderson's critique about working with informal spoken agreements. Harris called the IJGA suit a "cautionary tale for companies that seek to head off competition before it arises. To the extent permitted by applicable state law, consider employment provisions that limit the ability of (former) employees to compete." Harris wrote that he was unsurprised to see Goolsby "deny the claims made by IJGA, noting perhaps most prominently that he is a free agent, unencumbered by an employment contract, secrecy agreement or non-compete agreement."



working on a training manual for high school golf coaches, to be published this year.... A report last month from **Power Tee** (pictured left) named two Northern California ranges where the company's automatic tee systems had gone into service. On March 11, installation of 20 Power Tees was completed at **DeLaveaga Golf Course & Lodge** in Santa Cruz. The following week, 15 Power Tee stations were installed at **GolfBallin** at The Vineyards in Antioch.... North American regions with long winters

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No sport can hope to keep a prominent spot in the public consciousness without blockbuster publicity campaigns. Among golf's equipment manufacturers, TaylorMade seems to jump out and make a splash, most notably, when the brand has a new product to launch—which is often. During the second week of March, TaylorMade hosted the **Speed Pocket World Challenge** to promote its new line of game-improvement irons. To generate buzz and consumer contact, the company mounted temporary driving ranges in iconic locations in four of the world's largest cities: London, New York, Toronto and San Francisco. Hank Haney offered lessons in New York, LPGA Tour star Anna Nordqvist hit shots for the assembled crowd in San Francisco and European Ryder Cup Captain Paul McGinley took some swings in London. Fair weather for the event (pictured) in New York City—hardly the rule in early 2014—helped make this bold outreach a worthy effort.

and rugged terrain can now aspire to much lengthier golf seasons, based on new developments announced by **UK-based Huxley Golf**. Recently the



company completed its first all-weather 9-hole golf course. Built from scratch, a facility in Austria called **Modern Golf** is a true first, providing a durable and aesthetically acceptable synthetic playing surface on its tees, greens and green surrounds. This represents the largest-ever installation of the Huxley all-weather turf, nearly 6,000 square yards of it. A facility spokesman said that it had "solved many challenges by using a high proportion of all-weather surfaces, floodlighting four fairways and creating a state-of-the-art covered training center.".... The 2014 season is only slowly gathering steam and it will likely be a while before we get reports of golf professionals actively exploiting the new **Game Golf technology**. But in a recent appearance on the Matt Adams golf show on SiriusXM,

**John McGuire**, founder of the Galway, Ireland (now Silicon Valley-based) company that markets Game Golf said early response to the technology was highly encouraging. Golfers who have purchased their Game Golf hardware/software, packages, which uses a belt-mounted module (pictured below) and dime-sized tags on each club to produce dense but easily analyzed data from a round, have been making YouTube demo videos and suggesting product tweaks on a daily basis. The company's launch of Game Golf at the 2014 PGA Show was mightily enhanced by the precedent-setting endorsement delivered by the PGA of America, along with a previously brokered partnership with Golf Channel. McGuire said his company had "completely blown our first-quarter projections out of the water" and that other countries were lining up to be next in the Game Golf rollout.... Following



some time off to earn a graduate degree from Columbia University in motor learning and performance, PGA / LPGA golf professional **Trillium Sellers** (pictured above) has been hired as director of instruction at **Woodmont C.C.** in Rockville, Md.. She was most recently a teaching professional at Maryland's Chevy Chase Club.... At **Knollwood C.C.** in Skokie, Ill., the former Wigwam Resort instructor **Shane LeBaron** was appointed the club's new director of instruction. Sign of the times: **Mad River Golf Club**, in Ontario, Canada, employs a golf staff member, **Andrew Lovell**, whose title is "Head of Golf Instruction and Programming." If you aren't designing activities that engage members in golf skill development and golf competitions, you really aren't doing your job—that's the all-important "programming" part. ■

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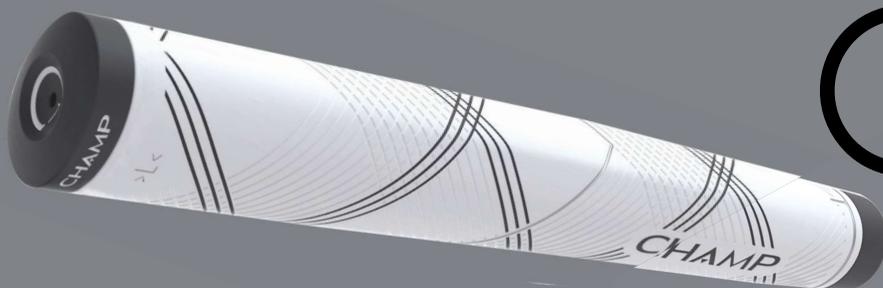
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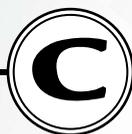
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# Communicate with Golfers and Colleagues Efficiently Using Social Media

Bill DeVore, a PGA Apprentice in the Carolinas, offers both sound reasons and effective techniques for reaching out on digital platforms.

When members of The Club at Longview are out living their daily lives, they can stay in touch with club news and activities quickly and digitally. Bill DeVore, a PGA Assistant Professional at the club in greater Charlotte, N.C., has been consistently using Twitter, Instagram and other tools to keep the club front-of-mind with its audience. In this video, DeVore waxes enthusiastic about tweets, retweets and other short, sweet ways to have the message be heard.

Staging his video presentation as a classy fireside chat (atmosphere matters), DeVore also poses a pointed question about PGA Connect, the social media solution for the exclusive use of PGA professionals. Building its user base gradually since it went live 10 months ago, PGA Connect is a platform that DeVore speaks of enthusiastically. He calls it a vital tool for professionals who want to stay current on trends and build their networks effectively.

The instruction-oriented DeVore (he has certifications from US Kids Golf, TPI and many other coaching programs) sees trends in game-improvement coming along so rapidly that constant communication with peers is needed in order to stay abreast. Meanwhile the prospective-golfer audience is tuned into social media and very reachable that way. "We have to be looking at these tools and finding new ways of using them to grow the game of golf," DeVore asserts. He concludes by providing his contact information to any colleague who may have questions about how to better harness social media as a business and career tool. ■





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# Fresh Start at Fairbanks Ranch

Range makeover and the leadership of a top-rank director of instruction have turned a socially prominent club into a serious place for game-improvement.

BY SCOTT KRAMER



With the club's renovation project complete, director of instruction Andree Martin (pictured) has the practice space she needs to run a first-class learning center. The club's Littler Short Game Area, honoring a pro who could hole out from anywhere, has a USGA-spec green.

**A**ndrée Martin can be found on her new golf practice range most days from sunrise to sunset. And that's great news for members at Fairbanks Ranch Country Club in Rancho Santa Fe, Calif. Now in her second year as the club's director of golf instruction, the New England native is a student of her craft known for seeking out the latest in coaching techniques and technology.



With 30-plus years in golf, Martin is both experienced and well-credentialed. She is an LPGA Class A professional, a certified golf coach and an inductee to the Maine Golf Hall of Fame. She's worked for PING and Titleist, was executive director for the LPGA Urban Junior Golf program and spent two decades teaching in

Peggy Kirk Bell's Golf Schools as well as in the Craft-Zavichas Golf Schools. Martin has received the Golf Digest Award for Leadership in Junior Golf and was named one of the Top 50 Teachers in the U.S. five times by Golf for Women magazine.

Under her familiar cowboy hat, Martin's eyes remain peeled for the

hitches and lunges that a weekend golfer needs help in fixing. "I've been very blessed with my career in golf," says Martin. "My goal is to see every student light up as they feel a new technique working for the first time." Every golfer has a different reason for playing the game, in Martin's experience, so it can take some



Doing the job right: Crews complete drainage, irrigation and finish-grading work prior to grassing. A good turnout for the Silver Foxes Clinic (below), one of Martin's many clinic groups.

detective work to truly understand their goals. "I love working with the variety of learning styles," she says. "The ideal is to find your students some fast and purposeful routes toward fulfillment of their goals—given the time they legitimately have to work on skills."

Regarding the cowboy headwear, Martin says she made the move during a teaching stint in Denver. "A baseball cap wasn't warm enough as the cooler days came around," she says. "I've always liked cowboy hats and then one day I found a felt one at a local festival. I got so many compliments that over time I bought one more, then another. They're fun to wear and I guess they've become a trademark."

It has been a true pleasure for Martin to exploit the great advantages of her club's fully renovated and expanded practice complex. Members were striking more than 10,000 balls a day, a volume the old range couldn't accommodate. Despite best efforts to rotate hitting space, the range turf didn't have enough recovery time. So in 2013 the facility was renovated on a tight budget, with a new layout that yielded an additional 15,000 square feet of teeing ground. The short game area was moved to the opposite end of the complex. The two tiers used for hitting were leveled to one, then

widened over the old short-game area, meanwhile getting lengthened by 15 feet. "All the changes resulted in two additional weeks for new turf to grow back," says Martin. "It makes for an overall more enjoyable practice experience."

The second issue improved was landing area visibility: Hills were flattened and reworked so golfers could see their shots land. Third, an improved target area contrast was added around all of the pins. The grass is now cut shorter and the target green pigment has been tweaked to greatly improve visual contrast. The reinvented range is now 270 yards deep with 10 target flags.

Thanks to what's been done for short-game practice space at the far end of the range, members now enjoy

a genuine USGA-spec green and a bunker practice area. The Littler Short Game Area green—named after Gene, who frequents the practice range—is three times the size of the old one. "We can stretch to 75 yards on the short-game area," says Martin. "Most members are using it from 40 yards and in, because we have such a great target area on the range itself now. The bunker area was contoured to simulate conditions and shapes members will experience on the course."

Around the clubhouse, a USGA practice green with challenging breaks was added, too. "We wanted a putting green closer to the new range where members would practice putting more frequently, because of the convenience factor," says Martin. "We also built it with challenging breaks and undulations to simulate the course more." To complete the makeover, Fairbanks Ranch installed lights around the greens and even installed lighted cups. Bag stands with putters and chairs are greenside for members and guests to enjoy, while they're having a drink and dining on the patio.

Overall, the improvements have also enhanced Martin's instruction. The added targets and flags allow her to encourage students to get more target-oriented, while the range and short game area allow her to create specific and purposeful practice plans customized for each student. "It's also laid out well for group clinics," she says. "We have a specific teaching area with a power port that's proven very valuable for video instruction and clubfitting. I also have uneven



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lies and rough off to the side that we use for instruction. And since the bunker area was contoured to simulate conditions and shapes members will experience on the course, they've been great for teaching bunker play during private and group instruction."

As for technology, Martin incorporates high-speed video into the instruction via her iPad. "I have several teaching aids, use Swingbyte and will soon have FlightScope," she says. "You'd think serious golfers would respond best to technology, but all ability levels do when using it properly and appropriately. I definitely use it with juniors, visual learners, and the technically oriented learner. I prefer to use it more to reinforce what I saw, to make a point. I also forward to students their swings and drills to review from home."

Two other areas Martin's been addressing: Instructing long-term golfers who have had injuries and need



to make challenging adjustments; and teaching upcoming Fairbanks Ranch while sharing her vast knowledge. Martin can often be found teaching individual lessons, women's groups and juniors. "Junior golf will always be special to me because of the impact we can make in their lives," she says. The program was minimal when she

arrived and was in fact a key reason they offered Martin the position. "We've now created a year-round program with seasons and brought back the junior club championship," she reports, "which was a big hit. Camps, participation in little league golf, and expanded programs are next."

Most of all, Martin says she enjoys being able to teach diverse types of lessons all year, as the San Diego climate is conducive to that. "I taught 16 clinics in my first three-and-a-half weeks there," she says. "I enjoy the learning that happens in a group setting, as well as the intimate private setting. Our membership is primarily comprised of educated golfers, many of whom have taken many lessons. I often need to break down all the information they've taken in and determine what really applies to them and their games where they are right now. I often simplify, so they're better able to transfer what they learn to the course." ■

Photo above gives a sense of how inviting the club wants its practice spaces to be. Below: One of the coaching stations is set up and ready for a Fairbanks member to jump in and test-drive.



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# TGA Looks Like a Junior Juggernaut in the Making

Josh Jacobs had a simple but effective idea 17 years ago. Now entrepreneurs from every walk of life are signing up to execute his school-based golf participation concept.

BY ART STRICKLIN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN WALTERS

The focus is on fun when trained TGA teachers gather their after-school participants by age group and welcome them into the game.







By engaging kids directly following the school day, TGA teachers get children who will mix well together and are eager to get the blood pumping.

**Y**ou can closely examine the professional backgrounds of Dave Seanor, Sean Rivera and Tenesha Davis without sensing they have much in common. Seanor is a former golf writer and editor, Rivera had been a Wall Street trader and Davis was pursuing a career as an electrical engineer. From diverse walks of life they have found their way into an entrepreneurial situation that industry people now see as one of the most successful golf initiatives of the last decade.

It's the hybrid golf and child-care enterprise that is sweeping the U.S. under the ever-better-known title of TGA Premier Junior Golf. Standing for Teach, Grow and Achieve, the national program has taught golf to more than 200,000 kids in 2,400 partner schools. It takes the royal, ancient and not very accessible game to where students are after school and involves them and ultimately their parents in a lifetime sport many have never previously experienced.

"There are a lot of ways to grow the game, but we are actually growing the pie because 80 percent of the kids in our programs have never been involved in golf before," says COO and National Program Director Steve Tanner, 33. "We feel like everybody can do their part and we are doing ours." The concept of creating after-

draws in teacher/investors from various levels of the golf and business world as well.

The idea was started in 2003 in Los Angeles by founder Josh Jacobs, 36, and has grown rapidly over the last decade. The prospective golf teachers buy their own territories and are incentivized to make it successful while the schools are happy to find another program to offer to the large numbers of kids who stay on school property late, waiting for one of their two working parents to exit their workplace.

Tanner says TGA has benefitted from a change in national family demographics where the stay-at-home mother is now part of a two-income working household, leaving more time for after school activities for kids, now filled by the school-based introductory golf programs.

"We really got lucky on this one with the two working parents and the emphasis on the physical component and the skills component after school. It's a great fit," Tanner adds. "We have a service-based business, which means you have to be passionate about golf and passionate about kids who are your customers along with parents and schools."

"I had seen so many different junior

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**"We get the clubs in their hands and it's a direct stepping stone to golf at ranges and regulation courses."**

---

**—Tenesha Davis**

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school golf programs on a pay-for-play basis, charging approximately \$100 for a six-lesson segment, with all equipment and instruction provided, is enough to entice schools to participate. It draws kids from a wide demographic range and

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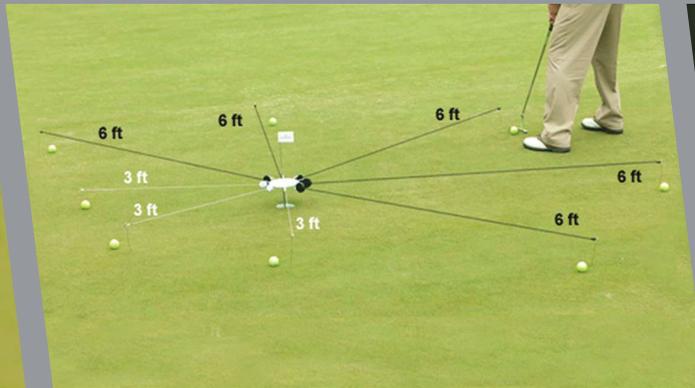
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For the teacher as well as the students, the move from school property out to a real golf course or practice range is exciting. For the golf facility owner, it's new business now and a feeder program going forward.

The kids are already at the school, looking for activity options. Bringing in the TGA road show exposes them to golf learning, fitness, life lessons and a new sport they can enjoy for a lifetime.

The unique company has already attracted the attention of the PGA of America, whose Southern California section recently purchased two franchises. In other parts of the U.S. you'll find PGA sections setting up informal alliances at TGA locations. "We all want to help refine participation in junior golf," says Northern Texas PGA Executive Director Mark Harrison, who has structured a new partnership with local PGA professional Troy Lewis, the owner of two TGA franchises. "We like to think of TGA as one of the on ramps of golf for kids," Lewis explains. "If you look at our pyramid for junior golf, with the off ramp being the top elite junior level, TGA is an on ramp and the pyramid is very broad for our juniors."

Lewis still serves as the Director of Instruction at Fossil Creek Golf Club, between Dallas and Fort Worth, the traditional landing spot for many past junior players. But he said the entrepreneurial nature of TGA is what drew his interest, his initial capital and his participation in growing the game.

programs and plans in my years as a journalist," says Seanor, the former golf magazine editor. "I was looking for a job and wanted to be in golf and was interested in what they had." TGA has been able to attract those looking to run their own businesses, with local territory rights being sold for an average

of \$25,000, and the owners having the incentive to maintain their school-aged customer bases with after-school lessons which can transition into summer camps and more formalized golf.

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"I enjoy the business-building side of it," he says. "When I reach a decision, I don't have to go to a member committee. I can go ahead and do what I feel is best for the business and best for the game."

Recently recognized with a Northern Texas PGA player development award, Lewis is currently working with

12 North Texas elementary schools, bringing golf to kids never before exposed to it. "You would be amazed at how many parents have never played before, but want to be a part of this and want to go out to a range to practice with their kids," he says with satisfaction. And that was exactly the situation Dallas' Kent Thompson

found himself in when his son Eli signed for a TGA program after school at age 8.

"I was surprised. He went from knowing absolutely nothing about golf to being able to drive the ball well off the tee. He really liked it," says Thompson, a non-golfer himself. Rivera had not been involved in schools for decades, other than sending his own kids there before heading off to the pressurized world of Wall Street finance. After 18 demanding years with Credit Suisse and Morgan Stanley, he was ready to make a switch.

"I just got tired of the stress and the travel and I was ready to move on," confesses Rivera openly. "Here, we have a nicer clientele than I had before—very down-to-earth customers and very relaxed customers."

He also noticed that his own kids, ages 5-9, were being offered a wide variety of after school programs, all of which parents paid extra for, and felt

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golf could be a fine addition to that mix. "I could see parents were paying a lot of money for their kids after school," Rivera explains. "It wasn't like when I was growing up where you'd go down to the park with a stick and a ball. There are a lot of two-income families now and they're looking for activities for their kids."

Rivera took over the Southern Westchester County franchise, one of five TGA franchises in the New York City area, and it's been the perfect mix of his well-honed business skills, his love for the game and his love for kids. "Having this job and balancing it with family gives me a good quality of life."

The opportunity to work with kids in a school setting is what brought recently laid off engineer Davis to the TGA franchise in the northern Atlanta suburbs. "I'm sports-mad and love working with kids and when I first heard about this I thought it was a good fit," says Davis, a native Hoosier who competed in multiple sports during her youth in Ft. Wayne. "Our programs are affordable. The kids say, 'let me try this out' We are the first touch for a lot of kids, most of them having never picked up a golf club. We get the clubs in their hands and it's a direct stepping stone to golf at ranges and regulation courses."

Because TGA is a private company it doesn't reveal financial figures, but Tanner said business is good and getting better. "We are a very sustainable, profitable business with strong financing and strong cash flow," he states. "The future is very big for us." For Seanor, the golf writing veteran who has written about almost every program and golf growth plan, what makes the TGA go is love for the game, a chance to expose it to a new and possibly huge demographic and a chance to be financially profitable and personally responsible in a business he enjoys and cares about. "I've found that I am doing some good and also doing quite well," Seanor says. "Both are important, if we want to keep moving forward." ■

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CHAMP/MacNeill Engineering Worldwide is the World Leader in Sport Cleat Technology® and maker of innovative CHAMP spikes, high-performance golf tees and accessories. Celebrating more than 80 years of unparalleled engineering innovations, CHAMP/MacNeill Engineering Worldwide has been a pioneer in spike technology since it introduced the world's first locking spike, SURE-LOK.

The CHAMP brand has become the #1 choice of Tour golfers with products such as tees, spikes and grips.

To learn more visit: [www.champspikes.com](http://www.champspikes.com)



## NuShield

NuShield, Inc. is the nation's leading manufacturer and distributor of screen protectors. NuShield, Inc. now offers DayVue, ideal for outdoor use where sun glare or reflections interferes with the clear visibility of various LCD screens.

DayVue is the only screen protector of its kind that combines anti-reflective technology and scratch resistance and can stand up to the harshest environments.

NuShield would like to offer you a special 10% discount on your purchase; just enter the Discount Code "PGA10" at checkout.

To learn more visit: [www.nushield.com/golf](http://www.nushield.com/golf)

- 1. **Bracketron**  
(866) 237-4443  
[www.bracketron.com](http://www.bracketron.com)
- 2. **Champ**  
(800) OK.CHAMP  
[www.champspikes.com](http://www.champspikes.com)
- 3. **CheckPoint Golf Systems**  
(720) 260-6999  
[www.proputtingpractice.com](http://www.proputtingpractice.com)
- 4. **Coastal Netting**  
(800) 726-3354  
[www.coastalnetting.com](http://www.coastalnetting.com)
- 5. **Easy Picker**  
(800) 641-4653  
[www.easypicker.com](http://www.easypicker.com)
- 6. **Ernest Sports**  
(855) 354-4653  
[www.ernestsports.com](http://www.ernestsports.com)
- 7. **Foresight Sports**  
(858) 880-0179  
[www.foresightsports.com](http://www.foresightsports.com)
- 8. **Golf Web Design**  
(888) 287-2614  
[www.golfwebdesign.com](http://www.golfwebdesign.com)

- 9. **golfersskin**  
(800) 977-3440  
[www.golfersskin.net](http://www.golfersskin.net)
- 10. **Links Technology**  
(847) 252-7600  
[www.linkstechnology.com](http://www.linkstechnology.com)
- 11. **Mitchell Golf**  
(800) 437-1314  
[www.mitchellgolf.com](http://www.mitchellgolf.com)
- 12. **NuShield, Inc.**  
(877) 900-9192  
[www.nushield.com/golf](http://www.nushield.com/golf)

- 13. **Pepsi**  
(866) 737-4653  
[www.pgalinks.com](http://www.pgalinks.com)
- 14. **Ping**  
(800) 474-6434  
[www.ping.com](http://www.ping.com)
- 15. **Power Tee**  
(877) 769-3781  
[www.powertee.com](http://www.powertee.com)
- 16. **Range Servant**  
(800) 878-8050  
[www.rangeservant.us](http://www.rangeservant.us)

- 17. **Sand Dollar's Solutions**  
(610) 334-4103  
[www.sand-dollars.com](http://www.sand-dollars.com)
- 18. **Tex-Net**  
(800) 541-1123  
[www.texnetusa.com](http://www.texnetusa.com)
- 19. **The Putting Stroke Teacher**  
(309) 358-1602  
[www.tpsteacher.com](http://www.tpsteacher.com)
- 20. **TPK Golf**  
(800) 433-4653  
[www.tpkgolf.com](http://www.tpkgolf.com)
- 21. **Tru Turf**  
(559) 421-9005  
[www.truturf.co](http://www.truturf.co)

- 22. **UST/Mamiya**  
(800) 277-0534  
[www.ustmamiya.com](http://www.ustmamiya.com)
- 23. **Wittek**  
(800) 869-1800  
[www.wittekgolf.com](http://www.wittekgolf.com)

## Welcome to the Family!

At the GRAA, we appreciate the business of all our partners that support our many endeavors such as *Golf Range Magazine*, GRAA Best Practices, the GRAA Awards Program, the GRAA Boot Camp Series as well as many other digital and relationship programs. Recently, the GRAA has welcomed the following new partners who have come on board to support the range side of the business and partner with our members on growing the game and growing revenue at your respective facilities:

**Ernest Sports**  
(855) 354-4653  
[www.ernestsports.com](http://www.ernestsports.com)

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# Golf Range Association of America Preferred Vendors

In recognition of their support and participation, The Golf Range Association of America wishes to thank the following GRAA Preferred Vendors.



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www.champspikes.com  
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www.coastalnetting.com  
*Exclusive Netting Company*



888-881-2433  
www.covershotsgolf.com  
*Official Mobile Canopy Supplier*



800-641-4653  
www.easypicker.com  
*Official Range Equipment Supplier*



888-287-2614  
www.golfwebdesign.com  
*Official Web Designer*



877-769-3781  
www.powertee.com  
*Official Automated Tee System*



800-541-1123  
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