

# Golf Insider

By T.J. TOMASI

IT'S GOOD FOR YOUR GAME

## Roll to a coil

"Golf is best played on the inside rims of your feet."

Jack Nicklaus said it, but he received this advice from his teacher, Jack Grout, who got it from Alex Morrison, the scion of much instruction that is accepted today. Morrison was one of the first to emphasize the importance of rolling the ankles in the golf swing.

### How it works

The ankle is a hinge joint with a range of motion that allows the

leg to move inward toward the center of the body while the foot remains essentially in place — a key move in a correct backswing.

This rolling motion is rarely used in everyday movement since it is much more natural to lift your front heel and knee in line, a habit ingrained from walking. This is why so many golfers simply lift their front heel and knee straight up during the backswing, thus ruining their coil.

### Roll your ankles

On the backswing,

### ABOUT THE WRITER



Dr. T.J. Tomasi is a teaching professional in Port St. Lucie, Fla. Visit his Web site at [tjtomasi.com](http://tjtomasi.com).

your left ankle (right for left-handers) folds inward toward the center line of your body in response to the pull of your front knee as it moves behind the ball. The knee should move inward rather than directly upward.



Rolling onto the inside rim of the front foot allows the lower leg of Nicholas Thompson to slant toward his back knee, which in turn allows the front hip to rotate.



Glen Day chooses to raise his front heel, but he still rolls onto the inner rim of his front foot.

### BIRDIES AND BOGEYS

## Is 'lite' John still long?

The two big stories in golf are Tiger's fat lip and John Daly's thin waist. After undergoing Lap-Band surgery, Daly has lost somewhere around 115 pounds as part of an all-out effort to regain exempt status on the PGA Tour, where he has won five times in his career, including two majors. Daly at 43 started his 2010 comeback at the Sony in Hawaii, a tough venue because it is narrow, and he was rusty after a long layoff — so it's understandable that he missed the cut.

Lap-Band involves using an expandable silicone belt that goes around the top of the stomach and can be adjusted by inflation to send the brain a message that your stomach is full so you stop eating. Effective as the technology is, it still takes will power and a certain amount of dedication to be successful over the long term.

One source reported that emotionally unstable people or those dependent on alcohol or drugs are not considered for Lap-Band surgery. This is because there is a large psychological component to the long-term success of the procedure.

A common complication of the surgery is loss of strength — not a good thing for a pro golfer. Since the brain can sense loss of strength, it could be that Daly will overswing at first, until he has time to calibrate his swing speed to his new strength level.

Still another complication for a golfer is that on exertion the stomach band can slip and change positions, causing pain and breaking focus.

Most dangerous to the delicate patchwork that makes up a professional golfer's performance is the effect on timing and balance. There are many golfers, such as Billy Casper, Craig Stadler, David Duval and Colin Montgomerie, who haven't done as well after major weight reduction.

Still, Daly performed admirably in his first outing, where his numbers weren't terrible: He hit 67 percent of the greens and drove it on average 303 yards, but with only 39 percent accuracy. He played with another bomber, Bubba Watson, who averaged 318 yards. In addition to other factors, Daly may have been pressing a bit since he's not used to being outdriven.

As proof that Daly hasn't lost his stamina, he hosted the pro-am party prior to the tournament, and even though you'd think his flashy pants would give him away, Daly was late for the party because the guard at the door didn't recognize him and wouldn't let him in.

Because Daly has lost his card, the big question for 2010 is can he play well enough so he doesn't have to rely on the sponsors and PGA Tour exemptions to let him in.

### DON'T MISS IT

## At the right angle

How the face of your club is positioned affects how well you'll hit the ball, and if you're having trouble feeling where your clubface is during the swing (and who doesn't?), Don't Miss the Face Angler, a teaching aid that allows you to see what's happening to the clubface by simply looking at the handle.

The Face Angler fits in the vent hole in the grip of the club. Twist it so that it is on the same plane as the clubface, and you can easily monitor the face's position throughout your swing.

You can find the Face Angler for \$6.95 at [www.golfaroundtheworld.com](http://www.golfaroundtheworld.com).



### THE GOLF DOCTOR

## A sound body calms the mind

Researchers at Princeton University reported recently that the brains of rats who exercise handle stress better than those who don't. Basically, exercise gives the rats biochemically calm brains.

This finding is huge for golfers because it suggests that you can protect yourself from mental (perceptual) stress by undergoing the physical stress of exercise.

The benefits of exercise for golf are obvious when it comes to increasing your stamina, strength and flexibility, but the new research cuts at a much different angle. Apparently, the brain's plasticity allows it to experience one kind of stress, i.e. the physical stress of exercise, then grow a shield that extends protection to a different class of stressors — psychological stressors such as water on the right and bunkers to the left.

Now, while the research did not deal specifically with golfers, it implies that with effort you

can rewire your brain so it's insulated from stress by using physical exercise.

"It's pretty amazing, really, that you can get this translation from the realm of purely physical stresses to the realm of psychological stressors," says Michael Hopkins, a graduate student at Dartmouth who has been studying how exercise affects emotions.

The second interesting finding is that the inoculation against psychological distress has an incubation period, so the decrease in stress occurs sometime after you exercise. At this point not even the experts know exactly how this information translates into structuring a detailed program of exercise for humans — how many weeks at what level of exercise will trigger the anti-stress benefits — but the message is clear: If you want to play "calm golf," keep exercising.

### FUN FACTOIDS

## Mud in your eye

There are a few situations in the rules that prevent you from cleaning your ball. Rule 21c says that when a ball interferes with play (other than on the green), the ball may be marked and lifted but not cleaned. The procedure is as follows: You mark then lift your ball and hold it very daintily-like with a limp wrist so you don't knock any mud off. Then replace it exactly as it was.

As for planning a shot with mud on the side of the ball, here's some advice: It goes the opposite way. If mud is on the left side of the ball, it will spin to the right and vice versa. This doesn't always hold true because the mud can fall off at any point, but it's slightly better than a guess.

## Who's your long drive daddy?

There were 13 players in 2009 who drove it 300 yards or more on average on the PGA Tour. The longest was Robert Garrigus, who led with an average tee shot of 312 yards. In 1999, John Daly was the longest driver on the PGA Tour at 305 yards, but he was the only player who averaged over 300.

### TEEING OFF

## Big and bigger

British science writer Richard Alleyne has documented that athletes in general are growing bigger and stronger. While the average human has gained about 1.9 inches in height since 1900, the fastest swimmers have grown 4.5 inches while runners are 6.4 inches taller.

A case in point is Usain Bolt, who at 6 feet, 5 inches and 210 pounds, is the fastest man ever, running the 100-meter dash in 9.69 seconds at 2008 Summer Olympics (he has since broken his own record). By contrast, the 1932 gold medal winner (10.3 seconds) was 5-foot, 7-inch Eddie Tolan, who weighed 145 pounds.

And golf has followed the same "size evolution." Golf's big star in the '20s was Gene Sarazen, who weighed 160 pounds and stood 5 1/2 feet tall, absolutely tiny by today's standard.

Compare the heights and weights of golf's big three in the '20s and '30s — Gene Sarazen, Walter Hagen and Bobby Jones — to their modern counterparts, Tiger Woods, Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson:

### Giants of the '20s and '30s

Gene Sarazen.....5'5.5" .....162 lbs.  
Walter Hagen.....5'10.5" .....185 lbs.  
Bobby Jones .....5'8" .....165 lbs.

### Giants of the Modern Era

Ernie Els .....6'4" .....210 lbs.  
Tiger Woods.....6'1" .....185 lbs.  
Phil Mickelson .....6'3" .....200 lbs.

Even comparing the size of the game's top players in 1980 to those in 2009 provides some interesting numbers. In 1980, seven of the top 20 money winners stood at 6 feet or more, and altogether, the top 20 averaged 69 inches tall and 179.4 pounds.

By 2009, 12 of the top 20 players were over 6 feet tall, and as a group they averaged a height of 72.6 inches and weight of 182.65 pounds. You can see the difference even among the top five:

### 1980 Top 5

1. Tom Watson.....5'9" .....160 lbs.  
2. Lee Trevino.....5'7" .....180 lbs.  
3. Curtis Strange.....5'11" .....170 lbs.  
4. Andy Bean .....6'4" .....210 lbs.  
5. Ben Crenshaw .....5'9" .....170 lbs.

### 2009 Top 5

1. Tiger Woods.....6'1" .....185 lbs.  
2. Steve Stricker.....6' .....190 lbs.  
3. Phil Mickelson .....6'3" .....200 lbs.  
4. Zach Johnson.....5'11" .....160 lbs.  
5. Kenny Perry .....6'2" .....220 lbs.

No matter how you slice it (or draw it), the big boys are here!

### ASK THE PRO

## Control putting with pregame practice

**Q:** When I play a new course, I have trouble with the speed of the greens. Can you give me some tips to get control of my putting? — M.M.

**A:** First, arrive a bit earlier than usual and spend some time talking to the pro or the superintendent. Ask him what the current stimp reading is (a measurement of speed), then find out what kind of grass is used and if the putting green is kept at the same speed as the on-course greens.

Then it's off to the practice putting green to calibrate the length of your stroke as follows: In putting, you need to get two things right: the speed (distance) and the direction. To develop the proper speed on your putt, mark off 6-, 15- and 30-foot putts on the practice green. Assume your address position with your feet perpendicular to the line you want the ball to

start on, and position the ball in the middle of your feet.

Starting with the 30-footer, make a practice stroke and notice the length of your backswing. Next spread your stance by moving your right foot back to the point where your backswing ended. Now adjust your front foot so the ball is still in the middle of your stance. Stroke the putt by taking the putter back to your back foot (at the big toe) and through to your front foot the same distance on the follow-through.

Do this for all the distances until you develop a feel for how much backswing you need for each length of putt, then practice putting "toe-to-toe," focusing only on producing the correct distance.

(To Ask the Pro a question about golf, e-mail him at: [TJInsider@aol.com](mailto:TJInsider@aol.com).)

### GOLF SPOKEN HERE

## Hung it out

A golfer who attempts to play a draw but hits a straight shot instead is said to have hung it out.

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"I will say it's definitely going to be even more important now to make sure you miss on the correct side."*

### RORY SABBATINI

on the effect of the new groove rule after the first tournament of the year in Kapalua.