

SMART GOLF: HOW TO PLAY WITH A JERK (PAGE 90)

# T&L Golf

A TRAVEL+LEISURE MAGAZINE

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

## 2003 EQUIPMENT PREVIEW

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- HOW TO GET FITTED

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TRY THESE GEORGIA GEMS

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NOW ON THE TEE:  
DEEPAK CHOPRA?

## THE LIBERATION OF JUSTIN LEONARD

HOW HE GOT HIS GAME  
(AND LIFE) IN GEAR

MARCH/APRIL 2003



DISPLAY UNTIL MAY 3



# golflife

IT'S MORE THAN A GAME

HONORS

## Deepak Chopra

BLOCKBUSTER AUTHOR, SPIRITUAL GURU, DEW SWEEPER

**//** GROWING UP IN India, I was a cricket player, captain of my university team. When I discovered golf less than two years ago, the fairways reminded me of a cricket field and my whole childhood came flooding back. The game has allowed me to re-embrace my youth, and something more: It has taught me how much a game can be like life.

"Golf is more mental than other sports, and more spiritual. I

Deep thinker:  
Chopra at La Costa

PHOTOGRAPHED BY JEREMIAH SULLIVAN



often play alone, and it feels like meditation. When I join other players, that too is revealing, because this game really shows you a person's character. After five minutes in a foursome I can tell you who's reckless in life, who's a risk taker, who's conservative and who gets mad at his wife.

"I meet people on the course who are so driven and obsessed they don't enjoy themselves. To me, that makes no sense. The point of the game is play. But it's always challenging. Yesterday I hit one bad shot, and my game got worse from there. The day before that, however, I had a birdie and then another immediately after. It's like the law of karma. Your past influences your present.

"Working on my new book, *Golf for Enlightenment: The Seven Lessons for the Game of Life*, was a fascinating process. I read everything I could find on the mechanics of the swing, from Tiger Woods back to Ben Hogan. I can tell you what every instructor says about mechanics, but I also learned that unless I take my time—unless I'm totally centered—my own shot never comes off. The moment I'm even in a slight hurry, or I start thinking about the result of my swing, I've already hit a bad shot. And no matter how self-aware you are, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking that your self-esteem derives in part from your score. In spirituality, the highest form of human

intelligence is to observe yourself without judging yourself. Observe yourself without evaluation. That process can bring about a transformation in your behavior. And in your game.

"The book interweaves golf lessons with the mystical tale of a struggling player who meets a mysterious young teaching pro named Leela. This mirrors the true story of a pro, Wendy Werley, who was suffering from migraine headaches related to performance anxiety when she came to see me at the Chopra Center at La Costa Resort and Spa. Our work together changed both of us and led me to write *Golf for Enlightenment*.

"Toward the end of the book there's a chapter called 'The Ball Knows Everything.' One great principle of spirituality is that the world is a mirror. Whatever you see out there is a reflection of what's happening inside you. When I say the ball knows everything, I mean that each shot you hit is a result of everything that's going on inside. Every shot is a function of your inner state, your spiritual self.

"When I'm here at La Costa I play every day, usually alone, either at the end of

## Scorecard DEEPAK CHOPRA

AGE  
56

HANDICAP  
Not yet established

TESTIMONIAL  
"One of the greatest teachers of our time" —Jesper Parnevik

SALES  
More than 20 million books sold worldwide

CLUBS  
TaylorMade woods, irons and RAC wedges, custom-fit TaylorMade Rossie putter

HOME COURSE  
La Costa Resort and Spa, Carlsbad, California

BEST SCORE  
83 at La Costa

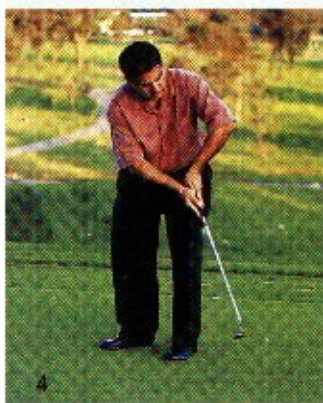
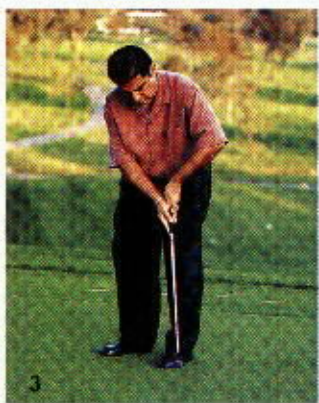
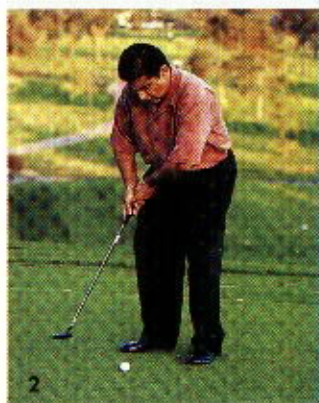
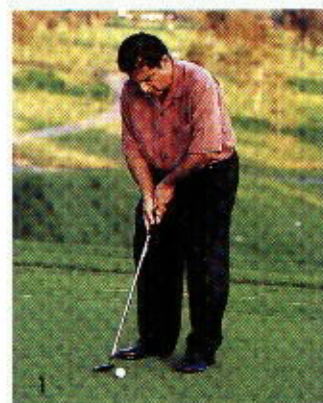
the day or early in the morning. Being on the course at dawn, with the day's first light on the green, is intoxicating. I don't have a regular game. Nor do I bet. There's an ancient Hindu proverb that goes, 'There is nothing to be gained in being superior to someone; but a lot to be gained in being superior to your previous self.'

"I am very disciplined in my daily exercise. Every morning I spend almost two hours in my gym at home and I watch the Golf Channel most of the time. I like watching Jesper Parnevik, who is something of a follower of mine. And Tiger, of course.

"My best moment in golf came on a hole that started horribly. I hit a poor drive on a par four, then hit a three-wood that

went into a fairway bunker about 150 yards from the green. I took a seven-iron and swung effortlessly. The ball landed inches before the flagstick and dove into the hole. I was playing alone, but there was a maintenance worker sitting by a tree near the hole, and as I went up to the green he gave me a big smile and thumbs-up.

"Since then I have lectured all over the world and played some fascinating



## Putting Guru?

ANALYSIS BY CLAUDE HARMON II

Deepak Chopra is somewhat wooden at address (1), with the look of someone who is trying to make the perfect stroke. He starts with the ball too far back in his stance. In his take-away (2), there is no real freedom of movement, and his left wrist collapses at impact (3), causing his shoulders to open on the follow-through (4). To correct

these faults, he should first move the ball farther forward in his stance. He should try to get more comfortable at address and take some of the tension out of his arms, allowing him to make a free stroke, back and through at the same pace, while keeping his body still. My advice to Chopra can be boiled down to one word: Relax!



courses. At the Delhi Golf Club in India, you see peacocks majestically strutting across the fairways. There's also a warning: BEWARE! MONKEYS WILL STEAL YOUR BALL. There are ruins in the middle of the course

that go back 2,000 years. Many players take three caddies: one to carry the bag and two to look for lost balls. Mysteriously, the balls you thought were lost always find themselves in perfect lies—thanks to the caddies!

"Golf is a mysterious game. It's about seeking self-knowledge, good karma and the peace that comes from being in tune with one's swing and one's inner self.

"Not to mention a birdie or two." •

## Meet the Head Masters

A few years ago, sports psychology was for head cases only. Now Tour players keep inner-game gurus on the payroll, and scads of schools offer amateurs similar help. In May, Deepak Chopra and his top instructor, Mitchell Spearman, will offer a three-day, \$6,500 Golf for Enlightenment seminar at the Chopra Center (888-424-6772, chopra.com). Here are six other institutions of higher-than-the-neck learning. —Connell Barrett

| School   | Tuition   | Motto   | Curriculum  | Alumni Notes  |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <b>Balance Point Golf Schools</b><br>Portland, Oregon (spring and summer); Palm Springs and Kauai (winter); 800-898-4563 or balancepointgolf.com | \$775–\$1,495 for three- and four-day "Great Shot" schools that offer instruction and range access. Student-to-teacher ratio: 4:1.  | Free your mind and the swing will follow. Balance Point founder Jim Waldron uses a mind-body teaching model to quiet distracting thoughts (like the dreaded <i>Don't slice!</i> ), leading to focused, target-oriented golf.  | Waldron's offbeat approach (you'll hit balls blind to improve feel) includes Method-acting techniques designed to change your emotional state. "If you want to play like Tiger," Waldron says, "become Tiger."  | Portland's David Kopf, 49, wanted so badly to beat his brother-in-law Jay that he'd try impossible shots. In 1995, Kopf tried Balance Point, and his 30 handicap fell to nine. "I play Zen golf instead of scrambling, screaming golf," he says, "and I beat Jay so often he won't play me."          |
| <b>Canyon Ranch Golf Performance Center</b><br>Tucson, Arizona; 800-742-9000 or canyonranch.com  | \$2,700 (per person/double occupancy) for a five-day package with an array of golf, lodging and resort and spa privileges. Student-to-teacher ratio: 4:1.                           | Develop a preshot routine, not a preshank routine. PGA-certified director of instruction John Bell seeks to quiet the riot of insidious thoughts that can sabotage the golf swing.  | Hit balls while reciting what you had for dinner last night. "It occupies your mind," says Bell, who also uses breathing exercises, hypnosis and a piston-powered gizmo that snatches the ball off the tee just before impact.                                    | First-tee jitters used to bedevil Irv Kannett, 82, who enjoys an occasional friendly wager at his club near Chicago. Kannett left Canyon Ranch with a new routine and nerves of steel—"and I don't buy lunch anymore."  |
| <b>Dr. David Wright's Mind Under Par</b><br>Newport Coast, California; 888-620-4653 or mindunderpar.com  | \$1,365 for three days featuring range access, two lunches and two 18-hole rounds on the seaside Pelican Hill Golf Club. Student-to-teacher ratio: 3:1.                             | Practice plus focus makes perfect. "Concentration is a golfer's greatest strength," says founder Wright, a PGA pro with two doctorates in psychology. "Tiger Woods is an amazing athlete, but his focus is his greatest strength."  | Know thine enemy. Students are taught to hit intentional hooks, tops and banana balls to learn the importance of shaping shots and to understand grip and swing path. Wright also stresses posture and alignment.   | Atlanta's Jim Smith, 60, spent more time in the woods than Paul Bunyan. Wright eased his tension. "I was skeptical," says Smith, a former 30-handicap who expects to break 90 soon. "But I learned to relax, and all the pieces fell into place."   |
| <b>Extraordinary Golf</b><br>Carmel, California (May–November); Palm Springs (January–April); 800-541-2444 or extraordinarygolf.com              | \$1,350–\$1,470 for a three-day school that includes instruction, range access, four meals and greens fees. Student-to-teacher ratio: 3:1.  | Relax and be the ball. <i>Golf in the Kingdom</i> fan Fred Shoemaker speaks of "embracing the chaos" and "letting go." "You don't build a swing," says Shoemaker, author of <i>Extraordinary Golf: The Art of the Possible</i> . "You find a swing."                                | Throwing clubs is not only permitted, it's required. Pupils fling rusty secondhand sticks to a target thirty yards away, mirroring the swing's centrifugal motion and teaching them to aim for the target, not the ball.  | "It's like going through the looking glass," says Ben Byrd, 52, a Nashville cardiologist. On his first day, after being told to spend some quality time staring at his ball, he sank 15 straight four-footers. "It's a total California experience, but it works. Golf is fun again."                 |
| <b>Switched-On Golf</b><br>Columbia, Maryland; Lansing, Michigan; 757-431-1317 or teplitz.com/golf.htm   | \$195 for three-hour seminar (\$295 for a day) includes range balls and access to putting green. Classes are held at various locales; see web site or call for locations and dates. | Golf isn't rocket science—it's brain surgery. Instructor Jerry Teplitz, who holds a PhD in "Wholistic Health Sciences" but has no formal golf training, teaches exercises that "rewire the circuitry of the brain." Says Teplitz, "We go to the core of the problem."               | Inner peace is at your fingertips. To fight stress, Teplitz suggests pressing fingertips to the forehead, pumping blood to the logical part of the brain, which lets you laugh off shanks. For fatigue, tap your chest to stimulate the thymus, releasing energy. | Tom Fox, 42, is a believer. "On the tee, I was positively neurotic," says the 21-handicap. "I needed a brainectomy." The operation worked: Two weeks after a Switched-On seminar, Fox shot a personal-best 88. "And I almost poked a hole in my chest pounding on my thymus."                         |
| <b>Zen Golf Schools</b><br>Santa Barbara, California; 888-874-9928 or zengolf.com  | \$1,095 for three-day school includes range access, lunches and greens fees at Rancho San Marcos Golf Course. Student-to-teacher ratio: 4:1. Corporate schools also available.      | Let your subconscious be your guide. Founded on Buddhist principles, Zen Golf "lets the intuitive mind produce the action, unfettered by the conscious mind," says founder Dr. Joseph Parent, Vijay Singh's mental coach and author of <i>Zen Golf: Mastering the Mental Game</i> . | The preshot routine is vital, but Parent stresses the postshot routine, encouraging students to punctuate a good swing with a physical act—perhaps a fist pump and barbaric "Yes!"—to mark the occasion, imprinting a positive memory.                            | Ruth Ackerman, 60, of Santa Barbara, was skeptical: "I thought, 'No way. This will never work. All I need is better mechanics.'" One visit later, she'd shaved 10 strokes thanks to Parent's "Zen parables" and her philosophical poststroke mantra: "After a bad shot, I just say, 'How unlike me!'" |