

# Future of Coles not set in stone

Staying motivated in golf the key

By ED VYEDA

Sentinel Sports Editor

SAN JOSE — Managing her golf game the same way she manages her money, with a conservative, consistent approach, Janet Coles has become accustomed to money-back guarantees.

"I've never been great, but I've always been good," says Coles, who grew up in Aptos, graduated from Watsonville High in 1972 and now lives in Monterey, near the Old Del Monte Golf Course. She's been good enough to consistently be on the LPGA Tour's top-30 money-winnings list, and since 1977 has won \$487,367.

But Coles was good from the very start. Before jumping into competition, she'd played golf only a couple of times — sneaking onto what she still finds herself calling the "Aptos Beach course," from her family's home near the first green. Then she almost immediately became a junior champion and ended up at UCLA playing golf.

Now 32, and about to putt out her 10th year on the LPGA Tour, Coles can handle the kind of temporary slump her game is going through, but isn't sure she can handle another 10 years of tour golf.

"If I play another five years, it will be a miracle," Coles said Tuesday, believing she's put her swing back together a bit for this weekend's San Jose Classic at the Almaden Golf and Country Club. "That hardest part is the road — it goes on and on and on ..."

Coles has tried to remain motivated the last six weeks, despite not playing well, which is something she probably couldn't have done 10 years ago. Before, she would have responded to a slump with more work and more work. Then, more work. But through the years, she's realized that's not always the answer.

"Sometimes, you need to get some time off," Coles says, "to do something that totally has nothing to do with golf."

Having always been conscious about her health and being in shape, Coles often finds her escape from the Tour grind by working out at a health club, in whatever city she happens to be playing. Besides some extensive riding on stationary bikes, Coles said, "The best part is going to the club and talking to the members about anything but golf."

Keeping one's sanity as a professional golfer demands a "flexible attitude," Coles believes. In what she calls her "hardest year, golf-wise," Coles has been tested.

"I want to be motivated, but I've been hitting it so badly," Coles said. "When I'm motivated, I can hardly wait to do it — to get up, get to the course and play. When I'm down, I've got to drag myself to go out there."



Janet Coles

Working hard to fight a slump

All of a sudden, in the last part of this summer, Coles starting missing cuts, and shooting 78s. "I'm human, and I get discouraged," she says. "But I'm not nearly as down as I would be if this happened when I was younger. I couldn't have handled it."

As a kid learning the game, Coles seemed to be able to handle just about anything, except how to avoid getting caught sneaking on the golf course. "I got kicked off of there more times — you ask Ed Holbrook about that," she says.

Holbrook is the former head pro at Aptos Seascapes, where Coles still has many long-time friends.

"Aptos was a great place to grow up," Coles says. "It was a little town of when I was there."

On Sept. 30, she's going back, for a special Day With Janet Coles, which she says will be "an absolute blast." Coles is scheduled to put on a clinic, play an exhibition, then have lunch with anyone who wants to stop by the club.

"There are a lot of people down there who started me off in golf," Coles says.

Those people, club golfers who play for fun, have the right idea about the game, Coles says.

A couple of weeks ago, while she was home for a break from the Tour, Coles went out to Carmel Valley Ranch in the late afternoon, "while the sprinklers were on, all by myself. I played nine holes, hit about five or six balls and thought, 'This is the life. This is the way to play golf.'"

Five years from now, Coles may decide that for her, it's the *only* way to play golf. Until then, she'll try to stay consistent, be conservative, work hard and try to stay motivated.