

Breaking away

Never too busy to help out

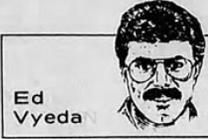
LPGA pros Coles, Inkster host charity fund-raisers Monday

REMEMBERING there is a real life, one that isn't always as attractive or rewarding as being a tour golf professional, Juli Inkster and Janet Coles are taking the time Monday to support something they believe in. They're not just writing a check; they're taking part.

For Coles, it's a matter of giving back something to the kids at her old high school, while for Inkster, it's helping the families of children whose lives probably won't ever include playing golf.

Coles is hosting her first benefit golf tournament for the Watsonville High Foundation, at the Pajaro Valley Golf Club, with money to go mainly toward girls' athletic programs. Inkster is featured in the second annual skins game at Los Altos Golf and Country Club, where her husband Brian is the club pro, to raise money for the Ronald McDonald House at Stanford, which handles child cancer patients.

"It's kind of an honor to reach a level of success, whatever that means, and to go back and help," said Coles, who will be joined by LPGA Tour pros Jane Geddes, Alice Miller, Lauren Howe, Vicki Fergon and Chris Johnson for the scrambles pro-am. "Not everyone has the opportunity, or the time and energy to do that. It's just an honor for me to do that, for the high school that



Ed Vyeda

Golf

allowed me to pursue my goals, and to help them out."

Supporting high-school girls' sports is important to Coles, who played on the Wildcat golf team, and went on to play basketball at UCLA, as well as golf. "That's what got me started," Coles said. "Now I can pump a little money back into it for them."

There are, of course, pro athletes who forget the people who helped them along the way.

"I guess some people can do that," Coles said. "But for me, it's neat to do this. I would do it all the time, if I had the time to do it."

Inkster, who grew up in Santa Cruz and now lives in Los Altos, said that the demands of the pro tour often prevent more players from developing an annual event in their hometown, or at their home course.

"I think most of good players are very responsible, when it comes to that," Inkster said Wednesday from

Seattle, where she and Coles are both playing this week. "The charity people don't overwhelm everybody. They realize what we're doing every week. I don't think there is another sport that gives as much to charity than golf."

Inkster and Dan Forsman, who grew up playing in the Los Altos area, are taking on Patty Sheehan and Fred Couples in a \$14,500 skins game. The players are to put on an exhibition clinic at 11:30 a.m., with the 18-hole best-ball match to start at noon. Tickets, \$25 each, are to be available at the gate.

Coles' tournament already has 68 amateur players signed up, with a few more openings available. Entry fee is \$100 per player. The pros are to put on a clinic at 11 a.m., with a noon shotgun start for the scrambles tournament. Gallery tickets are \$10, and include the barbecue. For more information, call 722-0670.

"I told the girls that it's going to be a totally fun day," Coles said. "They know I'm going back to my home roots, with some old friends. So they'll probably have some fun with that."

Inkster and Coles have both taken active roles in the respective events. "When you have your husband in charge," Inkster said with a laugh, "it's kind of hard not to."

Inkster knows she'll have fun, particularly since Sheehan will make sure the mood is as festive as that at

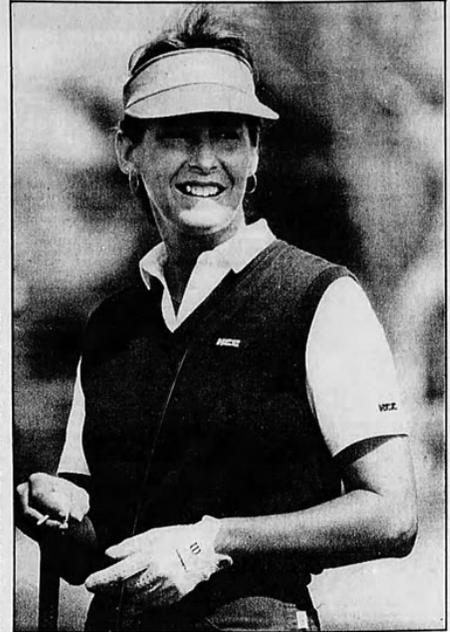
an Irish pub on St. Patrick's Day.

For Coles, putting on a tournament for the first time includes, "100 headaches," she said. "There has been some high anxiety the last few weeks. But (tournament director) Jean Clark has really been great, pretty much running the whole thing. It's going to be a thrill for me to be involved. I think it's going to be the kind of thing where we sit back, take a big sigh, and say, 'Let's do it again next year.'"

Both tournaments have received good support. Coles said that four key businesses (Granite Construction, GraniteRock, Shaw's Frozen Foods and Capurro and Sons) have ensured the event will be financially successful. "They are basically paying for pros and sponsoring the clinic," she said.

At Los Altos the original block of 500 gallery tickets is nearly sold out, but because of the good response to the exhibition, fans won't be turned away Monday.

And while they'll run into lots of familiar faces Monday, both Inkster and Coles will see even more the rest of next week, at the Konica San Jose Classic, the LPGA tournament that starts Friday at the Almaden Golf and Country Club. By Friday, it will be back to work for Inkster and Coles. Monday, though, they may be doing their best work, if charity still begins at home.



Bill Loveloy/Sentinel file

Janet Coles returns to her 'home' course Monday.