

# Learning about teaching

Coles enjoys new phase of her career as golf pro

**W**HEN SHE TEES OFF this week in the Dinah Shore Championship, Janet Coles will try to learn something. It's not as though she doesn't already know what's in store, since she spent 15 years on the LPGA Tour before retiring last year. But Coles, from Aptos, is concentrating on a new phase of her life in golf, as a teacher. And as she's discovered, as a teacher, you never stop learning.

## Golf



Ed Vyeda

"It's really a challenge, but it's fun and I enjoy it," says Coles, 37, who is the teaching pro at Rancho Canada in Carmel, where she lives. "To be a great teacher, you have to be well-rounded."

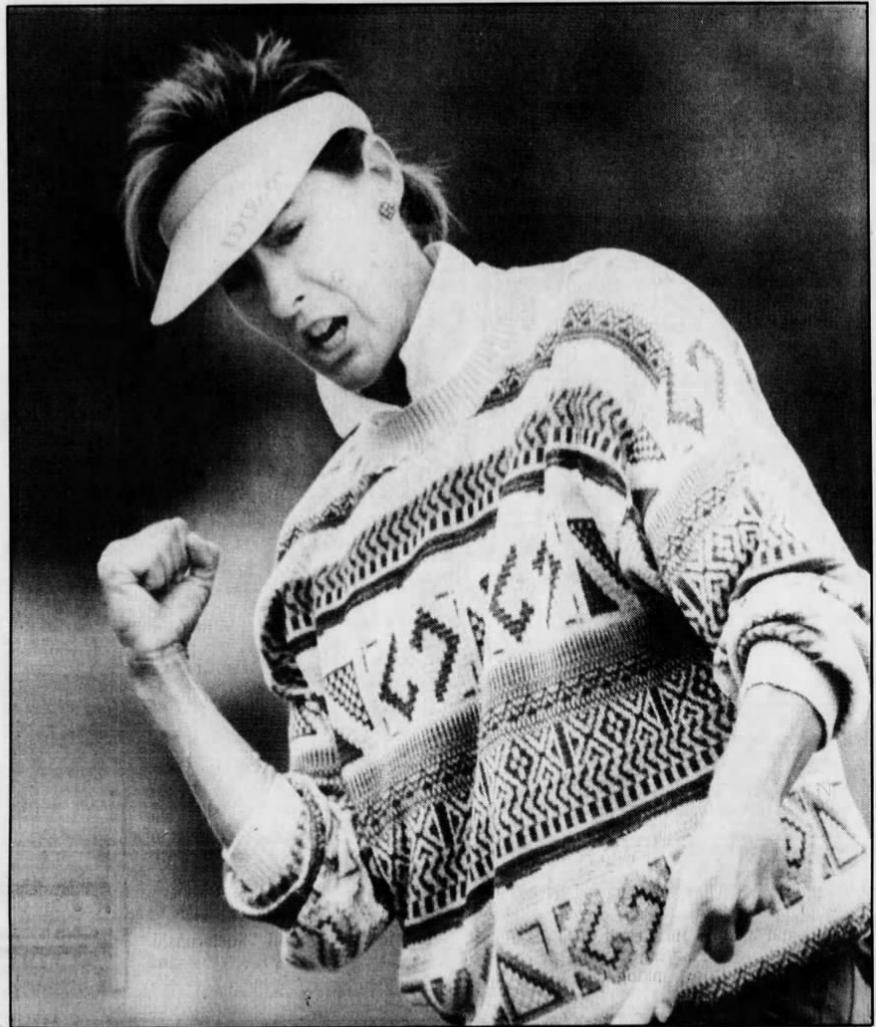
One thing Coles can relate to her students is competitive desire. From the time she started battling the boys on the Watsonville High golf team in the late 1960s, to her career at ULCA and on the pro tour, Coles has been a fierce competitor. And if there is one thing she misses about the LPGA, it's not the travel. It's the competition.

"I'm kind of an adrenalin junky," says Coles, a two-time winner on the tour. "I do miss the golf and the competition. I played in the Dinah Shore last year, and here it is a year later. It's the longest I've been away from competition in years."

Coles doesn't expect much from her game this week, but if she is pleased, she may decide to try to qualify for the U.S. Open. Although she figures she could come up with close to a dozen sponsors exemptions, if she wanted to play more, basically her career as a player has been set aside.

"It's been a real transition," said Coles, who coordinated her own private golf lessons in the Monterey area last year. "When you are playing (on the tour) you are completely focused and absorbed on one target. Life is not like that for the majority of people, to be so intently focused on something all the time."

The majority of Coles' students are men, but she is teaching golfers of all ages, and abilities. "What I would really like to be doing is some mid-week golf



Janet Coles has turned her intensity toward the game to teaching, rather than playing.

camps, especially for women."

Besides her job at Rancho Canada, Coles is active on the board of directors of the AT&T junior golf foundation.

"I want to stay involved in golf in the community," she said. "I want to extend my services as much as I can and show my support to things like junior golf. I think that's important."

What Coles enjoys most about the new chapter of her life in golf is "to go home every night."

The grind of travel on the tour caught up with Coles, even before 1989, her final full-time year in the LPGA. She scaled back in 1990 and by last year played only once.

"I didn't have the motivation to continue," she said. "It's so hard to stay motivated, hard to continue year after year. I think I was in a position to continue to play, with my health and stamina. But

it's more the desire. It wasn't there the way it has to be."

Coles, who has been named to the Hall of Fame at both UCLA and Watsonville High (class of 1972), has rerouted her desire to the practice tee. She structures classes on the fundamentals, she notes, "but more importantly on having fun as you learn the game."

She believes golf helps build self-esteem in children, and thinks that adults who learn the game can better "understand the process of improving their skill level."

Part of her philosophy, too, is to "de-emphasize being perfect."

Which sounds like a perfect approach to teaching.

*Ed Vyeda, the Sentinel's sports editor, writes the golf column.*