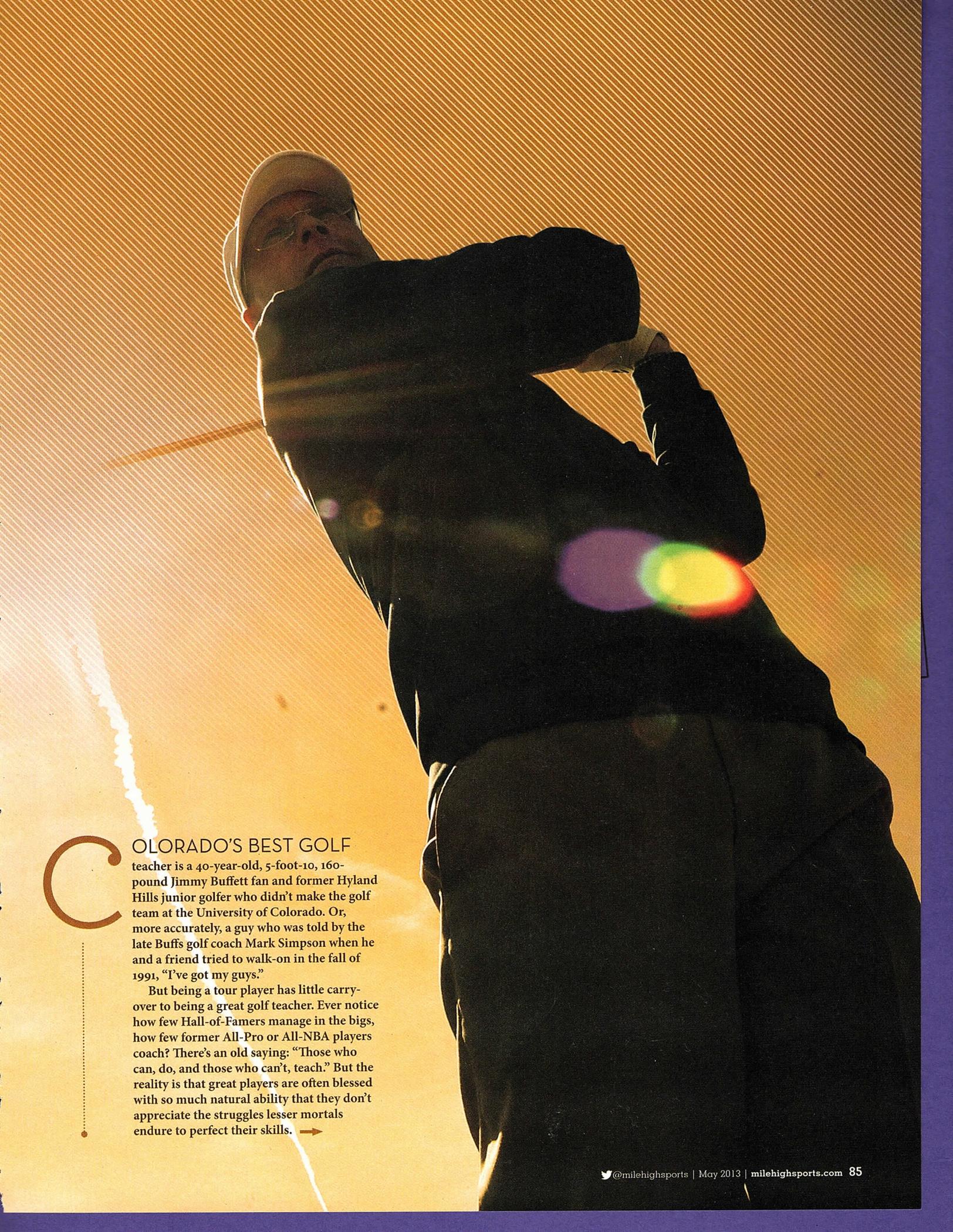




THE SWING DOCTOR

MEET COLORADO'S
BEST GOLF TEACHER

By Pencils Robinson



COLORADO'S BEST GOLF

teacher is a 40-year-old, 5-foot-10, 160-pound Jimmy Buffett fan and former Hyland Hills junior golfer who didn't make the golf team at the University of Colorado. Or, more accurately, a guy who was told by the late Buffs golf coach Mark Simpson when he and a friend tried to walk-on in the fall of 1991, "I've got my guys."

But being a tour player has little carry-over to being a great golf teacher. Ever notice how few Hall-of-Famers manage in the bigs, how few former All-Pro or All-NBA players coach? There's an old saying: "Those who can, do, and those who can't, teach." But the reality is that great players are often blessed with so much natural ability that they don't appreciate the struggles lesser mortals endure to perfect their skills. ➔



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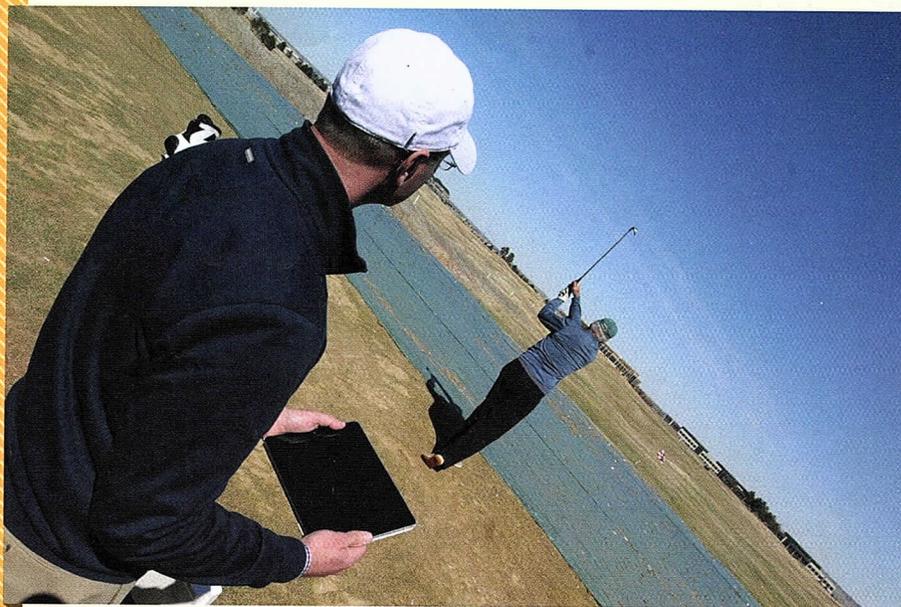
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Trent Wearer



Trent Wearer is a grunt who knew early on that he loved golf and that the game would somehow play an integral role in his life. His rejection as a player by the coach at CU didn't diminish his love for the game, but instead strengthened his resolve to do whatever it took to stay involved in golf.

Like a fledgling actor, Wearer "played Peoria" and paid his dues working at remote golf courses, then returned to Denver to work under a legendary teacher. When he was ready, he started his own golf academy, Trent Wearer Golf, and began a career that has seen him honored as a Best Young Teacher in America (2008-present, *Golf Digest*) the PGA Teacher of the Year, Colorado Section (2004,), as one of the Top 50 Kids Teachers in America (2007, *U.S. Kids Golf*), as the Top Teacher in Southwestern U.S. (2007, *Golf Magazine*), and as one of the Best Teachers in Colorado (2005-Present, *Golf Digest*). He also became in 2011 a member of the National Advisory Staff of TaylorMade-Adidas Golf, which means he doesn't have to buy shirts, shoes, hats and clubs like the rest of us hackers.

But the Swing Doctor, teaching out of Meridian Golf Club in the southern end of the Tech Center, doesn't just collect awards, he produces results.

"When you turn pro, you no longer carry a handicap index. You just play. I don't play nearly as much as I want. I probably get in only about 15 rounds a year, but I've made a vow to play more and play more tournaments this summer."

- the Swing Doctor

In 2012 alone, Wearer instructed both the boys (Kyler Dunkle, a junior from Douglas County High School) and girls (Mackenzie Cohen of Cherry Creek) CHSAA 5A state individual champions. Among the 17 of his male students who qualified for state, five finished in the top 10. Nine of his female students qualified for state and he taught half of the girls on the state championship Cherry Creek team. He has now taught six individual state champions and has instructed at least half the players on seven CHSAA team champs. And high school isn't the final stop for many of these junior golfers; 70 of Wearer's students have gone on to play college golf.

And while he has a particularly deft touch with young people, Wearer

» DID YOU KNOW?

Uncle Joel Taylor was playing in the 1959 Buick Open in which all the players were loaned Buicks to drive during the week. Joel preferred the baby blue Buick that Jack Nicklaus received over his maroon one. He persuaded Jack to trade and they both ended up buying the cars after the tournament. Jack would really rather have a Buick?

WHAT'S IT COST TO LEARN FROM THE BEST? \$150 an hour for adults; \$120 an hour for juniors; coaching packages available.

WHO ARE TRENT'S FAVORITE PROS TODAY? Zach Johnson (2007 Masters champ, who wrote an endorsement for the back of *Golf Scrimmages*), Jim Furyk, Matt Kuchar, Phil Mickelson and his favorites to win a major in 2013, Steve Stricker and Ian Poulter.

WHAT HAS BEEN TRENT'S GREATEST MOMENT AS A TEACHER? "Any time a student says, 'Ah ha!'"

WHAT'S HIS FAVORITE TYPE OF STUDENT? "Anyone with a great attitude and outlook. Those traits are everything in life and in golf. Both life and golf will beat you up if you're deficient in having a great attitude or outlook."

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A TOURING PRO AND THE AVERAGE CLUB HOTSHOT? "Tour players play on very tough courses – harder

and longer. The biggest difference statistically is in the short game. A scratch golfer hits about the same amount of fairways and greens, but tour players are phenomenal at the short game. They get up and down more. They chip it closer and hit it out of the bunker closer. They make more short putts and three-putt less.

WHAT'S WEARNER'S FAVORITE JIMMY BUFFETT SONG? "When the Coast is Clear."

WAS HIS FATHER UPSET HE DIDN'T BECOME A DENTIST? "No, he loves golf, too."

WHAT ARE TRENT'S FAVORITE COLORADO GOLF COURSES? Ballyneal, Colorado Golf Club, Castle Pines, Riverdale Dunes, Heritage at Westmoor, Hyland Hills.

WHAT ARE HIS FAVORITE COURSES OUTSIDE OF COLORADO? Pinehurst (N.C.) No. 2 (which will host both the men's and women's U.S. Open in 2014); Ocean Course at Kiawah Island, S.C.; Bandon (Oregon) Dunes, Old Head (Kinsale, Ireland).

continues to work with adults of all abilities, including top players like Brad Besler, a Texan who won last year's Wyoming Open and is attempting to qualify for the Web.com Tour (formerly the Nationwide Tour), and Jon Lindstrom who has played in 14 national USGA events and is considered by many to be Colorado's top amateur. Wearer currently has six mini-tour players under his care.

Lindstrom, 45, a Broomfield resident who won the Colorado Mid-Am in 2008 and was

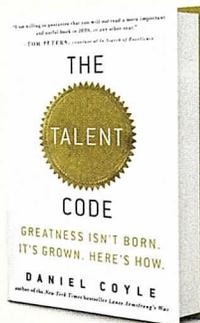
"When I was young I followed and did everything Payne Stewart did. I had an entire wall in my bedroom dedicated to him. His death was a tragedy and I miss watching him play."

- the Swing Doctor

named the state's best player in the 25-and-up division (the working amateurs of golf) visits Wearer three or four times a year for those little tweaks that keep his swing in tune. He'll also occasionally send Trent a video of his swing and receive timely feedback while competing on the national stage.

"There are a lot of good golf instructors in Colorado, but what sets Trent apart is that he takes what you have and builds from there," says Lindstrom. "He doesn't fit you into his own box; he doesn't teach that there is only 'one' swing. You never leave a lesson with Trent needing six weeks to incorporate everything he's taught you and playing terribly the whole time. He gives you one or two small things to work on so that you go out and play golf without obsessing about your swing."

Dani Urman, a key member of the Cherry Creek High School team which will be seeking its third straight state CHSAA 5A girls title this spring at Tiara Rado Golf Course in Grand Junction, has been a weekly



WHAT ARE WEARNER'S REQUIRED READING FOR GOLFERS? *The Talent Code* by Daniel Coyle; *Easier Said Than Done* by Dr. Rick Jensen; *Golf Scrimmages* by Trent Wearer.



BIG BURRITO

LENNY'S SMOKIN SIRLOIN

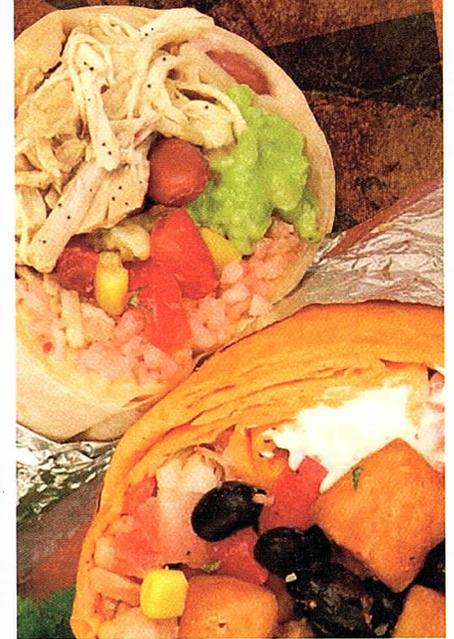
Carne Asada with jack cheese, rice, pinto beans, corn pico with sour cream on a tomato chile tortilla.

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Carnitas with potatoes, jack cheese, BCB jalapeno sauce, guacamole & sour cream on a jalapeno/cheddar tortilla.

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Wearner student since 2007 and can't say enough about her teacher: "He has helped me to understand my swing to the point where I can fix a problem in five minutes," says Urman, who will play golf at Division III Pomona College next year. "And he's not just a golf coach. He really gets to know you as a person."

Wearner's journey to becoming a great teacher began from early childhood as both his father Glenn (lowest was a five-handicapper) and his mom Nancy (lowest was a 23) were golfers. Nancy's brother, Joel Taylor, was sponsored by the Denver-Chicago Trucking Company on the PGA Tour in the 1950s and '60s and held Trent spellbound with tales of Nicklaus, Palmer, Snead and Terrible Tommy Bolt. When Trent was six, his folks bought a house with a backyard that opened out onto the sixth fairway at Hyland Hills, a beautiful muni course in Westminster. When he wasn't playing soccer or basketball or whiffleball, he was playing golf at Hyland Hills with his folks or in the course's junior program. He eventually got a job there and worked his way up to assistant pro, working behind the counter during the summers between semesters at CU.

It was at Hyland Hills during a break from the golf shop one summer that Wearner was helping a friend with his swing. The friend remarked how much sense Trent's instruction made, how it really helped to improve his swing. That was probably the moment when Trent saw where he would fit into the golf world and how he might make a living as a part of it.

"On Mondays in the summer, I take care of Reed and Cole. We do something different every Monday – a hike in the mountains, a canoe trip, fishing, tennis, bike riding and, yes, a few holes of golf."

- the Swing Doctor

He knew for sure that he didn't want to work a "real" job like his dad or his older brother, Brian (both dentists). So fresh out of college, he hit the road to learn the golf business. He was an assistant pro in St. Charles, Ill., for a year, then spent three years under Keith Lyford at his golf schools in Stratton, Vt., Lenox, Mass., and Scottsdale, Ariz.

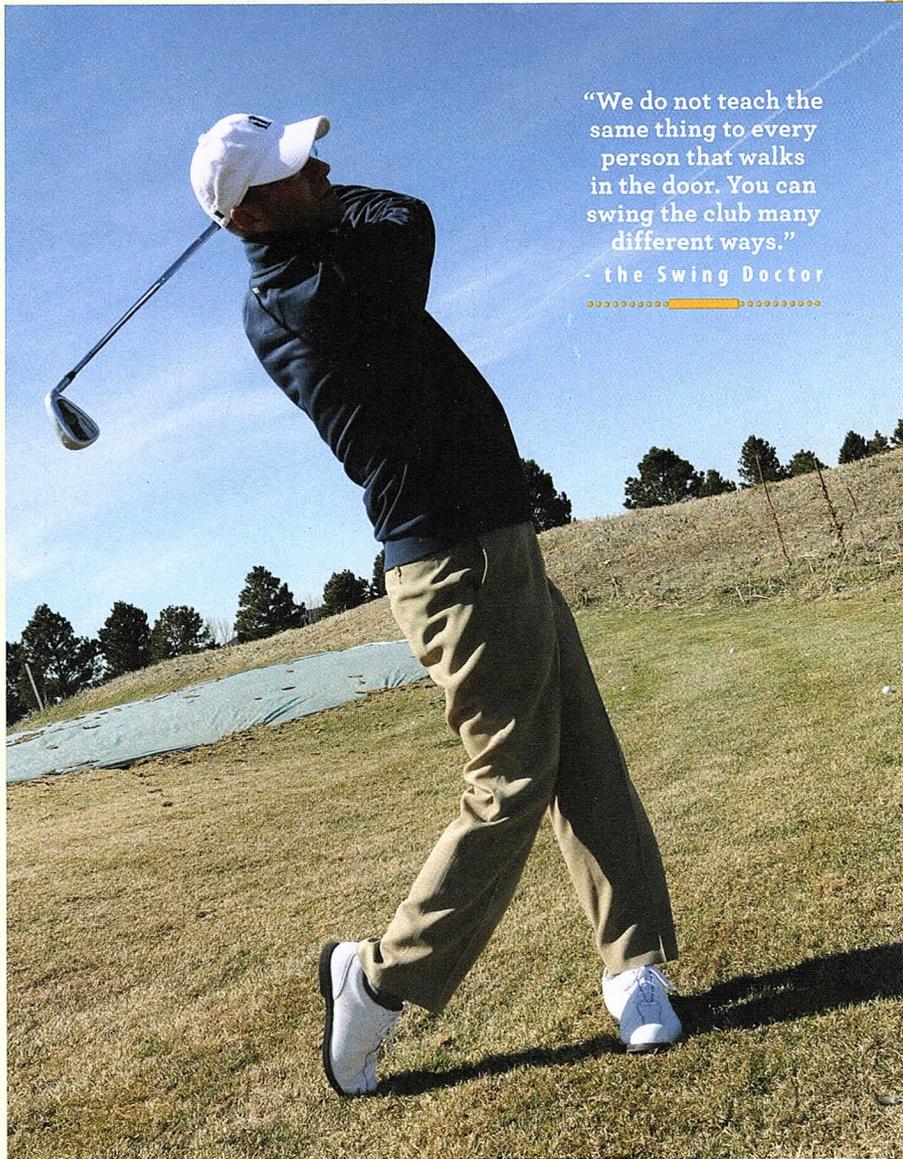
Part of Wearner's good fortune was that he married Robyn, who supported his passion for golf and didn't hesitate to hit the road with him on his early and hardly lucrative golf jobs. After three years, though, she thought it might be a good idea to head back to Colorado. That 2000 move proved fortuitous when Wearner landed a job teaching at the legendary Mike McGetrick Golf Academy at Meridian Golf Club.

When McGetrick moved his golf school to Green Valley Ranch in 2003 and began focusing on course development (which ultimately resulted in the excellent Colorado Golf Club), Wearner decided to stay at Meridian with some other teachers. That

› DID YOU KNOW?

Golf Scrimmages – Realistic Practice Games Under Pressure, Wearner's 2006 book has been sold in 20 countries and is used by almost every college golf program in the country. Seven years after publication it still sells at a rate of a book a day.





“We do not teach the same thing to every person that walks in the door. You can swing the club many different ways.”
- the Swing Doctor

decision ultimately led to the formation of the Trent Wearer Golf Academy and in 2006 a popular book that he authored called *Golf Scrimmages*.

Today, and almost every day, you'll find Trent hanging out at Meridian where he has a small desk, an efficient indoor hitting studio and putting area, his all-seeing computer (on which he can compare your swing to your own from a previous lesson or that of a tour player if you prefer, though

“When watching a person’s full swing, I watch the ball flight/result then work my way back to diagnosing why they are getting that result.”

- the Swing Doctor

many golfers don't want to see their swing next to Tiger's), and a grass tee area right outside his office. You immediately see that Wearer's in his element, that he loves what he's doing, loves the fact that he's a pirate looking at 40 and still “working” at a golf course, just like he did as a kid at Hyland Hills. Just as Jimmy Buffett the pirate looks natural in Hawaiian shirts, cargo shorts and flip flops, Wearer looks like he was born wearing a knit shirt, golf slacks and golf shoes.

Except for the slight recession of his blond crew cut, Trent, with the help of Robyn, a registered dietician, looks like he could still earn seven letters in soccer, basketball and golf at Ranum High School, if it still existed. And while he might like to be spending a little more time with his five-year-old twins, Reed and Cole, he can't believe his good fortune to be able to build their college fund by teaching a game he loves. **MHS**

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