



BE A KID AGAIN

ARTICLE BY RITA SLAVETSKAS



LEARN TO PLAY GOLF

HAS THE GAME OF GOLF PIQUED YOUR INTEREST? HAS YOUR INITIAL REACTION TO LEARNING THE GAME OF GOLF BEEN SOMETHING LIKE, "I'M TOO OLD TO START LEARNING GOLF; I'M NOT ATHLETIC ENOUGH; I WILL BE TOO EMBARRASSED TO MISS THE BALL; I JUST WON'T BE GOOD AT IT?"

If so, perhaps you need to think about approaching the learning of the game like a kid! Kids do not think about age, nor would they consciously think about being an athlete. They would "just do it." And, finally, a kid would just keep trying to hit the ball until he/she "got it!" Kids would just have fun doing something. Kids have few, if any, inhibitions, feel no pressure and are fearless in so many things in life.

And, if you are thinking that you have never performed the skills required for golf, think about the following: Have you ever danced, played tennis, bowled, played ball or played catch, skied, swam, pushed a child on a swing or skipped rocks across a pond? Each of these require some of the same skill sets as golf such as rhythm, balance, coordination, weight transfer and hands release. So you have performed them. You simply did not realize it.

So now you need to open yourself up to learning, set all inhibitions and adult thought processes aside and find someone to nurture you as you were nurtured as a kid. We know that kids are most successful and develop at their best when they are around a good communicator, coach or leader, a relaxing, positive and fun environment and receive lots of encouragement (high fives and rewards) along the way. Why should adults not do the same?

When you find the nurturer/instructor who provides the above attributes, assess the kind of golfer you would like to be. Let's say there are three choices: **1) Social:** to occasionally play totally for the enjoyment of being with friends, associates, family, your spouse or significant other, and to develop new friendships with absolutely no pressure, sharing your favorite beverage and snack

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Rita Slavetskias, voted by her peers as one of the Top 50 LPGA Teaching Professionals in the USA is the LPGA Teaching Professional at Dolphin Head Golf Club on Hilton Head Island.



afterward. **2) Recreational:** play on a regular basis (perhaps two or three times per week), at times wagering in various amounts (a beverage at the end of a round, a penny, nickel or dime a hole) and enjoy discussing some of those wonderful shots over a favorite beverage and snack. **3) Competitive:** Here's where the pressure is on to perform at the top of your game, strictly according to the rules of golf. Each of these requires a far different amount of commitment to learning and developing in the game. Your goal must be in sync with the amount of time you have to dedicate to learning the game.


ONCE YOU HAVE AN IDEA OF WHAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO WITH GOLF, ACQUIRE THE APPROPRIATE CLUBS. ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL, AND YOU WILL BE DOING YOURSELF A DISSERVICE IF YOU ATTEMPT TO USE EQUIPMENT THAT IS NOT SUITED FOR YOU. A FULL SET OF CLUBS IS NOT A REQUIREMENT TO LEARN THE GAME.

Once you have an idea of what you would like to do with golf, acquire the appropriate clubs. One size *does not* fit all, and you will be doing yourself a disservice if you attempt to use equipment that is not suited for you. A full set of clubs is not a requirement to learn the game.

Now find a course or facility where you can begin your adventure! Remember, adventures carry with them risks and rewards. Do not fear them, but look at them as a challenge and attack as a kid would. With the guidance of your nurturer, you can and will learn how to handle them. Look at it as an exciting time in your life.

Let yourself go, and remember the two most important letters in golf: G—it's a game and F—have fun! My hope is for more people to enjoy the game of golf at a level that suits their lifestyle and learn to be a kid for their entire lifetime! **2**

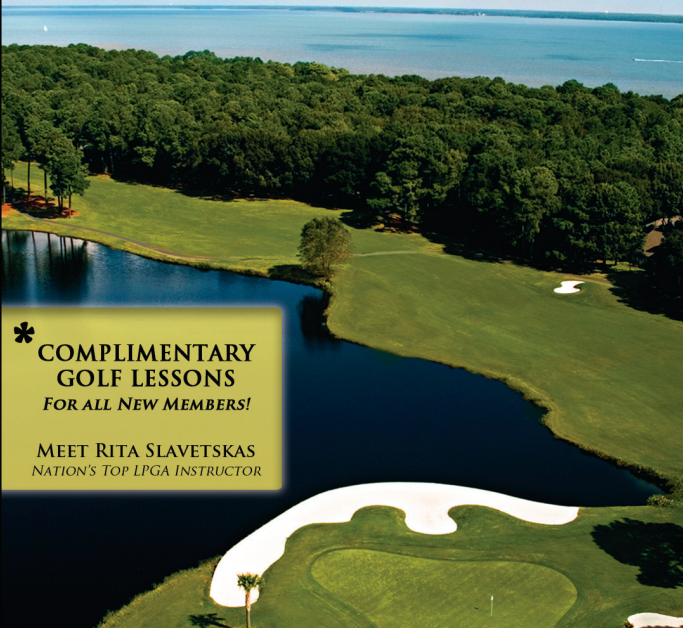
Rita Slavetskias, voted by her peers as one of the Top 50 LPGA Teaching Professionals in the USA, is the LPGA Teaching Professional at Dolphin Head Golf Club on Hilton Head Island. If you would like to join in the adventure, give Rita a call at (843) 681-5550.



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