

The horse before the cart

By Paul Eales

Have you ever thought about how many ways you can improve your golfing performance? A new driver or putter perhaps? Maybe even a course of lessons from the Professional at the local club. Can you think of any others? Read on and find out what I discovered only recently.

It has always fascinated me when coaching or listening to coaches how in the vast majority of cases the coach always expects the student to move their body in a manner as instructed. Why is this the case?

Surely we all are individuals with different strengths and weaknesses. We all have different ranges of movement and flexibility and we are all probably carrying some form of injury that we may not even know about.

If we agree that this is true then surely we should have our movement and the mechanics of our bodies checked out by a specialist therapist before we embark on changing how we swing the golf club. More than likely we are all swinging the club in a way that our brain has worked out is the easiest and least painful. This may not necessarily be the most effective way to hit the best shots.

If we are being coached with internal messages, that is, concentrating on what the body is doing to swing the club then our physical limitations may frustrate us as we struggle to get into a desired position to hit a shot.

However, if our thoughts are external, that is, concentrating on how the club swings then the body should be able to react to that in its own way providing there is a decent range of movement. Either way we need to know if we are healthy enough to play better golf.

Working with and watching DR John Brazier of Kore Therapy in St Annes has been a fascinating experience. I have observed his amazing muscle testing techniques designed to detect any obvious or previously unknown injuries that have inhibited patients from ever reaching their full potential in golf.

One such person was a golf professional and a student of mine. He was a former rugby player before taking to golf and was used to spending time in the gym lifting weights. He came to me for help complaining of lack of distance and control over his shots. He felt that being so strong he should have been

hitting the ball further than he did. After watching him play and hit I too was confused as he was definitely delivering the golf club in a very strong and correct manner.

I consulted Dr John knowing that this was not a golf technique issue. Within five minutes Dr John had discovered that my student was operating at approximately 50 to 70% of his power due to a problem with his neck. After about 20 minutes of treatment and more testing we left to check if the treatment had made any improvement to the power and control of his shots. What we saw was an amazing increase in the power of his swing that was now delivering the club head at speeds of 116mph and ball speeds approaching 170mph. As you can imagine we were both delighted to say the least at the sudden improvement in my student's performance.

There is no way I, as a coach, could have made such a huge difference in my students power and performance. So I would recommend you put the horse before the cart and have your well-being checked before you embark on a series of lessons to change and improve your golf swing.

