



Is that
all there
is...?
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SIDELINES

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WEINHOLD walkin' that fine line

Paul Weinhold is alone on the practice green at the Emerald Valley Golf Course in Creswell, knocking in two-foot putts. Before him is a throng of white golf balls, probably 40 of them. On the other side of the cup is another army of balls, the ones Weinhold has already put in and taken back out.

Weinhold, 22, is a member of the University golf team, but he's voluntarily redshirted this season, having agreed with coach Scott Krieger's suggestion that he take a year off from competition to try and regain his confidence.

"I was an All-American sophomore year," Weinhold says. "Then last year I was just a dog."

He says this matter-of-factly with an amused smile. Weinhold is 6-foot, trim and tanned, and gracefully handsome. He doesn't look like a loser.

"When I first got here (to Oregon), they loved me," Weinhold recalls. "I'd go out and play on rainy days. People would look at me like I was crazy. Now, I look at people who do that like they were crazy."

Story by Brian Ballou

Weinhold is talking about a game he started playing at age 16. "I was obsessively compulsive about it (golf). I spent every day practicing. I won a tournament later that year."

That first win was in Roseburg. Later that year he won another tournament in Coos Bay. While on the Medford High School team in 1980, Weinhold made both the Hogan and the American Cup squads, and in 1981, he drilled in a birdie putt that clinched Medford's state championship.

Weinhold is a college senior now. Two years ago, he was a part of the University golf team's NCAA squad, took medalist honors at the Portland State/Rippling River Tournament, tied for second place in the Portland Invitational and earned an All-American honorable mention. That same season he played 38 rounds, averaged exactly 75 strokes per round and had a low of 67. The season before, 1982, he had a low round of 65.

Then in 1984, Weinhold's junior year, his game fell apart. His confidence and consistency dropped, and his average climbed to 78; although that was only three strokes over the previous year, in collegiate golf that meant Weinhold was among the ranks of golfers in the Pac-10 who weren't quite good enough.

But Weinhold speaks as if he's describing someone else's sob story. He looks you square in the eye, and, speaking clearly and unwaveringly, talks not about yesterday and tomorrow, but about today — right now.

"I've been told I've got the talent," Weinhold says, "and all it comes down to is whether I want to do it." This became the question he's endlessly pondered during his redshirt season. He's evaluated himself and his relationship with golf.

"Golf's kind of the vessel for competition, and I was just going out there with the idea of using golf as competition to



try and win. And winning was 'it,' and not playing golf. The golf, it's like it wasn't even in the picture anymore," he says.

"Krieger would tell me last year not to be so hard on myself... when I would have a bad round," Weinhold explains. "But when you think like that, it's very, very difficult not to. And I do it in everything. If I do poorly in school, where I would get a 'B' in a class that I expected to get an 'A,' I would be very hard on myself. I'd let it get me down."

Weinhold agreed to sit out a year. He needed time to gather up all those loose ends that had begun unraveling within himself. Now he is applying himself to his political science and sociology classes, considering the possibility of attending law school, working as a bartender for Max's Tavern and training for triathalons.

To turn around and enter a couple of triathalons seems a bit peculiar for a person who wanted to get away from competitive sports. But Weinhold explains, "It's not something that I go out there to

Photos by Robert Hsu

win. That's the real beauty about it. This summer I was really wound up about golf because I was playing so badly, and it really got me down. As far as competitive things, I just wasn't dealing with them very well."

He took part in two long triathalons, where participants run six miles, bicycle 30 miles and swim one mile. He placed 12th individually in the Mile High Challenge Cup, held in Lakeview, Ore. last summer. He even did well in the swimming portion of the event.

"I'm a survival swimmer," Weinhold says, laughing, as he tells about swimming across Drew's Reservoir near Lakeview. "I'm standing there on this shore and there's all these people packed around getting ready to dive in the water, and I knew I'm going to get beat up. And I just look at my brother and he just looks at me and says I was white as a ghost."

Weinhold says he was afraid he would get part way across and "they'd have a boat out there trying to fish me out of the water at about the half mile mark." But he made it.

However, behind triathlon training, bartending and school, there is golf. "I've learned more from golf than from college," Weinhold says, flatly. "We learn how to survive and use our time. It's all individual."

"Hit one in the water and make a ten, nobody's sobbing for you."

The game of golf has consumed and directed most of his adult life. "Thirty days of golf is a lot to miss during a school year," Weinhold explains. "You can't take calculus and science courses because of all the (required) labs." Once, the golf team players missed six weeks of one term, including final exam week.

The demands of tournament-level golf

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